CHAPTER 4

# The Shaykh's Story Told by Himself

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## Part I: The Story of How I Became an Historian

At the time of my graduation from the Teachers' College of Balıkesir in 1935 I had only two options open to me. I could either have immediately started to work as an instructor at a village primary school or sat for an entrance exam to qualify for advanced training at the main Teachers' Training College in Ankara to become a secondary school teacher. During the summer of 1935 an unexpected new possibility presented itself. Atatürk had recently founded a new institution in Ankara called the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography in the hope of providing a scholarly foundation for the theories of Turkish history with which he was then experimenting. To serve as the faculty of this newly founded institution he had invited a number of German professors, most of them refugees from Nazi Germany. It was planned that forty students, selected by means of examinations administered in Ankara and Istanbul, would initially be admitted with scholarship. In principle, graduates of the lower teachers' colleges were ineligible to sit for this exam and university-level education was only an option for graduates of the regular high schools' College. But because the Faculty of Literature, History, and Geography had only just been created, that summer an exception to this general rule was made and the competition was opened up to graduates of all the teachers' colleges throughout Turkey. We learned only later that it was through the intercession of Afet Inan that this exception had been approved.

Afet Inan was herself a graduate of a teachers' college for women, and it was during one of Atatürk's inspection tours at her school that he had first met her. Later on he adopted her, took her into his own household, and sent her abroad to Switzerland for advanced training. In so doing Atatürk was in effect grooming her for the role she later fulfilled as the representative of his ideas and pedagogical views concerning the Turkish theory of history. It was in recognition of her own background as a graduate of one of Turkey's teachers' colleges that Afet Inan in the summer of 1935 used her influence to secure this unprecedented opportunity for that year's graduating class. Years later when I became a member of the Turkish Historical Society I met her face to face.

Afet was the lifelong collaborator of Atatürk and she worked closely with him concerning all aspects of the Turkish theory of history. After Atatürk's death in 1938 she married Doctor Inan and acquired his surname. My recollection of her is of a kind-hearted, gentle woman who, while leaving no important scholarly legacy in her own right, nonetheless had a profound impact on the development of the historical profession in Turkey.

In 1935 I sat for the entrance exam to enter the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography and was admitted. I was given the opportunity to study with scholars of international standing. The faculty had been created and organized with a view to promoting the development and study of a particular approach to history known as the Turkish historical thesis. Among the German professors who were founding members of the faculty were Anne Marie von Gabain in the fields of Chinese Studies and Turcology, E. Landsberger in the field of Sumerology, Hans Güterbock in the field of Hittitology, W. Rubens in Indic Studies, W. Eberhard in Chinese Studies, and a professor of Geography Herbert Louis. During the mid 1930s fields such as Hittitology, Sumerology, and archeology were particularly popular because of their presumed relevance to the Turkish theory of history then being promulgated. My first inclination was to study Chinese language, culture, and history, but I ultimately chose Ottoman history. As I now recollect the main factor which influenced my choice was the consideration that this period of history was better documented and possessed richer source materials than any other period of Turkish history. In addition, because my main interest in history was its social and economic aspects, I had no desire to devote a lifetime of study to the mastery of extinct languages and their long since abandoned scripts. It is also possible that my growing up in Istanbul, the capital of the former empire, had a sentimental influence on my choice of fields.



Had it not been for the opportunity offered by Afet Inan's opening the entrance exam to recent graduates of the teachers' colleges it is very likely that I would never have become an historian at all. One of my first teachers at the faculty was Professor Muzaffer Göker, who pursued a dual career in academics and politics, although his abiding interest was in politics. By Göker we were given instruction in political history. The other historian on the staff was Bekir Sıdkı Baykal, who had just returned to Turkey from Germany after receiving his doctorate. Above all others it was from Professor Fuad Köprülü, who had taken responsibility for teaching the history of the Middle Ages, that I learned the most. Köprülü was the Turkish scholar whose works most influenced my own genesis as an historian. As a student in his seminars at the faculty I also greatly profited from his personal guidance. In those days we students revered Köprülü as a master scholar with command over the two broad fields of history and literary history. Köprülü on his part felt an intellectual debt to the Russian orientalist V. V. Barthold, and the influence of this Russian scholar on Köprülü's research agenda and methodology is clearly detectable.

It was thanks to Köprülü's support that I was able to stay on at the faculty as a research assistant following my graduation. As one of the original graduates of the new faculty I felt a kind of missionary duty to contribute to the task which our patron Atatürk had set for us—namely, to provide a scholarly framework for teaching the Turkish historical thesis at all educational levels. Atatürk's aim was to liberate the Turkish nation from its status as a religiously-based society of the Middle Ages and to create conditions for modern Turkish statehood. Atatürk sought to give a new meaning to the study of Turkish history, making it the means of revealing the truth about the nation's past origins to the people and imbuing them with pride in their Turkic roots as well as a collective sense of their national identity. In essence Atatürk's task was to create a national identity *ex nihilo*, and he firmly believed that the development of a national historical consciousness would play a crucial role in that process. Atatürk was particularly sensitive to the negative image of the Turk in the West, which he attributed to the effect of six centuries of crusading conflict with Europe under the Ottomans and their predecessors. He saw this casting of Turkey in the role of adversary by the West as one of the principal causes

for the national tragedy suffered by the Turks in the nineteenth century and the downfall of their once powerful world empire in the twentieth. Because Westerners, in their minds and in their literature, equated the Turk with Ottoman imperial ambitions, he felt that Turkic history as a whole tended to be viewed negatively. Atatürk felt that interpretations were still confused and mostly dominated by distortions, inaccuracies, and deliberate falsification of the facts. This situation troubled Atatürk, not only as leader of his country but also as a common Turk. He continued to cherish the idea that the new nation state of the Turks which he had helped to found in Anatolia would soon take its rightful place among the modern Western nations and gain acceptance as their equal. In any case, the Ottoman state had already in the final century of its existence (1822–1922) begun an intensive process of westernization which lent some credibility and feasibility to Atatürk's dream.

During the 1930s Atatürk devoted a good deal of his attention and energies to developing the Turkish historical thesis. In 1930 he summoned a group of the Republic's top historians, which included Fuad Köprülü, Sadri Maksudi Arsal, Yusuf Akçura, Halil Edhem Eldem, Şemseddin Günaltay, and Işmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı to help found the Turkish Historical Society. He also commissioned them to write a new general history of the Turks from earliest times to the beginning of the twentieth century. The title given to the book was *The Main Outlines of Turkish History* (Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları). The formative ideas around which the book was framed may be summarized as follows:

- Turkish history begins not with the arrival of the Seljuks to Anatolia in the late eleventh century, but rather dates from the era of the Hittites and Sumerians.
- The first discovery of agricultural techniques and systems of writing by man are attributable not to the peoples of the ancient Near East, but rather to the Turks of Central Asia. Central Asia was the point of dissemination of advanced civilization to other parts of the globe.

The part of the *Main Outlines* book that was devoted to the Ottoman Turks was written by Işmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı. Uzunçarşılı's approach em-



phasized the institutional structure of the state. While still a student at the teachers' college in Balıkesir; I had already been exposed to the Turkish historical thesis, mostly through official publications distributed by the Turkish Historical Society. The texts based on the *Main Outlines* book was required reading in all of Turkey's schools during the early 1930s, and it was from this book that I gained my first inkling of what it means to study history. But even in those early student days I had already begun to realize that nationalist-inspired writing of history, although understandable as a reaction to western cultural bias and chauvinism, itself led to many excesses and an unscientific romanticizing of the past. In spite of this realization, however, after a lifetime of work as a professional historian I remain convinced that the need to correct distorted views of the Turks prevalent in western historiography still exists. Indeed it is my consciousness of this continuing need that has given inspiration to much of my scholarship. Unaware of the wisdom of Atatürk's vision at the time, I realized only later that it was pursuit of this politically crucial goal which motivated Atatürk to expend so much of his time and energy in the intellectual and pedagogical spheres. Today the early prototype versions of the Turkish historical thesis have been universally abandoned both by the scholarly community and by the public at large. Consequently, books in a genre similar to the *Main Outlines* book are no longer required reading in Turkey's schools. But Atatürk's foresight in establishing the Faculty of Language, History, and Geography as a center for the scholarly study of Turkish culture provided the essential framework for later discoveries in many fields of research, and these discoveries have contributed greatly to a better understanding of both Turkish and ancient Near Eastern history and civilizations. For example, the strides made in Turkish archaeology were only possible thanks to the institutional framework provided by Atatürk.

