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Cradle or crucible

Anatolia and archaeology in the early years of the Turkish Republic (1923–1938)

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ABSTRACT

The Turkish History Thesis of the 1930s played an influential role in the construction of the discipline of archaeology in the early years of the Turkish Republic. The Thesis argued that the Turks belonged to a high culture that brought civilization to many parts of the world through episodes of migration from their original homeland in Central Asia. Following the launch of the first series of state-supported excavations in 1933, the arguments of the Thesis took on more specific forms. Two important points were made, mainly through the help of archaeology, as well as linguistics and anthropology. First, the Thesis argued that Anatolia became the real Turkish homeland during migrations from Central Asia, and it hoped archaeology would confirm this by demonstrating Anatolia's identity as Turkish since prehistoric times. Second, as an alternative to the Orientalist discourse that viewed European civilization as having originated in Mesopotamia and Greece, Turkish archaeologists offered a new version of the origins of civilization that highlighted Central Asia and Anatolia. Believed to be the positivistic science of history, archaeology was able to convey powerful messages for framing the exclusiveness of national unity as

well as the inclusiveness of the nation-state in the international arena. This article discusses the image of Anatolia and its reciprocal relationship with archaeology in the early years of the Turkish Republic.

KEYWORDS

Anatolia ● ethnicity ● heritage ● history of Turkish archaeology ● Kemalism ● Turkish History Thesis ● Turkish nationalism

■ NATIONALISM, ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE TURKISH CASE

The collapse of the Ottoman territorial and dynastic control in the Near East during the later nineteenth century created an unusually problematic geography upon which many conflicting colonialist, imperialist and nationalist agendas have been practiced (Larsen, 1996; Meskell, 1998; Trigger, 1984). While the Eurocentric concepts of 'civilization' and 'historical destiny' were reconfigured by western powers reshaping the political map of the Near East (Bahrani, 1998; Scheffler, 2003), in many cases, the newborn nation-states of the region utilized the colonialist concepts for their new nationalistic agendas. By preserving the concepts of 'nation' and 'national destiny' implied in colonialist discourses, it became possible for the new nation-states [0]to argue for a reassertion of ancient lines of descent and to reinstate claims to cultural property (Hamilakis, 1996; Scott, 2002; Silberman, 1995).

Whereas the relationship between nationalism and archaeology in the Near East has been a widely consumed topic, the case of the Turkish Republic, the direct descendant of the Ottoman Empire, has not been critically evaluated. Any study of the issue would require developing an understanding of the literature on nationalism on the one hand, while tackling the issues specific to Kemalist notions of the Turkish nation-state on the other. In approaching the problem from a theoretical perspective, Hobsbawm (1990: 14) reminds us that nations are intrinsically modern constructs in terms of both their historical introduction and their academic treatment. The modernity typical of the implied concepts of this construct has been summed up by Kedourie (1960: 9):

that humanity is naturally divided into nations, that nations are known by certain characteristics which can be ascertained, and that the only legitimate type of government is national self-government.

Following Hobsbawm and Kedourie, nationalist discourses can be framed as modern appeals to becoming a historically, culturally and

territorially united community. According to Anderson (1991), imagining such a bounded, homogeneous and historically continuous community had only become a possibility through the innovative use of maps, censuses and museums in the nineteenth century. By the end of the First World War, the power void created by the wide-scale collapse of religious and dynastic territorial control in Europe and the Middle East had already been filled by the nation-states. Today, nationalism remains the most powerful rhetoric for attempts to demarcate political communities, claim rights of self-determination and legitimate rule by reference to 'the people' of a country (Calhoun, 1993: 211).

Furthermore, claims to nationhood are not simply internal claims for constituting a distinctive political community; they are also claims to certain rights within a world-system of states (Calhoun, 1993: 216; Wallerstein, 1991: 91–106). Since the nineteenth century, the flourishing archaeological discourses of modernity have often provided powerful mediums to convey messages for framing both the exclusiveness of national unity and the inclusiveness of the nation-state in the international arena. Thus, archaeology, the positivistic science of history, has assumed central importance in nationalist narratives due to its double potency in providing the factual basis for the mythic images of a nation's past on the one hand, as well as the keys for locating its national histories within the universal history of civilizations on the other.

In this context, the birth of nationalist discourses in Turkey can be viewed as a product of the conditions that controlled the demise of the Ottoman Empire during the latter part of the nineteenth century. In an attempt to salvage the collapsing Empire, Ottoman intellectuals advocated a modernization project as the only means by which the state could stand firm against the technological and cultural hegemony of the West. As the ideological framework of the Turkish Republic, Kemalism reinterpreted this long-standing modernization project as a pragmatic process of 'Westernization' based upon the European ideals of ethnic nationalism, positivism and secularism (Ersanlı, 2006: 105).

