



Book Review of *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks*

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Tessa Hoffman, Matthias Bjornlund, and Vasileios Meichanetsidis (editors), *The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks: Studies on the State-Sponsored Campaign of Extermination of the Christians of Asia Minor 1912-1922 and Its Aftermath: History, Law, Memory* (New York & Athens: Aristide D. Caratzas, publishing, 2011).

Rarely does a new publication raise both the serious study and public awareness of its subject to a new level. The volume under review is such a work. In recent years genocide scholars have increased their attention on the systematic state sponsored eradication of the historic Christian communities of Asia Minor by the Ottoman Empire and its successor state. Many scholarly works have appeared focusing on the fate of the Armenians during this period, but little has been written of a similar scope and quality concerning the Ottoman Greeks. The publisher, editors and contributors to this volume are to be congratulated for making a significant contribution to addressing this serious gap in the literature and providing scholars interested in investigating this subject with important studies, copious documentation, and visual and bibliographic aides. Moreover they have placed the historical information concerning Asia Minor Greeks into the theoretical and legal context of the field of genocide studies.

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The Genocide of the Ottoman Greeks presents a cohesive and well aligned overview of its subject, utilizing a wide variety of evidence drawn from official and unofficial documents from many countries in many languages. It has also brought together an international team of scholars whose previous individual specialized studies, in many cases, have not previously appeared in English. The scope of these studies is ambitious and in five-hundred and eight densely documented pages seeks to treat almost every aspect of this neglected subject.

In the introduction the editors tackle two important and interrelated questions as a framework for the specialized studies that follow. The first is why the genocide of the Asia Minor Greeks has been so little studied both as a subject within the context of modern Greek and Ottoman history and the growing field of genocide studies; and the second, is how the continued genocide denial on the part of Turkey has affected this neglect and resulted in a delay of its international legal recognition and study. As the editors point out, even in Greece the subject was not given widespread and official status until the 1990s. They also address the often repeated assertion that Turkish actions were the result of perceived military and political threats related to Greek irredentism by pointing out that similar massacres, expulsions, and persecutions had taken place well before either the Balkan wars or World War I and that victims should never be held accountable for the crimes of another state. It is also important to note that while the editors acknowledge the important contributions of Pontian Greeks to gaining an increased awareness and recognition of the genocide, they also caution against regionalism which results in a narrow focus and excludes what happened to Greeks in other areas.

The studies begin with a contribution by Israel W. Charney, a pioneer in genocide research, who describes the struggle to gain official recognition for the Greek genocide within the politics of the academic establishment and field of genocide studies. Tessa Hoffmann follows with a very detailed and masterful, overview of the historical context, utilizing a wide variety of primary sources. She points out that the term "holocaust" was applied by Europeans to describe the annihilation of Ottoman Christians as early as 1895 and was increasingly used in this context well into the following century. This usage as a synonym for anti-Christian destructive events disappeared as the minority was eradicated and was later applied to the destruction of European Jewry during World War II. Hoffman also provides a chronological framework for Ottoman state sponsored genocide activities, its various phases, pace and regional variations, and compares it to that of the Armenians. In her discussion of the statistical evidence, she estimates that approximately 1.5 million Ottoman Greeks were murdered between 1912-22.

The Hoffman article is followed by two studies that relate to the 1914 period. The first, by John Mourellos, is a revised version previously published in 1985 and concerns an early abortive attempt to effect an "exchange" of populations between Greece and Turkey, and the second, by Matthias Bjornlund, discusses the ethnic cleansing of Ionian Greeks as documented from sources drawn from the Danish archives. Not surprisingly, the Danish evidence supports information from many other primary sources that shows that the Ottoman state had deliberately decided upon a policy of violent Turkification designed to create a "Turkey for the Turks" by ridding itself of its unwanted minorities. A wide variety of sources including documents drawn from the Ottoman archives are used in the next study by Racho Donel, to document how the state created an apparatus, a Special Organization consisting of gangs of murderers and thieves for the carrying out of its genocidal plan. The destruction and burning of the cosmopolitan center of Smyrna is the subject of the next study. Written by Nikolaos Hlamides, it is an exceptional survey of the events leading up to Kemal's deliberate policy to destroy this hated symbol of foreign superiority and the subsequent uprooting of Anatolian Hellenism. Hlamides makes several British and Turkish eyewitness accounts available concerning what happened for the first time, and adds additional information documenting Turkish culpability for the massacres and fire to those contained in previous accounts. He also notes that photographic evidence coupled with eyewitness survivor testimonies confirm that a Japanese commercial vessel rescued Greeks. He also estimates that approximately 190,000 of the city's Christian inhabitants were killed, and places this statistic into the numerical context of the loss of life in all of Asia Minor. At the end of his survey Hlamides indicates that he is working on a new study concerning the statistical evidence concerning the magnitude of the Turkish crime in Anatolia, and given the quality of what he has presented concerning what Housepian has called the "Smyrna Affair," it will no doubt be a significant contribution. In fact, this author is given a special acknowledgement by scholarly contributors to the volume for his assistance and for making his rich collection of photographs available for research.