On the subject of the negative effect of superficial and fallacious interpretations of Turkish history by western historians let me mention a single example. Franz Babinger in his book on Mehmed the Conqueror describes this Ottoman ruler, the true founder of the Ottomans' *imperium*, as a sadist who derived pleasure from the torture and killing of human beings. Babinger emphasized throughout his book that the sultan's sole objective in undertaking his campaigns was the amassing of booty and slaves. Babinger saw no need as an historian to examine the conditions which led the Conqueror to embark

upon his uninterrupted campaigns. As his main source of information on the Conqueror Babinger made use of documents found in the libraries and archives of the Ottomans' foes in the West and made little effort to restore balance to his account by referring to the historical documentation found in the Ottoman archives. It is astonishing to note that despite such glaring deficiencies in the work, Babinger's book on Mehmed the Conqueror still enjoys considerable popularity. Historians who confront and contradict entrenched popular views and write histories aimed at challenging these views are unfortunately all too rare a breed.

## Part II: Intellectual Influences

I count among the historians who have had a profound effect on my own scholarship two principal figures. The first of these, Fuad Köprülü, who guided my historical interests during my early years of training, I have already mentioned. The other great historian with whom I was lucky enough to be associated was Paul Wittek. My first meeting with Professor Wittek was in 1949, when he had already been appointed as Professor of Turkish Studies in London at the School of Oriental and African Studies. During my one and a half year's stay in London I regularly attended his afternoon seminars at the school, which sometimes lasted from three to four hours. Among the other regular seminar participants at that time were Bernard Lewis, Victor Ménage, Vernon Parry, and Elizabeth Zachariadou. In these seminars Professor Wittek sometimes addressed set themes and other times engaged in discussion and offered his opinion about recently published works in the field of Ottoman studies. Occasionally one of the seminar group would present his or her research to the assembled company and discussion and criticism would ensue. Wittek had a sharp, critical mind, and his criticisms were unforgiving and sometimes devastating to those on the receiving end. He had absolutely no toleration for those who made use of old Ottoman historical texts in an uncritical manner. Wittek's greatest contribution to Ottoman studies was his application of western scholarly methods for text analysis to the earliest sources for Ottoman history. It is indeed unfortunate that the task of critical text edition and analysis which he commenced in the 1940s has not yet found any worthy or willing successors or devotees.



Two main approaches on the origins of the Ottoman state and its first rulers still dominate the recent literature. According to one approach, the stories relating to the origin of the Ottoman dynasty as told by the early chronicles are pure fabrication with no basis in historical fact and must be dismissed altogether as historical evidence. The second approach accepts these stories at face value without subjecting them to critical analysis. The truth of the matter is more complex than either approach would allow. In fact, the stories relating to Osman Gazi derive from two separate sources. On the one hand there is the factual chronicle tradition which derives from epic historical writing and reflects fourteenth-century conditions. But woven into this genuine narrative tradition are later additions by historians belonging to an era when the Ottoman empire had grown in size and stature who tended to idealize the state's origins in order to lend legitimacy and greatness to the dynasty. The task which now remains for serious modern historians to undertake is to separate those parts of the narrative which originate in the fourteenth-century epic story from the later accretions. The methods which might be followed to accomplish this task are as follows:

- testing the accuracy of the facts mentioned in the narrative against documentary evidence, such as *wakf* deeds, now coming to light concerning the earliest periods of Ottoman history
- carrying out extensive field research in the regions of northwest Anatolia which figure most prominently in the narrative accounts

Through application of the above-mentioned methods in some research that I have lately been conducting I have made some significant progress in untangling the confused record of the reigns of the first two Ottoman sultans, Osman and Orhan. Naturally, the easiest solution to the problem is just to declare the stories wholly unreliable. But, when these narrative stories are subjected to a careful and critical examination, they reveal a great deal that is historically relevant. It is certainly the case that the historical compilations of the late fifteenth century, as exemplified by the histories of Aşik Paşa-zade, Neşri, Ruhi, Idris Bidlisi, and Ibn Kemal, contain a number of ideologically motivated additions whose purpose was to exalt and lend legitimacy to the dy-

nasty. These additions reflect the challenges which the Ottoman state faced at various stages in its later history and the reactions of its leaders to those challenges in the form of political assertions. Such assertions and claims embedded in Ottoman historical writing become particularly prominent in the aftermath of Timur's defeat of Beyazid I (1389–1402) and the ensuing collapse of Ottoman imperial unity and territorial integrity.

It is, in my opinion, particularly unfortunate that in a spirit of revisionism gone awry a new generation of Turcologists in England have begun to attack the legacy of Wittek's scholarship, completely forgetting the fact that it was his pioneering research that first opened up the early Ottoman period to serious investigation. They accuse Wittek of being governed by sentiment rather than scientific method in his historical approach. Such accusations against Wittek are both unfounded and unfair. Wittek in his assertion that the *ğaza*, or holy war, on behalf of Islam constituted one of the dynamic elements in the constitution of the early Ottoman polity, fully recognized that the Ottomans used this appeal to Islamic loyalty for their own reasons of state. To deny that beliefs and belief systems exerted a primary influence over human behavior and social norms and to relegate them to a position of secondary importance in the interpretation of history reduces processes of historical change to simple mechanistic determinism. It is rightly argued that history is the study of man in his *meaningful acts* in society.

The interpretation of Ottoman history in Turkey has passed through several distinct phases in recent times. Following the abolition of the sultanate and the emergence of modern Turkey, historians and social scientists under the new political regime tended to focus their scholarly interest on the pre-Ottoman epochs of Turkic history and the origins and spread of Turkic culture. The main agenda for research at this stage of national development was the search for the cultural and political origins of the Turkish people. The nationalist urge was already strongly felt in the period following the empire's defeats in the Balkan wars of 1912–13. During the teens and twenties of the current century a strong nationalistic trend dominated indigenous schools of historical writing on the Ottoman empire. During this period the main intellectual figure was the first Turkish sociologist, Ziya Gökalp. Following the path first blazed in the works of Emile Durkheim and Gaston Richard, Gökalp's writings assured the predominance of the positivist and collectivist schools of sociology in Turkey. As a result of Gökalp's overpowering influence historical work that emphasized nation and national culture gained preeminence in the period. Fuad Köprülü's innovative research into the origins of Turkish culture meshed closely with the intellectual fashions of the period. Köprülü identified the origins of Turkish literature in Central Asia, traced its spread via the dispersed Turkic tribes of Iran and Asia Minor, and founded a school of integrated studies based on his discovery of the common roots of Turkic culture. By examining the development of Turkish folk culture on a trans-Asiatic basis Köprülü attempted to identify and describe the uniform characteristics of this geographically widespread literature. Köprülü sought to identify the main features both of the general Islamic milieu of Central Asia and the Near East in the second millenium A.D. while at the same time revealing the peculiar character of the Turks' religious and cultural expression within that broader tradition and context. His work on the popular sufi orders of Anatolia (especially the *babai*, *kalenderi*, and *bektaşi* orders) was a milestone in the scholarly examination of Turkish cultural life during the Middle Ages. In this work he was courageous enough, given the fact that the book was first published in 1918, to draw attention to the fact that the nomadic Turkic peoples who had formally adopted Islam still retained the strong imprint of their pre-Islamic, shamanistic tribal beliefs. There can be no doubt that despite its excesses this positivist and nationalistic approach to the study of Turkish history and culture represented an important advance in Turkish historiography since it removed the study of Turkish and Ottoman history from the limited and confining context of Middle Eastern and Islamic history and placed it within its more appropriate global geopolitical as well as interdisciplinary contexts.



The directions taken by Turkish historical research in the 1930s had a close connection with the developing international economic crisis of the period, which had a strong disruptive effect on Turkey as well. During the 1930s Atatürk focused his attention on Turkey's economic policies and sought formulas and social policies to relieve the plight of the masses. During this period interest in socialism and socialistic writing were on the upswing. A new attitude towards the social sciences in general began to reveal itself and in this intellectual climate we again find Köprülü as one of the leading figures. By founding a new periodical called *The Journal of Turkish Legal and Economic History*, whose first issue appeared in 1931, Köprülü gave direction to the new

trends in historical research. Immediately after he had founded this new journal Köprülü was invited to the Sorbonne to give a series of lectures, and during his stay in Paris he was greatly influenced by the work of two of his French colleagues, Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, both of whom were active in the new areas of historical research. While one group of Turkish researchers progressed in research on the history of institutions and remained in the tradition of Durkheim and his followers, the new history focusing on social and economic issues began in this period to attract an ever growing interest.