The specific path taken by the nationalist discourses in the foundational years of the Turkish Republic was a product of the particular sensitivities and attitudes of the government, shaped by the social and political circumstances of the First World War. At the end of the conflict, Greeks, Armenians, Kurds and other ethnic components of the defunct Ottoman State allied themselves with European powers negotiating a new political map of the Near East. Their claims were legalized by the Treaty of Sèvres, signed on 10 August 1920 between the Allied Forces (excluding the United States) and the Ottoman Empire. However, the Turkish War of Independence, through the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the chief commander of the war and later the first president of the Turkish Republic, resulted in an unexpected victory. The Lausanne Treaty, signed between the Allied Forces and the Grand National Assembly of Turkey on 24 July 1923,

drew the borders of the new Turkish Republic, which was formally established on 29 October 1923. Lausanne nullified the Treaty of Sèvres, thus putting an end to the territorial claims of the various ethnic groups in Anatolia.

However, the attitude of mutual distrust that had sprung up among the various ethnic groups during the war years became influential in the ideological formation of the new Turkish Republic. In the 1930s, Turkey was far from being composed of a single homogeneous ethnic unit. Statistical studies indicated an overwhelming linguistic and religious variety existing within the borders of the Turkish state in 1935 (Çağaptay, 2003: 259–61). In response to this situation, the Kemalist regime favored a discourse of an ethnically united nation and employed a particular understanding of Turkishness as the foundational character of this ethnicity. Turkishness was formulated as the dominant culture and national character of the new nation. Mustafa Kemal dictated the common elements of Turkishness to Afet İnan,¹ one of the most influential personalities in the formation of the so-called Turkish History Thesis, as follows:

- 1 Political unity
- 2 Linguistic unity
- 3 Geographical unity
- 4 Genealogical unity
- 5 Historical ties
- 6 Moral ties (İnan, 1930: 13)

A strong emphasis was placed on language as the main element of this national character. It was believed that the Turks had preserved their national identity and culture since prehistoric times through the agency of the similarly preserved Turkish language. In the words of Mustafa Kemal, those who spoke the Turkish language possessed membership in the Turkish nation:

Language is the most important attribute of a nation. Those who consider themselves to have membership in the Turkish nation, before and above anything else must speak Turkish. It would not be just to believe, if those who do not speak Turkish assert that they belong to Turkish culture and society. (Arar, 1981: 23–4)

■ KEMALISM AND THE TURKISH HISTORY THESIS

Configured within this ideological context, the ties between the Kemalist notions of nationalism and history are best represented in the Turkish History Thesis, which was formulated in a 606-page book titled *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* [*The Main Tenets of Turkish History*], published in



1930. *The Main Tenets of Turkish History* was commissioned by the members of the *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti*, the Turkish Historical Research Society, who were personally appointed by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Among the authors were influential historians, bureaucrats and ideologues, such as Yusuf [Akçura], Samih Rifat [Horozcu], Reşit Galip, Afet [İnan], Mehmed Tevfik [Bıyıkoğlu], Hasan Cemil [Çambel], Sadri Maksudi [Arsal], Şemseddin [Günaltay], Yusuf Ziya [Özer] and Vasif [Çınar] (İnan, 1939; İnan et al., 1930).

The Turkish Historical Research Society was established in April 1930 as a function of the *Türk Ocakları*, the Turkish Hearths movement, which had been initiated in 1911, and established as an association in 1912, in an effort to develop and spread an understanding of Turkish identity among the populations of the collapsing Ottoman Empire. The ideologies developed within the Turkish Hearths focused mainly on salvaging the collapsing Empire through irredentist and imperialist agendas. Amidst diverse ideas, the ideology of *Turan*, a symbol of the pan-Turkist movement, soon became the most popular; however, the ideology of the Turkish War of Independence and the new Turkish State was based on a contrary claim, which argued that a nation could only be possible within realistically defined state borders.

As part of an ideological rehabilitation process of the Kemalist regime, the Turkish Hearths were closed on 10 April 1931. However, the Turkish Historical Research Society was allowed to continue as an independent research facility and was re-established on 3 October 1935 as the *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, the Turkish History Association. The Association was responsible for the protection of the assets of Turkish history and the distribution of knowledge produced from these assets through the combined efforts of the authorities, specifically *Halkevleri*, the People's Houses, an institution established by the Republican People's Party, the ruling party of the single-party regime. In addition, the Association was also placed in charge of establishing the *Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti*, the Turkish Linguistic Research Society, a committee that would function as a supporting unit, which, through its comparative linguistic studies, would highlight the importance of Turkish among other languages.

The Historical Society's work program was communicated to Afet İnan by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and included the following questions:

- 1 Who were the indigenous people of Turkey?
- 2 Who established the first civilization in Turkey and how?
- 3 What is the role of Turks in the history of world civilizations?
- 4 The Turks' success in Anatolia cannot be explained by basing it on the legendary tribal story of the Oğuz Turks. Accordingly, a different explanation is necessary to explain the formation of state in Anatolia.
- 5 What is the real identity of Islam? What was the role of Turks in the history of Islam? (İnan, 1939, 1947; Karal, 1946)

In response to Mustafa Kemal's research agenda, the Turkish History Thesis asserted that the Turks were an ancient and glorious brachycephalous race similar to the European races and had established a glowing civilization around an inland sea in Central Asia. As ecological circumstances caused this sea to dry out, the Turks left Central Asia in waves and brought civilization to other parts of the world. China in the east, India in the south, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, Anatolia, Greece and Italy in the west were all civilized through these migrations. As a result of their westward migrations, Anatolia had been a second homeland to the Turks since prehistoric times. Because the Turks were the main foundational element of all major civilizations, all Anatolian civilizations, both ancient and modern, must also be related to the Turks (İnan et al., 1930, 1931).

