

instance, we would know nothing about the remarkable adventurer, the amir Chaka of Smyrna, if it were not for Anna Comnena's history (though it must be admitted that some of her information about him is contradictory). The emergence of the Ottoman dynasty brought the Turks into a closer and more urgent relationship with Byzantium; and inevitably the Byzantine writers give more and more attention to their formidable neighbours and future conquerors.

It has been calculated that if we include the century after the conquest of Constantinople there are close on forty Greek authors or collections of documents which contain information about the Ottoman Turks. Many of these are chronicles of the Turkish Sultans written in Greek in the sixteenth century, of which the most important is a History of the Turks from 1373 to 1512, only extant in one unpublished manuscript (Vatican-Barberini 111), which contains information not found elsewhere, for example about the Nicopolis and Varna campaigns. There is also a group of chronicles based on the so-called *Ekthesis chronike* (of which the original manuscript ends in 1517) which includes a later version by Malaxos and Dorotheos of Monemvasia and a verse version by Hierax. This group is useful for some precise chronological details. There are one or two Patriarchal chronicles, interesting for their evidence about the Conqueror's establishment of the Greek *millet*; and there are a number of chronicles based on earlier histories, especially on the work of Laonicos Chalcocondyles.

It would take too long to list these minor works. There are, however, seven major historians of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries who make a serious contribution to Ottoman history. First is George Pachymer, who was born in Nicaea in 1242 and died in Constantinople in 1310, shortly after having completed a history that covers the period from 1261 to 1308. Next is John Cantacuzenos, who usurped the Imperial throne in 1341, was eventually crowned in 1347 and forced to abdicate in 1355. He retired to Mount Athos and there wrote a history of his times, from 1320 to 1356. Contemporary with him with Nicephoros Gregoras, who was born in Paphlagonia in 1295 and died in 1359 or 1360, having written, amongst many other works, a history of Byzantium from 1204 to 1359. Then there is a gap, till we come to the four Byzantine historians of the Fall of Constantinople. These are George Phrantzes, who was born in Constantinople in 1401 and died in 1478 in Corfu, where he had written a history dealing with the period from 1258 to 1477—there also exists a shorter version beginning at 1413;—Ducas (whose Christian name is unknown, as are the dates of his birth and death), a Greek from Western Anatolia, whose History covers the years from 1204 to 1462; Laonicos Chalcocondyles, who was born in Athens in 1432 and died in Crete in 1490 and whose History stretches from the Creation, and in more detail from the late

thirteenth century, to 1478; and Hermodoros Michael Critobulos, who was born on Imbros in about the year 1405 and died on Mount Athos after 1470 and who wrote a history of the reign of Sultan Mehemmed II, from 1451 to 1467.

All these seven historians are of major importance for early Ottoman history. The earliest of them, Pachymer, was the contemporary of 'Osmān. He is not an easy writer to read. His style is verbose and he loves neo-Classicism; for example, he calls the months by their Attic names, and the Turks the Persians; and his main interests were domestic, especially theological. But he wanted to give a full picture of the careers of the Emperors Michael VIII and Andronicus II. He was therefore obliged to take note of the situation among the Turks. He made a serious attempt to disentangle the various local Turkish dynasties. His story of the career of 'Osmān (whom he calls Atman) is factual and reliable. Though his evidence is restricted to the occasions on which the Turks impinged on Byzantine politics, it is useful and indeed more indispensable than most Turkish historians are ready to admit.

Our next historian, the Emperor John Cantacuzenos, was the man who was actually responsible for the Turks' first settlement in Europe. It was no doubt inevitable that the Turks would soon cross into Thrace; but John definitely invited them in order to have their help in a civil war. During all the period covered by his History John was the most prominent political figure in Byzantium; and though he wrote in retirement, he seems to have kept copious notes. His book is an apologia; and the facts are interpreted in a manner to justify himself and his friends and discredit his enemies. But the facts themselves seem reliable. In consequence he provides an invaluable account of all the military and diplomatic relations between Byzantium and the Turks which occurred in his time. He seems to have thought the Turks less dangerous to the Empire than the Serbians, and to have had no strong feelings against them and their religion. Amongst his other works is a Defence of Christianity, against Islam, written for a Turkish friend who had become a convert to Christianity, in which he tried honestly to understand the Muslim point of view.

John's story is confirmed by the History and supplemented by the many letters written by Nicephoros Gregoras, who took an opposing view of politics. He has a little less to tell us about the Ottoman Turks, though like Pachymer, he tries to straighten out in his mind the various Turkish states still extant in Anatolia. But he seems to have regarded them as the chief danger for the Empire. He disliked them. When he tells of John marrying his daughter to Orkhān as the price of the Sultan's alliance, he refers to it as a wholly shameful thing, whereas John himself glosses it over as a splendid affair and dilates upon his daughter's loyalty to Christianity. With the two accounts to check each other we have a full account of

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