Around this time (the early 1930s) Ömer Lûtfi Barkan, who had recently completed his studies at the University of Strasbourg, where Marc Bloch was active, also returned to Turkey. As one of the pioneers of Turkish social and economic history Barkan began to devote himself to archival research and became a specialist in the field of Turkish agrarian and legal history through his detailed investigation of the Ottoman tax and population registers of the sixteenth century.

As I began my studies at the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography in Ankara in 1935 it was these trends in historical research that focused on the social and economic dimensions of Ottoman history which predominated in the historical profession. In other words historical training in Turkey during the 1930s gave precedence to the history of institutions and to social and economic history. In these fields it was the scholarship of Köprülü and Barkan that gave direction and inspiration to the new generation of historians in the thirties. My own persona as historian bears the indelible mark of these two Turkish scholars. Their influence can be clearly seen in my doctoral thesis, in which I concentrated on the social effects of the Tanzimat reforms and investigated the role played by unresolved social and economic problems in the relationship between landowners and peasants as a factor in the 1841 and 1850 Nish and Vidin uprisings respectively.

The French influence on Turkish historical writing continued to be felt and after the work of Fernand Braudel took a fundamentally different tack. When Braudel's *La Méditerranée* was first published I happened to be in Paris. In 1950 I had set out from London to take part in the *International Congress of Historical Sciences* then being convened in Paris. During the course of the Congress Braudel's recent book, written in a new style and representing a fundamentally different historical perspective, had engendered lively discussion



and debate. After reading the book I came to the, for me, exciting conclusion that for the first time in European scholarship the Ottoman empire had been presented and approached from an entirely new objective angle.

In his work Braudel presented his view that the Ottoman empire, far from representing an alien world on the eastern fringes of the Mediterranean, was in its social, demographic, and economic structures an integrating part that closely paralleled the lands of the western Mediterranean. Instead of seeing the eastern and western Mediterranean lands as separate and mutually incompatible worlds, as had most of his predecessors, Braudel saw the two halves of the sea as existing in a close commensality and mutuality of contact and influence. Braudel believed that the only way to understand Mediterranean history was not to separate it into its European and "oriental" (i.e., Ottoman) components, but rather to view it as an integrated whole. Braudel's interpretation of Mediterranean history came closer to reflecting historical realities than the portrayal by any of his predecessors. Braudel, as a student of the human geographer Vidal de Lablache, introduced revolutionary new methods to the study of history with his concepts of geographical determinism and, I believe, a Bergsonian understanding of historical evolution over the *longue-durée*. As a matter of fact, it is well known that Braudel in many ways continued in the path opened by Lucien Febvre and Marc Bloch, who had developed the concept of total history. This approach to history insisted on the need to study society based on the assumption that it was not made up of isolated events and structures, but rather existed and changed as a whole within the context of its given institutional and environmental framework.

Braudel attempted to apply these concepts of total history with its emphasis on material conditions to his study of Mediterranean societies, including Ottoman society. But he acknowledged the limits of his information concerning the Ottomans and described the empire as "a zone of formidable uncertainty." In the late 1940s, as he was writing his book on the Mediterranean world, there were very few detailed studies on either Ottoman institutions or economic conditions that he could rely upon, and he was frequently led into serious errors of interpretation by his dependence on the deficient secondary literature. Nevertheless, despite all his faults, Braudel was a gifted historian who wrote elegantly on many of the fundamental questions of Ottoman history, and his work raised important questions for future research. Each of the

questions raised by Braudel opened up new areas of research for Ottoman historians, and his book *La Méditerranée* undoubtedly left a profound impact on Turkish historiography. Barkan was the first Turkish historian to write a review of Braudel's work introducing it to the reading public in Turkey, and at the same time Barkan conducted research of his own into questions raised by Braudel's book. Shortly afterwards I too, in a review of Mustafa Akdag's article on economic conditions in Ottoman Turkey, touched on the importance of Braudel's historical conceptualization for the study of Ottoman realities. In this paper I placed particular emphasis on Braudel's ideas concerning the universal effect throughout the Mediterranean economy of global phenomena such as the invasion of American silver and the European demographic boom of the sixteenth century. On the occasion of Braudel's visit to Turkey at Barkan's invitation, I was able to make his personal acquaintance. The influence of Braudel's approach on world historiography is today generally accepted, and his influence on Turkish historiography has been equally profound. When Braudel was preparing the second edition of *La Méditerranée* Barkan supplied him with the results of his own research in the realm of Ottoman price history.

Distortion of Ottoman history can arise from a number of different sources, both scholarly and nonscholarly. There are those distortions which arise from uncritical use of the sources, but the larger problem comes from either nationalist or other doctrinaire (e.g., Marxist) bias. The effect of these may be observed in Balkan and Arab historiography. Beyond the regional nationalist biases there exists also distortion which arises from anti-Ottoman prejudice of broader scope. Such prejudice originates from trends such as Eurocentrism and political forces such as colonialism. In the beginning stages of the development of modern Turkish historiography, which coincided with the creation of the Republic of Turkey as an independent political entity and the dominance of westernizing ideologies, Ottoman history was interpreted from an unsympathetic secularist point of view. Understood in the context of political developments in the Near East and Balkans during the early twentieth century these nationalist tendencies in historical writing are perfectly understandable. It was an unavoidable precondition of national awakening and self-realization throughout the region that the Ottoman regime which preceded national liberation should be reviled as oppressive and backwards. According to this theory the developmental potential of the Balkan nations had been suppressed as a result of their subjugation by a retrogressive, rapacious, and exploitative class of Turkish overlords during the centuries of Ottoman rule. None of the Balkan historians wish to acknowledge the historical fact that side by side with the indigenous peasants lived large numbers of Muslim settlers who as pastoralists and cultivators of the land were also tax-paying *reaya*. Muslim and non-Muslim *reaya* living as neighbors in the same land shared the same material conditions and standard of life. For the Arab historians too the concept of an oppressive Ottoman exploitation served as a convenient scapegoat and explanation for their own countries' backwardness vis-à-vis Western Europe. But it was also during the period following World War Two that the Ottoman documentary and archival record began to be exploited. This development gave rise to revisionist trends in historical writing that challenged the credibility of some latent anti-Ottoman prejudices found in the literature. It was the Hungarian historians that took the lead in the field of archival research. Lajos Fekete and his successors made a particularly valuable contribution to Ottoman documentary studies. Following the trend started by the Hungarian historians, Yugoslav, Bulgarian, Roumanian, Albanian, and Greek historians all began to rely on the Ottoman documentary record as the most trustworthy source for the history of their countries during the early modern era. The document-based studies conducted by these historians have concentrated mostly on topics such as institutional history, demography, social and economic conditions, and the phenomenon of urbanization. Beginning in the 1970s the Arab historians, like their Balkan colleagues, began to conduct research in the Ottoman archives.

Among the other intellectual trends which have influenced scholarly study of Ottoman history, sociological theory has also played a noteworthy role. Social historians and sociologists belonging to both Marxian and Weberian schools have attempted to apply their models to Ottoman history. These various efforts have resulted in the development of new, sometimes very interesting, directions for research. Because there are broad areas of Ottoman social and economic history that still remain inadequately studied and understood, premature generalization by the social scientists remains speculative and cannot be confirmed on a factual basis. Yet sociological concepts and generalizations both help to formulate questions for historical research. Inspired by class conflict or patrimonialism, a new generation of Ottoman historians has

emerged whose interpretations of history are equally influenced by the works of historical sociologists such as K. Wittfogel and E. Eisenstadt.

In recent years a fashion has developed for tackling major problems in Ottoman history from the theoretical perspective offered by historical sociology. Underlying this approach is the assumption that these methodologies are so powerful an interpretive tool that they will be capable of resolving complex problems in historical research even though their practitioners may lack the appropriate skill or knowledge to make proper use of the first-hand narrative and the documentary evidence. If there is a proper task for history it is not to formulate generalizations divorced from both time and place but to investigate concrete events and developments in time and space. The recent rekindling of interest in hermeneutics and textual study among historians should therefore be welcomed as a needed reaction, and a positive development.

Those who would seek to define my place in contemporary historiography on the Ottoman empire by citing my earliest studies fail to see the evolution which my ideas have undergone since I first started writing history in the 1940s. As I see it, my historical writing falls into several clearly distinct periods. I was exposed to the Marxist interpretation of history through the lecture notes of Yusuf Akçura at the Ankara University's Faculty of Law, which I read while a student. The Marxist approach to Ottoman history achieved its strong influence in the 1970s during the time of the revolutionary leftist movement in Turkey. In those years, because of economic stagnation, Turkish students who could not find jobs were in constant agitation and began to seek the causes of Turkey's social and economic underdevelopment in the Ottoman legacy. The majority of the young writers focused their research on the topic of Ottoman social structure, reaching the conclusion that Turkish underdevelopment had its explication in Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production theory. When seeking empirical evidence to support their theories these writers turned primarily to the historical researches carried out by Barkan, Mustafa Akdag, and myself. The questions raised by the Marxist writers bore a close resemblance to the kinds of questions raised in Braudel's work. One of the forerunners of the Marxist historical school in Turkey was Sencer Divitçioğlu.