The Main Tenets of Turkish History was compiled in a matter of months, and 100 copies were distributed for preliminary reading among the established intellectuals and academics of the time (Uzunçarşılı, 1939). Due to a lack of sufficient data to support the major arguments, it was considered unsuccessful, and a shorter version called *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları: Methal Kısmı* [Introduction to the Main Tenets of Turkish History], was published in 1931 (İnan et al., 1931). A total of 30,000 copies of this version were distributed and immediately accepted as a foundational work for history taught in middle and high schools (Ersanlı, 2006: 119–25). Both publications preserved the essence of the main arguments of the Thesis, and the People's Houses promptly initiated a program to spread these teachings through its publications and other activities.

The primary endeavor of the Turkish History Thesis was to prove the Turkish nation to be the equal of European nations by uncovering the genealogical relationship that was expected to reside in the racial and linguistic origins of the Turks and the Europeans, which was believed to be located in the steppes of Central Asia. On this note, the reactionary racial emphasis should not be confused with the philosophy and agenda of other systematic racist politics of the time; its real agenda was to disprove the image of Turks as a secondary Mongoloid race, a subject that held Mustafa Kemal's personal interest. [0]In response to this view of the Turks as inferior, which was routinely purported in certain publications of the time (Timur, 1984), the Thesis argued that the Turks in Anatolia were related neither to the Mongoloid race nor to the other Near Eastern races: Turks were a brachycephalous race, just like the Europeans.

Furthermore, the emphasis on the Turkic ethnic identity of prehistoric Central Asia and Anatolia would suggest a claim to possess the primordial roots of European civilization. By this argument, the project of Westernization would redefine itself as a process of return to indigenous roots. Thus, the entire modernization process was perceived as a rediscovery of the forgotten national identity of the Turks.

The secondary endeavor of the Thesis was to break off ties with the Ottoman and Islamic past and support a secular Turkish identity (Baykal,

1971: 539). The new regime desired to distance itself from Ottoman history, and it emphasized this distance strongly through secularism. In order to demonstrate that Turkish history was not merely about Islam, major emphasis was placed on the pre-Ottoman, specifically the prehistoric, cultures of Central Asia and Anatolia.

The third endeavor was to register the ownership of Anatolia by both western nations and ethnic components of the Turkish Republic. In this respect, the stress on prehistoric times assumed a new task: to demonstrate the cultural continuity in Anatolia by proving that the people of the Turkish Republic today and the prehistoric peoples of Anatolia were genealogically related. Proving the existence of Turks in Anatolia since prehistoric times was seen as instrumental in affirming the territorial rights of the Turkish state against other ethnic groups. This argument was expected to finalize the verdict against the territorial claims of the Greeks, Italians, Armenians and Kurds (İnan, 1939, 1947a; Karal, 1946).

The Main Tenets of Turkish History and *Introduction to the Main Tenets of Turkish History* were both based on a superficial compilation of secondary sources. The upcoming agenda was to ascertain and support the ideas presented in the Thesis through original research. With this in mind, the First and Second Turkish History Congresses assembled in 1932 and 1937, respectively (Ersanlı, 2006: 139).

■ THE FIRST TURKISH HISTORY CONGRESS

The First Congress was held from 2–11 July 1932. The majority of participants were middle- and high-school history teachers. Mustafa Kemal, the authors of the Thesis and several established Turkish academics were present throughout the Congress. Because there had been insufficient time to conduct original research between the compilation of the Thesis and the Congress, the emphasis focused on disseminating general doctrines at a national level. As the foreword of the *Main Tenets of Turkish History* clearly explained, the primary goal of the Thesis was to educate the Turks with the right thoughts:

Until now, the role played by Turks in world history has been underrated through deliberate or inadvertent efforts in the history books published in our country and in the French history books that form the basis of the Turkish books. Acquisition of such incorrect information by Turks has been damaging to the development of Turkish self-identity and consciousness. The actual purpose aimed for in this book is to repair the damage of these mistakes on the consciousness of our nation, which has now resumed its natural position in the world. At the same time, this is a first step in

remedying the need to write a national history for the Turkish nation, whose sense of consciousness and unity has awakened after recent major events. Through this effort, we wish to open up the path to the depths of our nation's creative ability, to reveal the mystery of Turkish genius and character, to demonstrate to Turks their attributes and potential and to explain our national development in terms of our ties to deep racial roots. We do not claim to have written that much-needed Grand National history yet; however, we point out a general direction and a target for those who would conduct studies on the subject.