In contrast to that of Hlamides, the survey of the immediate political and military context of the Smyrna catastrophe by Matthew Stewart presents little new information, lacks detailed references to varied primary sources and is often based on general secondary works and surveys instead of specialized studies. For example, he relies on survey books by Richard Clogg, Stanford Shaw, and Philip Mansel, among others, for important pieces of information concerning statistics and factual details. Noticeably absent is any significant familiarity with the diplomatic and archival sources of the period which are almost exclusively accessed via secondary works. The single instance when Stewart directly refers to one of Horton's diplomatic documents he misattributes its original publication source.

Additionally, in what appears to be an awkward attempt to appear non-partisan, Stewart also repeatedly refers to Horton and Lovejoy's religious bias and seeks to appear balanced by mentioning Bristol's pro-Turkish leanings. Apparently, he is unaware that even Bristol considered Horton "fair and square" as Marjorie Dobkin-Housepian has documented for us in a detailed study of both men's roles during this period.

Stewart also errs when (p. 259, footnote.t 43) he attributes a quotation from a British eyewitness to an "anonymous account written contemporaneously and handed to British seaman Henry Shonfield, published online in August 2004 by *History Today*..." One can find the same quotation given in a fuller context in the Hlamides article (page 211) with a reference to its source as: "Smyrna September 1922 memoire of Charles J Howes, 86/14/1, Department of Documents, Imperial War Museum, London." Without having checked the document myself, I am inclined to believe that the Hlamides attribution must be the correct one. Although, Stewart gives a straightforward account of the complex international political situation, the Greek political context is missing and Greek atrocities are emphasized without any significant discussion of their Turkish counterparts. As highlighted by Hoffman in her article, the extensive record of Turkish massacres and deportations played an important part in the humanitarian argument for the Greek occupation which led to initial Allied support. In short, the reader is advised to use the Stewart study with caution.

The next two articles deal with two important relief efforts to aid the Ottoman Greeks both before and after WWI. The first by Harry Psomiades, is a slightly revised version of an earlier article that deals with the activities of the American Near East Relief. Psomiades uses archival and published sources to give an overview of the importance of this American humanitarian effort which saved some 200,000 lives in the Smyrna region alone. He notes that "the American efforts to effect emergency relief surpassed all other efforts combined, excepting the Greek." Of particular interest is his use of the unpublished papers of Fridrjof Nansen, the League of Nation's first Commissioner for Refugees material which formed the basis for his recently published posthumous book on this Norwegian philanthropist. This study is complemented by that of Stavros Stavrides on the ineffective mission of the International Red Cross (IRC) to investigate the massacres and "deportations" of Christian minorities of the Ottoman government and its use by the Great Powers to avoid any responsibility for their plight. Using a wide variety of diplomatic sources he charts the path of this "mission to nowhere," which he concludes was used as a smokescreen to hide their inaction while thousands died. Of particular interest to this reviewer, is his use of U.S. State Department documents to outline American policy towards this proposed international investigation. Stavrides also calls for further research into the IRC archives held in

Geneva in order to clarify and more fully contextualize what he has presented in this study.

The studies by Steven Leonard Jacobs and Alfred de Zayas are among the most important in the entire volume. They place the subject of the genocide of the Ottoman Greeks into the context of international law and the history and applicability of the United Nations Genocide Convention of 1948. Using the largely unpublished papers of Raphael Lemkin, the author of our legal term "genocide" and the moving force behind the UN Convention, Jacobs shows that he was not only aware of the Greek case but had studied it in detail as part of his human rights efforts after the Jewish Holocaust during WWII. This analysis shows that Lemkin documented that the Ottoman and Kemalist massacres and violations of human rights during the twentieth century had long and continuous historical antecedents going back to fifteenth century. Lemkin also recognized that during the long period of Ottoman rule, some members of Greek society cooperated with the Ottoman state and victimized their own people. This historical experience is related to similar aspects of other groups of victims such as Armenians and Jews. As Jacobs points out, Lemkin also recognized the reality of cultural genocide as a factor that needs to be taken into account in addition to the loss of life and that his "work on behalf of all victims...transcended any sense of parochialism."

The continued applicability and importance of the UN Genocide Convention is the focus of the Zayas article. In a detailed analysis related to international law and case precedents, Zayas shows that the UN Convention can be applied retroactively to the crimes committed by the Ottoman state and that the actions of its successor state in Istanbul in 1955 and in Cyprus in 1974 indicate a continuation of the genocidal process. He points out that the 1920 Treaty of Sevres, although superseded by that of Lausanne in 1923, nevertheless legally established Ottoman genocidal state responsibility and embodies the concept that restitution for the victims, especially with regard to property. Zayas's painstaking analysis shows that the same principals of international law were also recognized in the Charter of the Nuremburg Tribunal after WWII and that in the case of genocide there is no governmental statute of limitations that applies. He also cites recent cases of international law that make clear that successor states still bear a legal responsibility for the actions of their predecessors and that the Christian victims of the early twentieth century can still claim restitution and compensation for losses sustained. This has been successfully done by Holocaust survivors in the United States in a case involving the Republic of Austria which was upheld by a U. S. Court of Appeals in December, 2002. This legal precedent is especially important since as I have documented in one of my own studies, the United States State Department occupied Armenian property in Smyrna after the great fire in 1922 for its

new consulate without the owner's permission, but only with the connivance of Kemalist Turkish authorities which its government still did not officially recognize. Perhaps the cases that Zayas cites can be used to call attention to this seemingly illegal action.