Divitçioğlu took as his theoretical base Marx's Asiatic Mode of Production. Divitçioğlu's work had a sustained influence on Turkish historians and social scientists in those days. Huri Islamoğlu-Inan, one of the new generation



of social historians who studied with me, and Çaglar Keyder, a sociologist, are among the best representatives of this new school of research. In their research they adopt Marx's concept of social formation as their basic working model. This concept runs parallel in many ways to Braudel's concept of total history. As an historian, Islamoğlu-Inan somewhat modifies the classical theory of the Asiatic Mode of Production and her work attempts to clarify the peculiarities of the Ottoman social system that differentiated it from other Asian societies. I myself made a concerted effort during the 1980s to deepen my own understanding of some of the questions raised by the Asiatic Mode of Production debate. In particular, I began to undertake archival research and collect data that could shed light on questions such as the alienation and concentration of land in the hands of the members of the elite and their exploitation of peasant labor, the basic characteristics of the Ottoman agrarian regime, price movements, and rural-urban relations. It rapidly became clear to me that the AMP theory gave inadequate explanation for certain features of the Ottoman case. My work in the archives established, without any room for doubt, that the basis of the Ottoman land tenure system in the classical period (1450–1600) was the *chift-hane* system, a system that evolved within the framework of a highly centralized bureaucratic state structure for the purpose of regulating the productive capacity of the large masses of peasant households. It appears that Marx's theory, which he had developed by examining social relations in the context of the Indian subcontinent, represents not a universal phenomenon but a peculiar historical case. The theory put forth by Marx was that peasant society was subjugated to a class of military overlords who extracted the surplus agricultural production of the agrarian underclass by sheer force. Such a theory contradicts Marx's general theory of social formation based on relations of production. Such practices were not general throughout Asia as the AMP label would imply. In this limited context social structure evolved, AMP argues, not through economic articulation, but rather as the result of political suppression. The Ottoman *chift-hane* system on the other hand was based on *a particular economic articulation* through processes that can be documented from the archival record.

In 1977 Immanuel Wallerstein convened an international conference at Binghamton to celebrate the inauguration of the Fernand Braudel Research Center. At this conference I presented a paper on the influence of the Braude-

lian school on research in the field of Ottoman social and economic history and attempted to summarize research progress on a number of questions raised by Braudel's approach. Wallerstein's interest revolved mostly around the question of the place occupied by this large imperial land mass within the western capitalist world economy. Wallerstein's peripheralization theory was discussed in search of consensus on the important questions of when, how, and how far the Ottoman economy was incorporated into (that is peripheralized by) the European world economy. Wallerstein's views were of keen interest to Turkish historians and when, later that year, the First International Congress on the Social and Economic History of Turkey was convened in Ankara, Wallerstein was invited to take part. At that conference Çaglar Keyder and Huri Islamoglu-Inan, together with other young sociologists and historians, had the opportunity of meeting Wallerstein in person, and they later sent their students for study at the new center in Binghamton. At the State University of New York in Binghamton a research group emerged and Çaglar Keyder himself later joined the Center as a member of the University's Sociology Department. This research group began to take an active role by sponsoring conferences and preparing publications relating to the question of the place of the Ottoman empire in the context of Wallerstein's peripheralization theory. This research trend started at Binghamton soon found followers in other circles, and McGowan's book on Ottoman social and economic history is an example of the new school of research. Islamoglu and Keyder also published some thought-provoking studies relating to the AMP theory and peripheralization.

In Wallerstein's view the Ottoman empire, like China, possessed a nearly self-sufficient "imperial" economy. Economies of this type represented challenge to European economic penetration. According to Wallerstein such imperial economies represent a separate category which remained essentially independent from the European capitalist world economy. But the Ottoman empire was different from China in that its geographical location on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean traditionally drew it into very close trading relations with Europe. The Ottoman empire was an important source of raw materials such as cotton, leather, wool, and dyes for European industries. But at the same time it acted as an important market for European export of manufactured goods, woolen cloth in particular. Over time the close trading relations between Europe and the Ottoman empire grew to such proportions that



they began to transform the social and economic structure of the Ottoman society. Under these latter circumstances, the Wallerstein school argues, the long-delayed peripheralization of the Ottoman economy did in fact occur. To investigate this process of peripheralization in the Ottoman empire, the Binghamton research group began to carry out empirical studies. The present state of research seems to indicate that the true peripheralization of the Ottoman economy did not take place before the second half of the eighteenth century. Professor Reşat Kasaba at the University of Washington in Seattle is one of the leading figures among the young researchers currently working in this field. Debate on the process of marginalization of Turkey's economy is not a new phenomenon; the *kadro* movement of the 1930s had also discussed Turkey's reduction to a semi-colonial status by the European capitalist economies. Wallerstein's group has, however, developed a more penetrating methodology for studying this phenomenon, and they exert a growing influence over studies on the late Ottoman empire.

## Part Three: Major Studies

I completed my doctoral studies between the years 1940 and 1942. The subject of my doctoral thesis was the effect of the Tanzimat reforms in Bulgaria. During the course of my research I was fortunate enough to discover at the Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul a special collection of documents on the Bulgarian question compiled for Abdulhamid II. The papers, amounting to ten volumes, were originally preserved in the Başbakanlık Archives. I made a special study of those documents relating to the Vidin uprisings of 1841 and 1850. The reports sent by the governor of the province and confirmed in details of the reports by special investigators sent from Istanbul indicated that land disputes between the landowners and the Bulgarian peasants and corvees lay at the root of these rebellions. We know that when similar reforms had been attempted in Bosnia-Herzogovina, land disputes and corvees had given rise to discontent and uprisings there too. Thus, already at the time of my doctoral research I had begun to focus my attention on questions such as land tenure and peasant problems. Around the same time Ömer Lûtfi Barkan was also carrying out his research on the land question in the sixteenth century. As for myself, the land and related questions have remained a constant fo-

cus of my research throughout my academic career. In the years following 1942, when I completed my doctoral thesis, I continued to conduct research on the Tanzimat era of Ottoman history in both its internal and international aspects.

In 1953, as the five hundredth anniversary of the conquest of Istanbul approached, historians in Turkey began to focus their attention on the historical significance of this event and on the reign of Mehmed II in general. I too took part in these activities and began to collect information in the archives relating to this period of Ottoman history. In the forty years since 1953 on the basis of this research I have published quite a number of studies on the subject of fifteenth-century Ottoman history. In addition to the information on Mehmed II's reign gathered from the Başbakanlık archives, I discovered that the Bursa *sicillât* (law court records) also contained important information. The series of kadi registers from Bursa begins in the 1460s, and the last three years of Mehmed's reign (1479-81) are covered in detail in a bulky register. Because the material in the Bursa *sicillât* is mostly concerned with city life in Bursa, the direction of my research turned to areas such as Ottoman urbanism, trade, crafts, silk trade, industry, and the position and administrative activities of the kadis of Ottoman cities. Soon after beginning my research I realized that the *sicillât* constituted a source of capital importance for Ottoman social and economic history. Later on I also made use of the Istanbul *sicillât* for my research and, in fact, a large part of the documentation that I have used throughout my years of research in Ottoman history came from local court registers.

In the period between 1935 and 1950, before I began carrying out my own research in these records, a number of studies had been carried out under the auspices of the *Halk Evleri*. Most of these studies had been published in obscure journals, and the work was mostly done by high school teachers as opposed to professional historians. Because of their location in the provinces, these records had remained mostly inaccessible to professors from the Istanbul and Ankara faculties. The publication efforts of the period 1935–50 suffered somewhat from disorganization and lack of consistent standards. But whatever its publishing flaws the corpus of original documents selected from the *sicillât* that took shape in these years served to provide reliable first-hand information on important subjects, such as local developments and economic practices, popular movements in rural areas, brigandage, and a great deal else.



In later years local studies grounded in information extracted from the court records of Ottoman cities also became popular in other parts of what had once made up the empire. Historians in Syria, Egypt, and the Balkan countries all came to realize the importance of the Ottoman *sicillât* records as a source for their own history. In Syria Abdulkerim Rafeq; in Egypt André Raymond and A. A. Abdurrahim; in Bulgaria G. Galabov, Berov, and S. Dimitrov, and in Bosnia Hamid Krashevliavić, A. Sučeska, H. Shabanović, Hamid Hadzibegić, and others all published studies based on these local records. So far as Turkey is concerned, a decision has now been taken to collect the local records presently housed in museums and other municipal buildings in the provinces and house them under one roof at the National Library in Ankara.