With this book, the audiences we wish to educate with correct thoughts and vision are the Turks. Our primary ideal is to liberate Turks from faulty thoughts immediately. It is for this reason that we wanted to disseminate our ideas as soon as possible. We have left the detailed research on documents written in various languages and investigation of other sources for future works. (Inan et al., 1930: 2)

The majority of the presentations at the First Congress were built around establishing the importance of the Turks as a civilization-building nation worthy of other civilized nations. One of the first presentations, given by Afet [Inan], concentrated on finding a satisfactory explanation for the identity of the indigenous populations of Central Asia. Inan's arguments included ethnic themes, yet her main critique was against the European-centered civilization theory:

Many European scholars consider some Central Asian tribes to be their ancestors and to have carried civilization to every part of humanity and Europe, throughout prehistoric and historic times. They differentiate the people of the Altai-Pamir Plateau, whom they call Arians, Indo-Europeans or Indo-Germans.

One way or another, these views may find support; however, there is an aspect that is untrue, and that is to forget, or to cause one to forget, that the real mother race of those civilized peoples' who spread about the world is the Turkish family.

The indigenous people of Central Asia are the Turks. Therefore, it would be against nature to attempt to create a different Indo-European race separated from the great Turkish family. The sensible and human thing to do would be to recognize the race, which nature created in the Central Asian steppes, and respect its name.

It is also necessary to acknowledge one more thing, and that is the fact that our ancient Hittites, our ancestors, were the first indigenous owners of our country. Thousands of years ago, they established this land as their homeland, instead of their motherland [in Central Asia]. They transported the center of the Turks from the Altai Mountains to Anatolia and Thrace. The unbreakable rocks of this homeland are among the unshakable foundations of the Turkish Republic. (Inan, 1932: 40)



Although influenced by the mythic importance of the Central Asian steppes in the migration epic of the Turks, the new Kemalist imagination of Central Asia was by no means related to the formerly popular pan-Turkist ideals. The Kemalist state was based on the establishment of a system of central authority within the territorially defined borders of the Turkish Republic. This system was shaped by a strong opposition toward irredentist ideologies such as pan-Turkism and pan-Islamism. Central Asia was simply a convenient geography to support all the arguments. Some popular studies of the time indicated that the indigenous prehistoric homeland of brachycephalous races should be searched for in Central Asia (Pumpelly, 1908; Stein, 1928/1981). Furthermore, some European researchers argued that the prehistoric cultures of Central Asia constituted the origins of Indo-European or Arian cultures (Pittard, 1943). Turkish researchers positioned this knowledge in a different direction by realigning it with the historically known origins of the Turks in Central Asia, which in fact dated back merely to the sixth century AD. Despite the lack of any reliable evidence between prehistoric times and the sixth century, the indigenous population of Central Asia was a priori accepted as Turkic. Consequently, a genealogical relationship between the modern Turks, the brachycephalous Central Asians and the Indo-Europeans was possible. Viewed from this angle, the construction of a genealogical relationship between the Turks and the Indo-European speaking Hittites was not perceived as a fallacy at all. On the contrary, this paradoxical situation was seen as supporting evidence for proving the relationship between the Turks and the Europeans, both of whom were argued to have originated in Central Asia, the historically established homeland of the Turks.

Hasan Cemil [Çambel] put forward this idea in his presentation 'An Overall View on the Origins of the Aegean Civilization', with reference to the famous Turkish migration epic that involved stories of Turks as skilled ironworkers:

For example, the Aegean Civilization; the Hittite Civilization that settled and developed in Asia Minor; the Scythian Civilization that ran down from shores of Danube to our Achaeans; the Sumerian civilization that established its great center in Mesopotamia; and the Egyptian civilization that originated in the Delta, crossed the Mediterranean shores after rising to the Nile's waterfalls and brushing the Aegean basin with its waves, are civilizations that are all connected to each other like the links of a chain.

And the ends of this chain are to be found in the iron mines of Altai where the links were forged. (Çambel, 1932: 201)

Yusuf Ziya [Özer] supported Çambel's statements in his presentation 'The Relationship of Egyptian Religion and Gods to Turkish Culture':

All the tribes including Arians and Semites left the Turanian Plateau in the Neolithic times. Their primitive language was Turkish.

Despite the fact that these people generated diverse language forms due to differing lifestyles in differing climates and other potential reasons, the origins of the main language remained preserved. The reason for this was that their development was built upon common foundations.

And that is the reason for the connections and similarities between the two language groups. And that is the reason why Turkish is the mother of all Semitic and Arian languages. (Özer, 1932: 246)

Whereas the commanding aura of the First Congress called for the acceptance of the Thesis without questions, two major discussions created some turmoil. The first one was between Fuad [Köprülü], an established professor of history at İstanbul University, and Afet [İnan], a history teacher at the time and the leading supporter of the Turkish History Thesis. Köprülü pointed out that the earliest known historical mention of the Turks appeared in sixth-century Chinese sources, and he argued that İnan's emphasis on prehistoric racial and linguistic origins was impossible to prove due to lack of evidence. İnan responded emotionally to Köprülü's critique, stating that the Turks had always spoken Turkish since prehistoric times and that their Turkishness never depended on Chinese sources to bring them historical consciousness (Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, 1932: 51).

