

Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860–1950

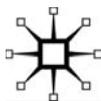
This Page Intentionally Left Blank

Ottoman/Turkish Visions of the Nation, 1860–1950

Dođan Gürpınar

Assistant Professor, Istanbul Technical University

palgrave
macmillan



© Doğan Gürpınar 2013

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2013 978-1-137-33420-6

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No portion of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, Saffron House, 6–10 Kirby Street, London EC1N 8TS.

Any person who does any unauthorized act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2013 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of St Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

Palgrave® and Macmillan® are registered trademarks in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and other countries

ISBN 978-1-349-46263-6 ISBN 978-1-137-33421-3 (eBook)
DOI 10.1057/9781137334213

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources. Logging, pulping and manufacturing processes are expected to conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

A catalog record for this book is available from the Library of Congress.

Contents

<i>Preface and Acknowledgments</i>	vi
Introduction	1
1 The Encounter with the Ottoman Heritage: Imperial Grandeur, Medieval Decay, and Double Discourses	21
2 The Encounter with the Islamic Past: Turks, Arabs, and Persians	68
3 Anatolia's Eternal Destiny was Sealed: Seljuks of Rum in the Turkish National (IST) Imagination from the Late Ottoman Empire to the Republican Era	106
4 The Depiction of European Feudalism, the Middle Ages, and the Crusades in Late Ottoman and Turkish Republican Imagery: The Constitutive Other of an Emerging Identity	135
5 From 'Renewal and Regeneration' to 'Decline and Collapse': The Rise and Fall of Tanzimat (1839–1950)	164
6 Infusing the Young Spirits with the Motivation to Oppose and Counter Oppression: Revolution and the French Revolution	191
Conclusion	223
<i>Notes</i>	228
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	284
<i>Index</i>	295

Preface and Acknowledgments

This book is in many aspects a personal endeavor. My first book in English pursued the historical origins of the mind-set prevalent among the retired diplomats who emerged as public intellectuals, especially on foreign policy issues. This attitude enjoyed great popularity among the Turkish upper-middle class in the 2000s and was known as *ulusalcılık*, secular neo-nationalism. Likewise, this book's origins lie in my childhood and my first historical readings and encounters. Being a curious child and particularly enamored of history, my first historical readings consisted of epic histories of Ottoman and pre-Ottoman Turkish polities.

As I subscribed to a liberal democratic vision in my late teens and early twenties after abandoning mainstream (and childish and naïve) Atatürkism (a nationalist worldview almost exclusively shared by the Turkish upper-middle classes), I converted to the revisionist school of historiography that repudiates the national(ist) myths. Nevertheless, I remained unconvinced by the wholesale renunciation of nationalist historiography as merely a sham, a view especially prevalent in leftist circles. Due to my childhood fascination with history and the epic nature of this 'history for children', I was troubled by the crude mockery of nationalism as mere chauvinism. Personally experiencing the captivating nature of the national iconography in persuading and converting people, I disagreed with the dominant postulate that perceives nationalism and officially-imposed historiography as forthright indoctrination.

Knowing how captivating this epic historiography was, I perceived nationalism as a deeply entrenched mental cosmology addressing and satisfying the needs of its target group rather than an artificial ideology imposed from without. I maintained that people were not passive onlookers but active participants/agents in endorsing this outlook. Moreover, a passion for history was an essential and even indispensable part of this cosmology and the normalization of the nationalization process. It was the historical iconography that had converted people to nationalism. The relationship and emotional bond people forged with history is multilayered. On one hand, given its vulgar, banal, and xenophobic aspects, it is hollow. On the other hand, it betrays an existential quest for those who need to attach themselves to an imagined

community and shared past; it represents an escape from the utter meaninglessness and unprincipledness of today. Today's apathy and mediocrity become valor, glory, and splendor in the immemorial past.

In this book I will try to outline the molding of a national imagery that had been constructed beginning from the late Ottoman habitus and accelerated in the early Republic. I opted to end the study in 1950, maintaining that the building blocks of nationalist imagery had been erected by then. The study addresses the emergence of academic historiography and its popular consumption in the late Ottoman Empire among the Muslim/Turkish intellectuals and in the public sphere. It examines a time span in which there existed no strict boundaries between scholarly and popular history. It ends at a time when popular history and the scholarly study of history began to diverge. This is a book that hopes to contribute to the newly-developing field of the history of historiography. It is also inspired by the new studies of nationalization that examines manifestations of nationalism and nationalization in different walks of life and nationalization of the past.

However, regardless of its scholarly nature, this book is also personal in many regards. It is a tribute to my bygone childhood memories. My thanks go, of course, to many with whom I shared personal and intellectual exchanges. The fascination of İlkan Dalkuç with historical images, symbols, and metaphors, and his political wit and satire furthered my inspiration and enriched this book. Ceren Kenar's intellectual rigor combined with her political fervor also inspired this book in many ways. Erkan Şen, Yıldırım Oğur and others in *Young Civilians* inspired me in casual discussions and jokes, knowingly or unknowingly. Usually, it is these casual academic chats, discussions, and exchanges of views that inspire and improve academic books. For me and for this particular area of study, the chats and conversations I had with my politically-committed comrades stimulated my inspiration. Their political humor and wit in mocking the vainglorious excesses and sacred meanings attributed to history contributed mightily to this work. I am also grateful for the professionalism of Palgrave Macmillan and especially the care and kind assistance of Jenny McCall and Holly Tyler, who deserve credit for their support. The language revision was undertaken by James Connell, who was extremely helpful and generous.