Towards the end of 1953 the subjects of research around which my interest was beginning to concentrate had already become clear. The major axes around which my research was to revolve were the land question and the Ottoman timar system, Ottoman social and economic history, and urbanization in the Ottoman empire from the beginning of the fifteenth century. While I was conducting my research in the Başbakanlık archives on the *tahrir* registers of Mehmed II's era I came across an extremely interesting and valuable document belonging to the period of Mehmed's father, Murad II. This register, dating from 1432, was the timar register for the sancak of Arvanid, or Albania, which I published in book form in the year 1954. This publication was the first full edition of an Ottoman land register in Turkey. The only earlier effort in this field was Lajos Fekete's publication of the Estergom register in Hungarian translation. The timar register of Albania contained documents relating to the period 1432 to 1455 and provided important information shedding light on the Ottoman timar regime. It also provided insight into problems connected with Ottoman settlement in Albania and the identity of local Christian families that were incorporated into the Ottoman timar system. The other registers relating to the period of Mehmed II which I was studying at the same time revealed the existence of Christian timariots in other parts of the Balkans controlled by the Ottomans. These research findings demonstrated to my satisfaction that the feudal-military aristocracy representing the pre-Ottoman regime preserved their status in Ottoman society as timariots. This discovery completely invalidated the widespread claims that the Ottoman conquest had led automatically to the expropriation of Christian landowners by the Muslim

conquerors. The Balkan historians took a keen interest in my research findings. The article on the continuity from Czar Stephan Dushan's empire to that of the Ottomans, published in Turkish in 1953, was translated into Serbo-Croatian by Nedim Filipović and published in Sarajevo. In a history of Greece written around that time by A. Vakalapoulos mention was also made of these new discoveries. Today it has become generally accepted by all Balkan historians as a fact of history that most of the military aristocracy remained in place after the Ottoman conquests and did not yield its place to a new landholding class from Anatolia.

My researches on the period of Mehmed II contradicted the findings of the German scholar Franz Babinger, who was conducting intensive research of his own, and my critical review of his book on the Conqueror and his time appeared in 1953. This review brought an end to the cordial relations that had existed between us up until that time and to this day I regret my loss of his friendship under such circumstances. In his research Babinger hardly used the contemporary Ottoman archival evidence and ignored the principal Ottoman narrative source for the Conqueror's reign written by the contemporary statesman and intimate of the court Tursun Beg. As for myself, I have been able to exploit only a small fraction of the material I have collected during a lifetime of study in the Ottoman archives. The material which I have collected would more than suffice for a comprehensive study of the Conqueror's reign superseding all previous work on the subject. A proper understanding of the reign of Mehmed II, which coincided with the time when the Ottoman empire and the traditions of Ottoman rule and sovereignty attained their classical form, is critically important for understanding subsequent periods of Ottoman history. There is no doubt that his reign constitutes one of the most important turning points in Ottoman history. It was at this time that the Ottoman empire finally emerged onto the stage of world history as one of the major players after more than half a century of uncertainty that lasted from the beginning of the fourteenth century to 1453.

In the 1950s I became interested in the history of the Crimean khanate. My father had immigrated to the Ottoman empire from Crimea in either 1905 or 1906, and my family background gave me a personal as well as professional reason for pursuing this interest. My first research into this topic had been completed in 1944 when I studied the establishment of Ottoman suzerainty over the khanate in 1475. In addition to this early study I have published a number of articles relating to the structure of the Crimean khanate, its position within the Ottoman imperial system, and its relations with Russia.



In 1949 one of my students brought me the manuscript of an old history that he had found in his village. Study of the manuscript revealed that it was a previously unknown Ottoman chronicle covering the events of the Varna Crusade of 1444. Recognizing that this work was an original Ottoman example of the *menakibname* type that gave authentic and detailed information about John Hunyadi's campaigns against the Ottomans, I decided to publish the source together with Mevlut Oğuz, the student who had first brought it to me for study. After its publication scholars in Hungary, Poland, and Roumania expressed a keen interest and saw immediately that the text revealed many important and previously misunderstood aspects of the Varna Crusade. This publication, together with my edition of the 1432 timar register of Arvanid, helped to provide a clearer picture of conditions in the Ottoman empire during the reign of Murad II (1421–1451). I also made a separate investigation of the registers of *wakf* endowments from Murad II's reign preserved in Ankara at the General Directorate of Pious Foundations. It can now be said that the combination of these three sources enables us to gain better insight into Ottoman realities in the first half of the fifteenth century.

Sultan Mehmed II was the first Ottoman sultan to codify the existing Ottoman law, and during his reign two separate law codes were promulgated. I have made a detailed study of these two law codes in particular and have also published a number of studies on Ottoman law in general. One reason for my interest in law is that starting from my high school years I was in close touch with Sadri Maksudi Arsal, who was a friend of the family. During my high school years I helped him to transcribe drafts of his work on Turkish legal history from Arabic script into Latin letters for the printers. When we used to meet in his study he would also occasionally describe his research projects to me. I have a vivid memory of fighting off drowsiness during these sessions when he would explain, sometimes for hours at a time, about subjects which as a teenager must have been mostly over my head. But though I had little appreciation of these private lectures at the time, I later realized that I had derived quite a lot of benefit from listening to Sadri Bey. During my first year as a student of the Faculty of Letters I simultaneously attended lectures at the

Faculty of Law, and throughout my life I have maintained a strong interest in law.

In 1956 I edited, together with Dr. Robert Anhegger, a collection of legal rescripts belonging to the reigns of Mehmed II and Beyazid II. Simultaneously a French translation of these laws was prepared by Nicoara Beldiceanu, while Franz Babinger published a facsimile edition of the text. This translation, which was prepared after our edition had been published, contained many serious mistakes. The review which I published concerning the translation unfortunately resulted in my losing another friendship.

As a result of my researches into the Ottoman law codes and *tahrir* registers I had come to an important conclusion concerning the Ottoman agrarian regime. Based on my research I now felt ready to describe the origin and general character of the Ottoman system of taxation. In my article in Turkish entitled "Raiyyet Rüsûmu" I established for the first time that land taxes such as the *chift resmi* had to be understood within the context of a more general system which determined and defined the legal and social status of peasants. According to the dictates of this system it became clear to me that the cultivator of a plot of land sufficient to provide for the needs of a peasant family paid the full *chift resmi*, the cultivator of half that amount of land paid the half *chift resmi* and represented the second tier of the landed peasant class, while cultivators with less than a half *chiftlik* of land constituted the lower tier of the landed peasant class. That these categories were the significant ones determining social and economic status became clear from the *tahrir* registers themselves, where taxpayers were listed as belonging to one or the other of these three categories. It also became clear that the land as well as the family cultivating the land were registered together as one unit. Peasant families representing a certain potential labor capacity were entered into the registers not as individuals but as production units, i.e., the *chift hane*. As becomes clear from Ottoman archival records, it was the *chift hane* which gave definition to the village social categories within the context of the Ottoman imperial land regime.

By means of centrally maintained registers the Ottoman administration was thus able to organize and categorize the land and the labor of the entire rural economy and keep it under its own control. My research had revealed this system which lay at the very heart of the Ottoman imperial administrative system. It was this system, the Ottoman *chift hane* system, that determined the



other basic Ottoman administrative practices and forms such as the *tahrir* system itself, and it was also the means by which the amount and character of land and personal taxes were determined. In my later research I discovered that prior to the Ottomans in regions where the agricultural production was characterized by dry farming, similar systems for regulating the peasant labor and land had existed. From the time of the late Roman empire onwards imperial rulers throughout the Mediterranean lands had developed such systems for maintaining control over their primary source of revenue, i.e., the land and peasant. The Ottomans, introducing very few changes of their own, merely perpetuated existing norms and practices. For their part they had as their principal concern preserving the peasant land-family units in the conquered territories as productive tax-yielding entities. The Ottomans had little interest in or incentive to carry out radical changes affecting peasant society. The Ottomans carried neither social nor religious revolution to the rural society they conquered.