Perhaps the most prominent discussion had to do with the ecological circumstances in Central Asia during prehistoric times. A debate took place between a Thesis proponent, Dr Reşit Galip, and his critic Zeki Velidi [Togan], another influential professor of history at İstanbul University. Togan pointed out that the lack of evidence in some congress presentations was leading to major fallacies, particularly with regard to the time and location of the drought in Central Asia that was the supposed cause of the Turkish migrations. The arguments focused on two alternative interpretations of Aurel Stein's *Inner Most Asia* (1928/1981) and Raphael Pumpelly's *Explorations in Turkestan* (1908). According to Togan, the works of Stein and Pumpelly did not support the view that the Central Asian Inner Sea dried up within the period of conceivable human history. Reşit Galip's counter-argument was built on an emotional advocacy of the Thesis, which at times was imbued with offensive personal attacks on Togan's political and academic standing (Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, 1932: 167–93, 369–89).

■ ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE SECOND TURKISH HISTORY CONGRESS

Despite the fact that the First Turkish History Congress closed with an acceptance of the Turkish History Thesis, it was obvious that the main arguments could not withstand the critiques of professional historians. The



need for original research was more urgent than ever. Luckily, some methodological indicators for the direction of the future research were clarified in the conference. For example, it was expected that the relationship between the Turks and the Europeans would be constructed by proving the prehistoric racial connection between the two peoples. Future research was also expected to be able to support beyond a doubt all the major themes of the thesis, i.e. the Turkishness of Anatolia, a secular history, and equality between Turkish and European civilizations.

Immediately following the Congress, archaeology, as the positivistic science of history, assumed a position of priority among the other disciplines. In the Kemalist context, positivism was not necessarily perceived as a medium for the production of a flourishing democratic and critical philosophical environment. Rather, in an attempt to close the economic and cultural gap between Turkey and Europe, positivism was expected to expeditiously produce new technologies on the one hand and new rationales for a secular and nationalist discourse on the other (Ersanlı, 2006: 105).

When the First Turkish History Congress met in 1932, only a small number of archaeological excavations were being conducted in Anatolia, mainly by foreign teams concentrating on classical periods. In 1933, new excavation campaigns were launched with the full support of the Turkish Historical Society at the sites of Ahlatlıbel, Karalar and Göllüdağ. Subsequent work was conducted from 1935–7 at Alacahöyük, the Thracian Tumuli, Ankara Castle, Çankırıkapı, Etiyokuşu, Pazarlı, Sarayburnu and Karaoğlan. These excavations were commissioned to young Turkish experts with nationalist tendencies, such as Hamit Zübeyr Koşay and Remzi Oğuz Arık, who had received special government funding to study in Europe. In contrast to the earlier archaeological research conducted on Turkish territory, the primary focus during the 1930s was on finding the oldest civilizations in Anatolia.

As a discipline imported from the West, archaeology was the perfect medium of the modernization project. It could search for the Turks in the most ancient times, beyond the timeframe covered by the traditional – and presumably less scientific – methods employed by history. Evidence produced through archaeology and anthropometry would then be used to prove that the Turks had a very ancient and glorious history beyond their Islamic past. Establishment of the prehistoric existence of the Turks in Anatolia would purify Turkish nationalism from its Islamic tendencies, and the secular discourse supported by this finding would help to locate Turks within the civilized nations of the West.

By providing proof of the prehistoric existence of the Turks in Anatolia, archaeology was also the perfect discipline to certify to Anatolia's Turkishness. Demonstrating that Anatolia was the prehistoric Turkish homeland would both justify the Lausanne Treaty and serve the idea of an ethnically unified nation-state. Through its reliable scientific methods, archaeology

could transform the idealized images of the past into an ethnic reality (Smith, 1988: 181–2).

When the Second Turkish History Congress assembled in İstanbul on 20–25 September 1937 before a major international audience, the emphasis was indisputably upon archaeology. The opening speech was given by Saffet Arıkan, the minister of education, who praised the new methods that had enabled the construction of new ties to history. Minister Arıkan also declared the latest activities of the Turkish Historical Society to be based on the objective truth of scientific evidence provided by the positivistic methods of archaeology, anthropology and linguistics. Because these disciplines accounted for natural phenomena, Arıkan stated, they could thus provide more scientific and reliable interpretations for the just arguments of the Thesis (İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi, 1943: 2).

With the help of the newly conducted archaeological excavations, the focus of the Turkish researchers had been transformed from a general assertion of Central Asian origins to a purportedly more scientific discussion of Anatolia's prehistory. This discussion was carried out in terms of the ethnic identity and origin of the Anatolian pre-Hittite populations. Yet the intricate arguments of the congress presentations obscured the ethnic differences of Anatolia by their emphasis on its continuous Turkish identity since prehistory. This emphasis on Turkishness through time aimed to forge an image of Anatolia as the ethnically united geographical space of the nation-state.