The next group of studies concern subjects which have been the subjects of research within the field of genocide studies as applied to other victims, but break new ground for the study of the genocide of the Ottoman Greeks. They concern the need for educational resources, understanding the context of commemorative monuments, the theoretical framework created by genocide perpetrators to justify their actions, and the use and misuse of genocide photographs. The first article by Ronald Levitsky deals with genocide education and draws on his experience in the Chicago public schools. He highlights the fact that unlike the Jewish and Armenian cases, very few educational resources have been made available concerning the Anatolian Greeks and that their victimization remains little known. Levitsky discusses a new Teaching Unit on the Greek Genocide developed by the Pontian Greek Society of Chicago that applies the technique of the personal narrative of eyewitnesses and survivors that other ethnic groups have successfully used in schools. He also describes how teachers can engage their students by making them "active learners" through "hands-on" activities that engage them in historical materials designed to make them reflect upon and analyze what they are learning. Michael Bruneau and Kiriakos Papoulides follow with an insightful overview of the commemorative monuments erected in Greece by the refugees and others in the genocide's aftermath. Their role is both to preserve the memory of "lost homelands" as well as to help preserve Ottoman Greek identity within Greece. The authors chart not only the erection of specific monuments and their types, but the timeline for recognition of the genocide and displacement of the refugees by Greece. This "right to remember" was long delayed by any official recognition of the Greek state and only occurred forty to eighty years after the population "exchange." The authors show that Pontian refugees have played a key role in gaining acceptance and official recognition which came only in the 199's. This research model is so successful that it could easily be applied to the study of other Greek commemorative monuments in Greece and the diaspora.

Alkis Kalaitzidis and Donald Wallace present a theoretical framework for identifying and understanding the kinds of conditions and ideologies that are created by those committing and justifying genocide. They focus upon what they refer to as ethno-nationalism which they say is especially important in identity formation as a nation transitions from a multi-ethnic state. As part of their detailed analysis, starting with Lemkin, they also discuss the theoretical framework of what defines genocide, and then move to the relationship between ethnicity and nationalism. They often refer to the

existing theoretical literature on these subjects and apply this information to the Ottoman and Kemalist decisions to commit genocide and resulted in their "Turkey for the Turks" and other turkification policies. What is missing in their otherwise fine analysis are abundant direct references to Turkish sources which could illustrate the application of the theoretical framework they present. What they rely on are a few published interviews of Turkish officials and references to secondary works written by scholars with access to the sources such as Taner Akcam. They also give only passing references to well known contemporary theorists of Turkish nationalism such as Ziya Gokalp, which should have been amplified and discussed in more detail.

The final study by Abraham D. Krikorian and Eugene L. Taylor concerns the important subject of photographic evidence and its use and abuse as primary sources in connection with documenting the genocide of the Ottoman Greeks. As the authors point out, visual documentation and its manipulation with the advent of new technologies is becoming increasingly more complex and sophisticated, and our methodologies and standards need to keep pace with these changes. This is particularly important in the field of genocide studies where evidence concerning the death and destruction of particular ethnic groups, such as the Ottoman Greeks is still challenged and attempts are made to dismiss it as the result of warfare or unfortunate and unforeseen results of well intentioned government actions. Krikorian and Taylor present an excellent discussion and detailed analysis of a specific number of genocide photographs and apply what they identify as the two most fundamental principles to their analysis: "attestation" (affirming the accuracy of what the photograph represents) and "attribution" (identifying a photo with a person, place and time). The authors use specific examples of the misattribution and caption identification of particular photographs largely related to the Armenian genocide to illustrate the kinds of errors made and highlight the kind of careful work that needs to be done. Of particular interest is the important use of textual evidence directly related to particular photographs as examples of how the two fundamental principles they call attention to should be applied. Perhaps Krikorian and Taylor might collaborate with Hlamides to document and correctly caption the photographic evidence that survives concerning the destruction of Smyrna as part of a future project. In the twenty-first century where technology and instant visuals have a constantly increasing impact, this kind of work will take on more importance than ever before.

The numerous photographs, the detailed glossary of terms, the extensive bibliography (including films), and the index that form the appendices to this volume are themselves important contributions to the subject. I know of no other publication that has gathered together such an array of supplementary material in one volume. Everyone concerned with making the genocide of Ottoman Greeks better known should advocate that public

libraries, universities and cultural institutions add this fine volume to their collections. The publishers and the scholars who came together to create this important publication have established a new standard of excellence for the field.

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