It is possible, thanks to the preservation of the extremely rich Ottoman archival record—from *tahrir* registers, to law codes, and law court registers—to establish in detail the actual material conditions which prevailed in the rural parts of the empire. Through the Ottoman records and knowledge of the social and institutional conservatism of the Ottoman regime we are also able to reconstruct a fairly clear picture of what peasant life and agrarian conditions must have been like in the Balkans and Anatolia under the pre-Ottoman Seljukid, Byzantine, and even Roman imperial regimes. Because very few documents from the pre-Ottoman period have been preserved, our knowledge of these periods remains imprecise. But under the light of a detailed knowledge of the Ottoman *chift hane* system some aspects of these earlier regimes can be clarified. Thus our original study on the Ottomans' "Raiyyet Rüsûmu" opened the way to a broad new area of research in both Ottoman and comparative contexts.

I consider as one of the most critically important aspects of my work as an empirical historian my efforts in the realm of document and text publication. In the early years I turned my energies in this sphere to documents pertaining to the Tanzimat reforms. As mentioned above, in 1954 I published the full edition of a timar register of Arvanid. At the same time I published a collection of documents on the reign of the Conqueror and on the city of Bursa. The

series of documents on Bursa (over five hundred) has continued with a sequence of articles in the journal *Belgeler*. Most recently I have prepared for publication the customs register of the port of Caffa covering the years 1487 to 1490. I also collected for publication Ottoman rescripts of justice from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I have published the texts of Ottoman law codes and coedited with R. Anhegger a collection of regulations dating from the reigns of Mehmed II and Beyazid II. At present I am preparing an edition and translation of three principal Sultanic Ottoman law codes. The first of these is the law code of Süleyman I, the second is the so-called *kanun-name-i cedid* compiled in the early seventeenth century, and the third is the law code of the sancak of Aydın. For this project the text is being prepared according to the principles of critical text editions, and the text is accompanied by annotations and a full English translation of each of the three codes. The work is being supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities and publication is anticipated during 1993.

Another text publication which I am currently preparing in collaboration with Gilles Veinstein and M. Berindei is the customs registers of Kilia and Akkerman from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. With the publication of the Caffa register, this material will provide the basic source for Black Sea trade in the fifteenth century.

## Part Four: Major Projects

Over the course of my professional career I have undertaken a number of long-term projects which I hoped would provide a foundation for further study in the field of Ottoman historical research. Some of these projects have already been completed; others are still in progress.

One of these projects concerns the *sicillât* of Bursa. When I first began to work on these records in the early 1950s they lay in heaps in one of the cells of Mehmed I's medrese in Bursa, covered with dust and dirt. After I had already worked for several years in Bursa I had the idea of proposing a new home be found for these important records and approached the General Directorate of Museums in Ankara with a plan for preserving and cataloguing these records. The idea was enthusiastically received, but since the first stage in the plan was to send the registers to Topkapı Sarayı in Istanbul for rebinding, I



soon became the victim of my own suggestion's success. When the registers were sent to Istanbul for cleaning, repair, and rebinding, they became inaccessible for research for quite a long time. Eventually the registers returned to Bursa and were housed in a special archive at the city's Archeological Museum. Once they returned to Bursa these registers attracted the attention of both the Turkish and the international scholarly community, and publications based on these records began to proliferate.

Many years later, in the 1980s, I turned to the *sicillât* of Istanbul as a potential source for the history of the empire's capital city. The Istanbul *sicill* archives are now housed in the Müftülük of Istanbul and contain close to 10,000 volumes. This archive was created during the reign of Abdulhamid II (1876-1909) when a resurgence of interest in the Islamic sciences and particularly Islamic law manifested itself. The archive was placed under the jurisdiction of the Sheyh-ül-Islam. During Abdulhamid II's time the archive was carefully organized and classified and a catalog of the holdings was also prepared. This archive is of first-rate importance not just for the history of the city of Istanbul but more generally as a source on Ottoman urban life, crafts and trade, and legal history. I had thought for a long time that there was a need to develop some kind of organizational framework by which this important source for Ottoman history could be fully exploited and research results published and disseminated. While so much important scholarly research had been carried out on Byzantine Istanbul, it seemed to me shameful that such a major source for the history of the Ottoman city should lie unexploited and indeed almost completely ignored. I became determined that this important source should gain equal recognition with the Başbakanlık and Topkapı Sarayı archives as a major center for research on Ottoman history. With this in mind I established contact with the Müfti of Istanbul, his honorable Selâhattin Kaya, and with his assistant at the Müftülük's archive, Abdülaziz Bayındır, and I began immediately to encourage some of my doctoral students at Chicago to carry out their research there. I also had the idea of setting up a small team of qualified researchers who could take charge of publication efforts based on the Istanbul *sicillât*. Through consultation with professors Abdullah Kuran and Zafer Toprak of Bosphorus University I sought advice on establishing a foundation devoted to the promotion of this project. The mayor of Istanbul, at that time Bedreddin Dalan, was also approached for his ideas on the subject. Later on

the planning committee was widened to include professors Nurhan Atasoy, Cemal Kafadar, and Gulru Kafadar, but because our sources of funding were still inadequate the project's realization had to be delayed. In the end a solution was reached whereby the project would be directed under the auspices of the Center for Art History of Istanbul's Faculty of Letters with funding from the Koç Company. At the present time work continues on transposing the contents and information contained in these registers into data banks by use of computers and other technical aides. During the early stages of this project a part-time research staff of three assistants is working to process the information in a systematic fashion. The publication of the first register of the kadi of Istanbul is anticipated shortly. It is the hope of the project organizers that once this first in a series of studies and monographs on the Istanbul *sicillât* is published it will serve to publicize the project and further stimulate interest.

There are very few peoples in the world who are as well endowed with such rich historical sources for their own national history as the Turks. The variety of archival evidence found in Turkey is something unique. For the past fifty years, ever since I began my first work in the field of Turkish history, I have been a strong advocate of the necessity for setting priorities that will ensure the preservation, scholarly classification, and openness of access of the Turkish archives.

In 1985, in collaboration with his excellency former ambassador Ismail Soysal, we organized a colloquium in Istanbul on the archive question. The prime minister, his excellency Turgut Özal, and a number of archive technicians and specialists took part in this colloquium and, following the meeting, it was decided by the government to allocate generous funds for the purpose of archive development and modernization. At the present time the Ottoman archives in Istanbul are on the way to becoming an international center for scholarly research on a par with the London and Paris archives. Hundreds of cataloguing personnel are now working to classify the millions of documents preserved at the archives, and for the first time a trained cadre of archivists is now in place in Turkey. If we recollect that from the ruins of the Ottoman empire there emerged more than twenty independent nations, the need for historians from these countries to turn to the Ottoman archives for the illumination of their own historical pasts is obvious. In addition, the Ottoman empire is one of the great empires of world history on a par with the Chinese



and Roman empires. In addition to Ottomanists, historians, and other specialists, the Ottoman empire holds a particular interest for sociologists and other social scientists. For example, K. Wittfogel and E. Eisenstadt both devoted a significant portion of their works to the case of the Ottoman empire.

The journal *Belgeler* (Documents), which is published under the auspices of the Turkish Historical Society and on whose editorial board I currently serve, has been published continuously since 1964. This journal serves as one of the principal mediums for the publication of documents relating to Ottoman history.

One of the most significant archival sources for the study of Ottoman history is the series of registers, numbering more than 260 volumes, called the *Mühimme*. The *Mühimme* registers were those registers in which matters discussed by the Imperial Council were summarized in the form of imperial rescripts, or *fermans*. More than thirty years ago I presented to the Turkish Historical Society my idea of publishing each of the *Mühimme* registers in a series of volumes. The essential elements of my proposal were as follows:

- each of the Mühimme registers should be published first as a facsimile
- each volume would be accompanied by a detailed alphabetical index of proper names and technical terms
- each volume would be accompanied by an introduction serving to indicate the peculiarities pertaining to that specific volume

I was convinced that this plan would meet best the needs of the scholarly community. I was aware at the same time that previous efforts at summarizing the contents of the registers and publishing simplified versions of the texts in modernized Turkish had failed to provide material which was of any use to serious scholars and historians. Regretably, the executive committee of the society voted against adopting my suggestion on the grounds that it would prove too expensive. I still remember with disappointment that among those who rejected this proposal were my historian colleagues. Had the project been undertaken thirty years ago as I had hoped, by now the major universities of the

world would each have on their library shelves the full 260-volume set ready to serve as the foundation for all serious studies in Ottoman history.