The Thesis proponents held the common conviction that all of the different Anatolian civilizations stemmed from the same root in Central Asia, and should thus be considered in terms of different waves of migrations from this common homeland, rather than as separate entities. In a pioneering work conducted under the personal directive of Atatürk, Afet İnan collected anthropometric measurements from a remarkable number of 64,000 individuals in Anatolia and Thrace within a matter of months (İnan 1941, 1947b). She later presented this study as her PhD Thesis at Geneva University in 1939, under the supervision of Eugene Pittard.

With her presentation at the Second History Congress, İnan now believed that she possessed the scientific data capable of supporting the argument that the Turks belonged to a brachycephalous race, just like the Europeans. Furthermore, based on the measurements of Hittite skulls, she emphasized Anatolia as a land that had always preserved its Turkish racial characteristics (İnan, 1943: 8–15). İnan's arguments were supported by those of Professor Şevket Aziz Kansu, who claimed that when the Oğuz Turks arrived in Anatolia in 1071 they were simply reuniting with their Turkish brothers.

The Oğuz-Seljuk Turks, who arrived in Anatolia in historical times, followed the path of proto-Turks who had migrated from Central Asia to the West earlier and in prehistoric periods.



The Oğuz-Seljuk Turks did not transform the racial composition of Anatolia, as it is often claimed. Anthropological and archaeological evidence indicate that Anatolia, from eastern Anatolia to the Aegean coast, had been settled by Alpine proto-Turks since proto-historic times, before the Seljuk Turks arrived. (Kansu, 1943b: 456)

Eugene Pittard, the honorary chair of the Congress, seemed to support these arguments. Based on Raphael Pumpelly's work, Pittard believed that the primordial roots of Neolithic civilizations would be found in Turkestan (Pittard, 1943: 65–84). Furthermore, he supported the argument that there had been waves of migrations from Turkestan to the West and that the Neolithic inhabitants of Europe must have arrived through the passage provided by Anatolia. Whereas Pittard was ambivalent about the Turkishness of prehistoric Central Asia, Yusuf Ziya Özer carried Pittard's ideas further in support of the argument that Anatolia was a second homeland to the Turks (Özer, 1943: 124). Özer argued that the proto-Turks and the proto-Hittites were of the same element and this unified cultural background allowed the Hittite civilization to flourish successfully on Anatolian soil. Özer's implication was that despite their ethnic variety, all Anatolian peoples – the modern residents, as well as the most ancient ones – should be considered Turkish.

Most importantly, the archaeologically supported claims were now asserting Anatolia as the direct forerunner of the European, specifically the Aegean and the Mediterranean, civilizations. Arif Müfit Mansel from Istanbul University clarified this argument in his paper 'Achaean Problem in Aegean History':

It is observed that Anatolia became a second motherland to Central Asian tribes as a result of various migrations that took place throughout various periods. The majority of these waves moved toward the west and invaded Europe and the Aegean Basin among other places. (1943: 210)

A similar note was struck by Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, excavator of Alacahöyük, in his presentation of Alacahöyük's contribution to the history of civilization:

The Copper-Age culture of Alacahöyük seems to be related to pre-Scythian cultures of Southern Russia and Kuban culture on the one hand and Sumerian culture on the other hand, due to similarities with the Royal Cemeteries of Ur.

This culture can be detected in Eurasia's migrant people, and no doubt, the research so far indicates that the motherland for this primitive culture is Central Asia. Furthermore, this culture spread from China to Scandinavia and constituted an important step in the evolution of humanity.

In all respects, the ancient culture of Alacahöyük is related to the Turkish Culture due to its connections to the Central Asian culture. It is necessary to admit that the Turkish race was an agent in the creation and spread of human civilization and active during prehistory just as it was in history. This is our main view. (1943: 31–2)

In contrast to the First Congress, the Second Congress allocated no formal discussion time between presentations; however, this did not appear to prevent the communication of implied differences between the Turkish and European researchers. Interestingly, the international research community seemed to be discussing the identity of pre-Hittite Anatolia through a comparison of the excavations at Troy on the Turkish Aegean Coast and the excavations at the Hittite sites in Central Anatolia. Based on the differences detected, a cultural boundary between Western and Eastern Anatolia was evident for the international archaeological community.

Von der Osten, the excavator of Alişar, agreed with the Turkish researchers that Anatolia was under the influence of the brachycephalous Hittites in the third millennium BC. Nor did he dispute the similarities between the Hittites and the Sumerians and their common Central Asian origins. However, Von der Osten maintained that two separate cultural spheres had developed in pre-Hittite Anatolia – the center of Western Anatolian culture was Troy, whereas the locus of Central Anatolian culture should be searched for in the earliest levels of Alacahöyük, Alişar and Pazarlı (Von der Osten, 1943). Bittel, the excavator of Boğazköy, also supported the differences in Western and Central Anatolian cultures through a study of mortuary practices in prehistoric times (Bittel, 1943).