Another of the most important series of registers for historical research contained in the Başbakanlık archives are the *tapu tahrir* registers. These registers, numbering more than 2,000, are today preserved mostly at the Ottoman archives in Istanbul but also in part at the General Directorate of Deed Registration in Ankara. The importance of this fund was first demonstrated in studies carried out by the late Ömer Lûtfi Barkan. Since the 1940s they have formed the subject of active publication both within Turkey and internationally. In our opinion however, despite the flurry of interest in publication, no ideal method of publication has yet developed that fulfills the requirements for scholarly use. For instance, let us take the Hungarian publications based on these registers which, because they are published only in Hungarian translation, become essentially inaccessible to scholarship outside Hungary. Had these registers been transcribed in the original language they would have remained much more accessible to the international scholarly community. As for the publications in Turkey, there has been an unfortunate trend, referred to above, toward simplification and modernization of the Ottoman texts. In my opinion, a system similar to that which I had earlier proposed for the publication of the *Mühimme* registers, which envisaged providing facsimiles of the texts with notes and indices, would be the most suitable method for scholarly use. It should be recognized that these publications are not intended for the general public's use and should be designed only for use by specialists.

Six years ago in 1986 I proposed to the Turkish Historical Society a project for organizing the publication of these imperial land registers in a scholarly and systematic fashion. In this project I proposed as the initial task the job of publishing all the registers of the reign of Süleyman I that pertain to the areas contained within the present day borders of Turkey as a series of volumes. The method for preparing these volumes would conform to the above indicated publication specifications. The *tahrir* registers contain information on the population and economic conditions of villages, towns, and cities indicating also the value and amount of agricultural production. These censuses were carried out by the state for the purpose of estimating tax revenues and establishing social groups. Consequently, when, according to the project's plan, all the *tahrir* registers pertaining to Turkey from the reign of Süleyman I have been published, it will be possible to map out in full detail the demographic and economic resources of Anatolia as they existed 400 years ago. The executive committee of the Turkish Historical Society agreed to accept this project into their general plan, and a committee composed of specialists on the *tahrir* registers was established. At present we are pursuing contacts with the General Directorate of State Archives in Turkey to identify those individuals who will be able to take charge of the task of publication.



A project that I was fortunate to bring to fruition was the creation of a permanent organization for research on Ottoman social and economic history. To launch this project I conceived the idea of convening an international congress and, with the agreement of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Letters, Emel Dogramacı, and the Chairman of the Department of Economics, Osman Okyar, Haccetepe University was chosen as the site for the first international meeting. The meeting took place in Ankara in 1977.

Throughout the world since the Second World War the fields of social and economic history had emerged as areas of growing interest and concern for historians. Following the opening of the Turkish Archives after 1930 both in Turkey and in the Balkan countries a number of important studies relating to those fields were produced, and the social and economic aspects of Ottoman history began to be studied in greater depth. By bringing together researchers working in these fields a number of new areas for research were identified and the meeting served as a positive impetus for the further development of Ottoman studies. Subsequent meetings were held in Strasbourg (1980), Princeton (1983), Munich (1986), Istanbul (1989), and Aix-en-Provence (1992). To give permanence to these efforts and to encourage future research, we created an International Commission for the Social and Economic History of Turkey. The founding members of this commission were, apart from myself, Osman Okyar, Emel Dogramacı, Kemel Karpat, Bernard Lewis, Irene Mélikoff, William H. McNeil, Nikolai Todorov, and Immanuel Wallerstein.

My most recent project in the realm of Ottoman social and economic history has been to organize and edit a textbook designed to synthesize current research advances. As partners for this project, which, according to the original contract with the publishers (Cambridge University Press), was to cover the whole period from the beginning of the empire to its final collapse within

750 pages of text, I approached five well-known specialists working on specific periods of Ottoman History—Suraiya Faroqhi, Bruce McGowan, Donald Quataert, Mehmed Genc, and Halil Sahillioğlu. In the end, the last two members of the group withdrew from the project. I undertook to prepare the portion of the work covering the period 1300–1600, and Faroqhi, McGowan, and Quataert took on the responsibility for each of the successive centuries to the close of the nineteenth century. As a replacement for Sahillioğlu, Şevket Pamuk agreed to write the segment on Ottoman monetary history. After years in preparation the book has finally been completed and sent to the publishers. We hope that it will be ready for distribution in 1993. The book is on the one hand designed to answer some of the questions raised by Braudel in his now classic book on the Mediterranean world and on the other hand to correct, while at the same time complementing, the work of Wilhelm Heyd on the Levant trade. It is our belief that in this book we have convincingly demonstrated the important economic role played by the Ottoman empire in world history, a role which was until now either imperfectly understood or mostly overlooked.

Another project with which I am now involved as one of the chief responsibles is the *History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind* being sponsored by UNESCO. The fifth volume of this work, currently planned as a seven-volume set, covers the period 1500–1800. Professor Peter Burke from Cambridge University and myself are sharing duties as editors of the fifth volume, and we have already agreed upon the general plan for the volume. At present, approximately sixty percent of the chapters have been written and final publication is scheduled for 1996.

In addition to serving on the editorial boards of a number of journals, I have taken a personal role in founding and perpetuating two specialized journals devoted to Ottoman studies. The first of these is *Archivum Ottomanicum*, which I founded in 1969 together with Tibor Halasi-Kun (+1992), and the second is the *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, founded in 1980 together with Nejat Göyünç and Heath Lowry. These two journals are the only journals that are exclusively devoted to Ottoman studies as opposed to the more general context of Turcology or Turkish history. In the category of general journals covering all these fields the leading journals are *The Journal of Turkish Studies* (Cambridge, MA) under the joint editorship of Şinasi Tekin and Gönül Tekin; *International Journal of Turkish Studies* (Madison, WI); *Turcica* (Paris); and *Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları* (Istanbul, 1980–). In addition, *Türkologischer Anzeiger*, published annually in Vienna since 1975 under the directorship of Andreas Tietze, gives a comprehensive listing of worldwide publication on both Turcological and, more specifically, Ottoman-related subjects.



We are currently working on a project for the preparation of another kind of practical work designed for researchers wishing to conduct research in Ottoman history. Our plan is to prepare a work organized as a dictionary of Ottoman technical terms. The preparation of such a work has now become a necessity as the numbers of students and specialists concentrating their research on the Ottoman archives continues to grow. To start with I proposed to two distinguished Turkish colleagues, Cemal Kafadar of Harvard University and Nejat Göyünç of Konya University, that the three of us work together on this project. Later on Şinasi Tekin joined us. While taking note of the efforts of our predecessors in the field, such as Mehmed Zeki Pakalın, Midhat Sertoglu, and Reşat Ekrem Koçu, for our own work we plan also to incorporate into the volume the results of our own research over the years preserved on index cards.

## Part Five: America

In the years between 1943 and 1972 I taught Ottoman history at the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography at the University of Ankara. I became an assistant in 1942, was promoted to *doçent* in 1943, and became full professor in 1952. In 1956, in addition to my teaching at the Faculty of Languages, History and Geography, I also taught Ottoman administrative history and the history of the Turkish Revolution at the Faculty of Political Science, Ankara. On several occasions during this period I was invited to be a visiting professor at various American universities. I came to the School of International Affairs at Columbia University in 1953–54. In 1956 I was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship to spend one year as a research fellow at Harvard University; and in 1967 I spent one semester at the Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University.

Prior to 1971 I had never considered the possibility of moving permanently to the United States, but in 1971 the History Department at Harvard

University invited me to deliver two lectures, and the idea of my joining the department on a permanent basis was discussed. Around the same time, Professor Thomas Naff of the Department of Oriental Studies at the University of Pennsylvania invited me to join his department on a five-year contract, but because I had not yet made up my mind about leaving Turkey permanently I felt that I should not accept such a long-term offer. The next year, 1972, brought a very handsome offer from the University of Chicago as University Professor with responsibility in the Department of History for teaching and supervising research in Ottoman history. During the 1970s Turkey was in the throes of student riots sparked by the revolutionary left movement, and it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain order in the university classrooms. Guns were being shot off in the corridors, confrontations between the students and the police became a daily occurrence, and there were many student fatalities as well. During the time of the funeral processions for these students the Faculty was routinely closed and all academic work ground to a halt. In such an atmosphere, it became virtually impossible to carry out either teaching or research, and so I decided to broach the matter of leaving Turkey for America with my wife Şevkiye. Şevkiye and I had been married since 1945 and by that time she had become chair of the Arabic department at the Faculty and an established scholar in her own right. I knew that accepting the offer at Chicago would entail considerable sacrifice for her. When, however, she agreed to accompany me, I accepted the offer from Chicago and we moved to Hyde Park, taking with us our grandson Gökhan, who had been born two years earlier. From 1972 to present I have lived in Chicago, and having grown up in the densely urbanized environment of Istanbul, I quickly adjusted to life in one of America's big cities. My home near the shore of Lake Michigan is only 20 minutes walking distance from the University.

When we arrived the spirit of the history department at the University of Chicago was William McNeil, author of the *Rise of the West*. I had met this paragon of global historians twice previously at meetings in Venice and Madison, Wisconsin. It was McNeil's ambition to make the history department at the University of Chicago into a center where specialists representing all areas of the globe could gather, and with this view in mind it would have been unthinkable that Ottoman history should fail to be represented in the department's program of study. Among the other members of the department at that



time were Europeanists, such as the department chair, Karl Morrison, a specialist on Medieval European history; Erich Cochrane, a specialist on the Italian Renaissance; and Leonard Krieger, an expert on European intellectual history. The Asianists included Donald Lach, author of *Asia in the Making of Europe*, and the historian of China Ping-ti-Ho. This distinguished group of scholars gained Chicago's Department of History a reputation as one of the world's foremost centers for historical research. At Chicago it was possible to attend an interesting guest lecture delivered by an expert in the field nearly every day, and interdisciplinary work in social sciences was particularly encouraged through the medium of specialized seminars and the work of the Committee on Social Thought. Chicago's library, which contains over four million volumes, also acted as a stimulus to serious historical research. In my opinion developing nations should follow America's example in devoting resources to their libraries as a critically important stimulus to both education and modernization. The University of Chicago, as an institution which places primary emphasis on original research and publication, allows its professors the maximum degree of freedom in determining their teaching preferences and priorities. As a result, I was able to adjust my teaching schedule with a view to achieving harmony with my own current research interests, thereby widening the scope of my research to include new topics, while at the same time making optimal use of my spare time for publication activity. In my opinion the University of Chicago provides the ideal working environment for scholars. Following my retirement in 1986 I remained active at the university and continued to oversee the progress of my doctoral students' work. At the same time I have maintained close ties with my colleagues.

Turning now to the situation of Turkish Studies at the University of Chicago, it may be said that the beginnings of the program date from the academic year 1962–63, when Richard Chambers was first appointed to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. Shortly before my arrival at the University of Chicago, Fahir Iz had been invited to join the NELC as Professor of Turkish Language and Literature. After Professor Iz's retirement and departure from Chicago, he was replaced by Robert Dankoff, a productive expert in the field of Turcology. At the University of Chicago it has been possible for graduate students, after completing their elementary language training, to conduct original historical research using Ottoman sources.

During my years at Chicago I trained twelve such advanced graduate students and all of them conducted primary research in the Ottoman archives of Istanbul, wrote original doctoral theses, and now hold positions at a variety of universities. As they have progressed in their careers they continue to publish original scholarly contributions relating to the history of the Middle East during the Ottoman centuries. My primary goal in training these graduate students was always to prepare them as experts in Ottoman archival research, and my courses were always organized with that goal in mind. I made it a matter of principle to work very closely with my advanced doctoral students to ensure that they avoided the sad fate of some other so-called experts whose teachers and advisers allowed them to defend theses and even publish books knowing that their students command of Ottoman Turkish was only barely adequate.

In recent years the efforts at modernizing archive administration and the decision to liberalize access to the Ottoman archives has broadened the possibilities for conducting serious research into Ottoman history. Because these archives serve as the repository for the national histories of more than twenty countries that have emerged from the former empire, it seems inevitable that the most important universities will want to create or maintain positions for Ottomanists within the general framework of historical studies.

We have noted with regret a recent trend at some universities where Ottoman studies and Turcology have been eliminated for financial reasons. Unfortunately, at my own institution, the University of Chicago, the position I had occupied was allocated to other fields and at present Ottoman studies is not being maintained at its former level. This is a particularly unfortunate development since a solid infrastructure for Ottoman studies had been created during my tenure at the University of Chicago. Particularly noteworthy in these developments was the creation of an important collection of Ottoman documents for researchers. The core of the collection was contributed by the late Professor Alexandre Bennigsen, who brought with him to Chicago an impressive number of microfilms from the Başbakanlık and Topkapı Sarayı archives. To this fund I added microfilms of a number of documents and manuscripts that I had collected over the years in the libraries and archives of Turkey. After photo-duplication, binding, and classification of this material, the university's library was enriched by a collection of Ottoman documents and historical manuscripts. It may be said without exaggeration that the collection of Ottoman documents now housed at Chicago's Regenstein Library constitutes one of the richest sources for research on Ottoman history outside Turkey. Using this material it would be possible to write any number of doctoral theses. At present the archive is being used by students and professors who make research visits to Chicago from all parts of the United States.



Apart from this archival material, Regenstein Library also houses one of America's richest collection of printed books in Ottoman and modern Turkish. In view of all this effort at building up a program of Turkish studies at the University of Chicago, it would have been unthinkable to abandon it or allow it to languish. Some of my colleagues at the university who shared this sentiment began serious efforts to raise endowment funds to found a chair in Ottoman Studies. Through a matching funds agreement, whereby half the money will be supplied by the Turkish government and the other half by the University of Chicago, a decision to create such a chair has recently been reached. Both the university's president, Hanna Gray, and the former Prime Minister of Turkey, Turgut Özal, gave their personal approval to these undertakings, and some significant progress towards the goal of funding this chair has already been made.

One of the intellectual traditions of the University of Chicago is the emphasis it places on interdisciplinary research and contacts. My own appointment at the university was principally in history, but I was also a member of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures and took an active interest in their activities. Within this department the languages and cultures of all the Middle Eastern countries from ancient Egypt and the civilizations of Mesopotamia to those of the present day are all taught. Collaboration with both students and faculty from this department has been of great benefit to me, and occasionally we have conducted joint seminars on closely related areas of research. For me one of the most interesting of these joint seminars was the comparative study of palace organization in the premodern societies of the Middle East. From the work of this seminar it emerged that some of the main features of palace organization, such as the division into male and female residential quarters, can be traced as a continuous tradition as far back as ancient Mesopotamia. In my opinion, neither the Ottoman empire, nor for that matter the Umayyad or Abbasid caliphates, can be properly understood and explained without reference to ancient Mesopotamian and Iranian civilizations.

These ancient civilizations bear a close affinity to their historical successors in many areas, such as concepts of state and kingship, taxation and landholding, traditions of urbanism and trading practices and, more generally, economic philosophy and social structure.

One of the most unforgettable memories of my two decades at the University of Chicago relates to the visit from Turkey of a group of sufis belonging to the Halveti order. Led by their *sheykh*, Muzaffer, a group of more than twenty dervishes gathered in the university's chapel to witness a performance of the *sema* ritual of dancing and worship. For the occasion the chapel was filled with students and other observers. When the rituals were completed, *sheykh* Muzaffer joined some of the audience at a different location to respond to their questions. Some of the *sheykh's* disciples, both American and German, were also present. As the questioning began, the limits of Muzaffer's understanding of Islamic mysticism and sufi philosophy were soon revealed. Muzaffer's actual profession was bookseller at Istanbul's central book market, and his grasp of some theological concepts was not that profound. During the question and answer session he faltered a bit in some of his responses and finally lost his temper. Despite this momentary embarrassment, however, the evening as a whole was a great success and remains as one of my most truly memorable experiences at the university. The dervishes' cries in their repeated invocation of God's name reverberated off the chapel's ceiling filling the air with spiritual intensity, and I was genuinely moved. It struck me that such an event taking place in America's heartland could only have transpired through the miraculous intercession of the Prophet Muhammad himself.

Two of the most memorable and significant scholarly meetings that I participated in during my years at Chicago were the colloquium on slaves and slavery jointly organized by myself, Ralph Austen, and J. Coatsworth, and the conference on the age of Süleyman the Magnificent organized by myself and Richard Chambers. The latter conference was organized as an international symposium and the conference papers are currently in the process of being published.

I met my future wife Şevkiye when we were both studying Arabic at the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography in Ankara. We were married in 1945, and in 1948 our daughter Günhan was born. A little more than twenty years later she gave birth to our grandson Gökhan. In 1989 my wife Şevkiye



passed away. She had been not only a life's companion to me but also a colleague in scholarship and work partner. After completing her studies in Arabic language and literature, she became a faculty member and later department chair of the program in Arabic language and literature at the Faculty of Languages, History, and Geography at the University of Ankara. She prepared a scholarly edition of the *Layla wa Majnun* stories of Kays ibn Mulawwah and prepared an unpublished doctoral thesis on passages from the Arab chronicles relating to the Ottomans.

♦ ♦ ♦

In the foregoing I have described in my own words my life and accomplishments and failures in accordance with the Turkish proverb: "Şeyhin kerâmeti kendinden menkûl." (All the great deeds of the shaykh are related by the shaykh himself.)

# Paths to the Middle East

## Ten Scholars Look Back

**Edited and compiled by Thomas Naff**

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To R. Bayly Winder and Albert Hourani, two who led the way