A comprehensive examination of the issue indicates that while everyone seemed to agree on the importance of Anatolia in prehistoric times, specifically the third millennium BC, there were reservations about Anatolia's ethnic identity and uncertainty as to its cultural boundaries. Some researchers agreed that the Aegean cultures might have been influenced by Anatolia in the third millennium, but felt the real focus should be on the second millennium, when Aegean culture asserted its superiority over Anatolia through colonization activity. Dr Marinatos, the director of the Heraklion Museum in Greece, focused on this claim in a presentation entitled 'Crete-Anatolia Relations during the Second Millennium BC' (Marinatos, 1943). As with many others, Marinatos paid tribute to Anatolia, stating: 'The cradle of humanity is Central Asia, but the cradle of culture is Anatolia' (1943: 170). However, by focusing on the colonization process in Anatolia during the second millennium, Marinatos' agenda was to posit that Greek culture carried Anatolian customs to a higher level. If one were to complete his above sentence with the clues provided from his presentation, the cradle of culture might be Anatolia, but the cradle of civilization was certainly Greece.

It was evident that even the most supportive international presentations did not accept the prehistoric ethnic identity of Anatolia and Central Asia as Turkish. For example, Brandenstein agreed that the Etruscans arrived in Italy from Anatolia (1943: 219) and indicated a common geography for the origin of Etruscans and Turks; however, he also firmly stated that Etruscans could not be viewed as a branch of Turks. Similarly, Dörpfeld, the excavator of Troy, evaded presenting any ideas about the ethnic



identity of Trojans by stating that the issue needed further archaeological evidence (Dörpfeld, 1943).

Hans Gustav Güterbock, a German professor of Hittitology at Ankara University, gave a presentation on the subject of history writing among the Hittites (1943). By pointing out the differences between the Hittite custom of history writing and other neighboring traditions, Güterbock argued against the idea of a common heritage between the Turks, the Sumerians and the Egyptians (1943: 181).

An explanation provided by Turkish History Thesis supporter Arif Müfit Mansel represents an attempt to develop the most complete counter-argument for the suspicions of the international community:

Toward 2000 BC, a Central Asian tribe called the Achaeans moved toward the West. One branch arrived in south Russia and the Crimean coast through a movement from the Caucasus to the North. It is probable that some parts of this branch penetrated into Thessaly and Greece by way of the Danube and the Balkans. However, a major branch occupied Eastern Anatolia. It split into two from here, and moved toward Syria on the one hand and southern and western Anatolia on the other hand. In addition to Anatolia, this branch occupied the islands of Cyprus, Rhodes and Sisam [Samos] and created a great civilization in the Aegean, after invading the Greek continent by way of the Cyclades. (Mansel, 1943: 195)

Perhaps the final words on the subject were to be found in Dr Koppers' (1943) comparison of 'the authentic Turkish' and 'the authentic Indo-German' lifestyles. While leaving a door open for the study of potential interactions between the two groups, Koppers firmly asserted that it would be wrong to rush to conclusions based upon the archaeological studies of Pumpelly. Koppers pointed out the difficulty of deriving an acceptable explanation for the ethnic identity of the cultures at Turkestan from the existing evidence. Accordingly, he concluded that the 'Turks' and 'Indo-Germans' should be studied as separate entities. His closing words merit attention:

In the end, the history of humanity and civilization reveals a grand drama, a grand world theater. One person alone cannot stage this drama. The roles must be divided, and doesn't there appear to be a mighty hand in the distribution of the roles? For the common good, one's role can not be more important than others'; and to play the roles well, one needs to collaborate instead of compete with the others. (1943: 665)

■ CONCLUSION

It became clear during the Second Turkish History Congress that archaeological evidence had transformed the arguments of Turkish researchers

from a general assertion of Central Asian roots to a supposedly more scientific discussion of the ethnic identity and civilizational superiority of Anatolia. On the one hand, the archaeologically supported claims indicated Anatolia as the homeland of the Turks since prehistoric times. On the other hand, Anatolia was presented as the direct forerunner of the European, specifically the Aegean and the Mediterranean civilizations. Accordingly, an outer image of Anatolia emerged as the cradle of European civilization, whereas a complementary inner image suggested a crucible of ethnic diversity, within which variety was melted down to unity.

A number of other activities attesting to this image were included in the Congress program, such as archaeological site visits and an exhibit at Dolmabahçe Palace. Specifically, the exhibit allowed the newly discovered truths of the Thesis to speak for themselves. The chronologically ordered display included a wide variety of objects from the Turkish excavations, as well as objects especially transported for the occasion from other countries. This variety would appear to emphasize the universal cultural heritage, yet the name of the exhibit itself would tell a different story. *‘Türk Tarihi ve Eserleri’* – ‘Turkish History and its Artifacts’ – was an attempt to register the civilization-building character of the Turks and their ownership of Anatolia since prehistoric times.

Whereas the Turkish researchers sincerely believed in the integrity of their arguments, they were also well aware of their shortcomings. Hoping that these shortcomings were merely technical in nature, researchers did their best to establish scientific support before declaring their conclusions before an international audience. This strategy was a product of the pragmatic nature of the Kemalist modernization project. An example of this strategy was also evident when the Sun Language Theory was exposed to the international community during the Third Turkish Language Society Congress in 1936, one year before the Second Turkish History Congress. As a supporting sister of the Turkish History Thesis, the Sun Language Theory argued that the Turkish language was the mother of all languages. Although Turkish linguists passionately advocated the Theory, the arguments did not find support among the international participants. Following this, the Theory was quickly abandoned.

From this perspective, one of the major aims of the Second Turkish History Congress was to test the validity of the archaeologically supported Turkish History Thesis before an international audience. However, the international community remained suspicious and resistant towards the arguments. Despite all the scientific efforts, the Second Turkish History Congress was the last international platform at which Turkish researchers supported the Thesis. Following the Second Congress, Mustafa Kemal’s health deteriorated quickly, and he died in November 1938. Moreover, in the political aftermath of the Second World War, as Turkey sought new alliances with the West, state support for the Turkish History Thesis was



withdrawn. This withdrawal weakened the ideological basis of Turkish archaeology and pushed the discipline into a long-term vacuum. In time, it was accepted that the Hittites and the populations of prehistoric Central Asia might not be Turkish after all.

Turkish archaeology has been transformed both methodologically and ideologically since the 1940s; however, this transformation continues to be shaped around the concept of Anatolia as its central issue. Archaeology in Turkey is often understood as 'Anatolian Archaeology', and the scope of its research remains within the aims of unearthing Anatolia's rich heritage and examining the regional character of the artifacts recovered. On this note, the critical literature on the history and problems of Turkish archaeology that has appeared within the last decade has mostly been concentrated on the bureaucratic and technical problems of the practice in Turkey (Özdoğan, 1998, 2001, 2006). More curiously, the same literature has commonly revered the legacy of the early Republican Turkish archaeological endeavor and the Kemalist concepts of Anatolia for having provided the foundations of the unbiased, democratic and pluralistic approach of Turkish archaeology today (Özdoğan, 1998, 2001, 2006; Özgüç, 1986; Pulhan, 2003). In this context, claims for the 'Turkishness' of Anatolia have been submerged under a discourse that highlights the uniquely plural nature of Anatolian heritage and the objective and democratic approach of the Turkish archaeological endeavor to this plurality. Whereas renewed appeals as to what Anatolia is or should be may be expected to provide conciliatory perspectives to the politics of heritage and identity debate in Turkey, the narrow focus on Anatolia leaves the scope and future of the discipline within a limited field of academic discourse.

In fact, this article grew out of a wider concern with the current state of Turkish archaeology and the need to develop an understanding of Mustafa Kemal's concept of Anatolia commonly referenced by those who share similar concerns. As formulated recently by Fotiadis (2006), 'the ease with which we recognize the historical documents as *ideologemes*, constitute a measure of the *historical distance* that separates us from them'. Within Fotiadis' framework, this article describes Kemalist notions of history in terms of the 'phantoms, figments, specters, mirages, dreams, or nightmares, all of which belong to the realm of ideology' (Fotiadis, 2006: 5–9).

In some sense, any text implies an ideologue. Hopefully, however, we try not 'to mistake fantasy for reality', as that is precisely what we associate with the realm of ideology (Fotiadis, 2006). After 80 years, 60 governments and three military interventions in the history of the Turkish Republic, it is difficult to put forward an objective account of what Mustafa Kemal really intended in his agenda for archaeology. What I have argued here is that the currently imagined concept of Anatolia attributed to Mustafa Kemal was not implemented during his lifetime in the early years of the Turkish Republic. I realize that the argument put forward here

conflicts with the fundamental concerns of objectivity and the place of politics within the discipline of archaeology in Turkey. Yet a clear distinction between archaeological endeavor and politics is impossible to imagine (Diaz-Andreu, 2001). Can archaeologists really stand aside, retreat to an empiricist position and claim that truth was/is being manipulated by others? Do archaeologists really hold such a privileged position outside of society and its ideological constructs? I argue that, if the false separation between political influence and value-free science continues to resonate, any critical re-evaluation of the very methods and assumptions of archaeology will be prevented from debate and development (Jones, 1997).

In 1882, Ernst Renan wrote that 'historical enquiry brings to light deeds of violence, which took place at the origin of all political formations, even those whose consequences have been altogether beneficial' (Renan, 1882/1990: 11). For this reason, historical studies often constitute a danger to the principle of unity existing in nationalist discourses. Undoubtedly, all past deeds were rational products of their respective historical contexts. Nevertheless, a mere acknowledgement of this fact is not enough to relieve us from our responsibilities in the present.

Notes

- 1 Square brackets indicate the surnames which were adopted in 1934.

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