

the *Sanat ansiklopedisi* "Encyclopaedia of the Arts" in five volumes and *Osmanlı tarih deyimleri ve terimleri sözlüğü* "Dictionary of Historical Phrases and Terms" in three volumes.

From that period until the 1960s, no new projects for a general encyclopaedia were initiated with the exception of the *Hayat ansiklopedisi* "Encyclopedia of life," begun by a private publisher in 1961 and by 1963 completed in six volumes. In a very short period, 100,000 copies were sold, indicating the need for a general encyclopaedia by an increasingly literate society.

The *Meydan Larousse büyük lughat ve ansiklopedi* is the largest Turkish encyclopaedic work initiated by a private publisher, with publication beginning in 1969. It is an encyclopaedia as well as a dictionary, being a translation of the *Grand Larousse encyclopédique* published in 1960-4 in ten volumes. Some subjects and entries related solely to French language and culture were omitted, and subjects related to Turkish and Islamic culture inserted. The encyclopaedia was issued in fascicles and was completed in 1973 in twelve volumes, with two supplementary volumes issued in 1974 and 1985, respectively. The publication of *Meydan Larousse* was a turning-point in the history of commercial publication of encyclopaedias in Turkey, and a result of the enthusiasm with which the *Meydan Larousse* was greeted by the public, other publishers have seen the commercial opportunities offered by publishing encyclopaedias.

Hence during these years, a handful of publishers began to specialise in such reference works. The major publishers today are Anadolu Yayıncılık, Gelişim, Görsel and İletişim, who publish not only general encyclopaedic works but also encyclopaedias on specialised subjects, such as *Turt ansiklopedisi* "Encyclopedia of the Homeland", which gives information on the history, economic and social conditions of the cities of Turkey in alphabetical order; *Türk ve dünya ünlüleri ansiklopedisi*, a biographical reference source; *Gelişim genel kültür ansiklopedisi*, a general encyclopaedia; *Anadolu uygulamaları ansiklopedisi*, an encyclopaedic publication on Anatolian civilisations; and *Cumhuriyet dönemi Türkiye ansiklopedisi*, which covers the development of various fields in the Republican period such as the constitution, archaeology, the press, energy, mining, librarianship, etc. *Ana Britannica ansiklopedisi* is a translation and adaptation of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, published in 1988 by Anadolu Yayıncılık. The publisher has also published yearbooks in order to update the necessary information. The second Turkish edition was initiated in 2000 and it is still in progress. Finally, *Türkiye diyanet vakfi islam ansiklopedisi*, an *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, is being prepared and financially supported by the Turkish Religious Foundation. The publication started in 1988 and twenty-two volumes, covering the letters A-İ, have already appeared. The encyclopaedia contains not only subjects related to Islam but also wider aspects relating to the Islamic community throughout the world. Most of the Islamic subjects are very detailed, and the articles have comprehensive bibliographies.

Bibliography: A. Adnan Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde ilim*, İstanbul 1943; Agah Sırrı Levend, *Türk edebiyatı tarihi*, Ankara 1973; *Türkiye'de dergiler ansiklopediler (1849-1984)*, İstanbul 1984; Ayhan Aykut, art. *Ansiklopedi*, in *TDV İslam ansiklopedisi*, iii, İstanbul 1991. (A.O. İCİMSOY)

5. In Urdu.

Here there does not seem to be any significant tradition of any antiquity, leaving aside modern Urdu translations of such reference works as *Chamber's Encyclopaedia*, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and, of course,

the Urdu *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, which draws on material from the Western *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, published in Leiden.

MEHMET TĀHIR, BURSALĪ (1861-1925), Ottoman biographer and bibliographer.

Mehmed Tāhir was born in Bursa in northwestern Turkey on 22 November 1861, the son of Rif'at Bey, clerk to the city council, and grandson of Üsküdarlı Seyyid Mehmed Tāhir Pasha, formerly a commander in sultan 'Abd ül-Medjīd's imperial guard. He studied at the Bursa military academy from 1875 and at the élite Harbiyye (War) academy in İstanbul from 1880. Graduating in 1883 he spent the next twenty years teaching geography, history and rhetoric at military schools in Manāstır (and one year in Üsküb) in Macedonia, as part of the Ottoman Third Army. In 1904 he became director of the military high school in Selānik (Salonica). Whilst at the Harbiyye academy he had become a member of the Melāmī order of dervishes, by whom he was profoundly influenced in his teaching, publications and political outlook. In Manāstır he first conceived the notion of collecting bio-bibliographical data on poets and learned men, and in 1897 published his first work *Türkler'in ulum ve funūna khidmetleri* "The Turkish contribution to arts and sciences" (İstanbul 1314). In 1316/1899 he also published a full-length biographical study of the Arab mystic Ibn al-'Arabi.

Mehmed Tāhir was dismissed from his teaching post in December 1906 for his Şūfī involvement and his membership of the Ottoman Freedom Society (*'Othmānlī hürriyyet dîm'iyyeti*). From 1908 to 1911 he served as deputy for Bursa in the first representative assembly of the Second Constitutional period, and subsequently served in the Ministry of Charitable Endowments (*Evkâf nezâreti*) on a committee to inspect the holdings of institutional libraries. In 1915 he became director of the Topkapı Sarayı library. The date of Mehmed Tāhir's death is uncertain, but was probably 1925. He was buried in İstanbul.

Mehmed Tāhir's principal work is *'Othmānlī mü'ellifleri*, a three-volume bio-bibliographical compendium published between 1915 and 1924, listing 1691 Ottoman authors and their works. Despite many lacunae and acknowledged errors, *'Othmānlī mü'ellifleri* was unique in its comprehensive scope and immediately became a standard reference work. Aside from the works already mentioned, Mehmed Tāhir also compiled over twenty lesser biographical works, either of particular individuals (e.g. Kātüb Çelebi) or of groups of Ottoman *shaykhs* and *'ulamā*.

Bibliography: For a full bibliography, see the detailed article by Ömer Faruk Akün, in *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vi (1992), 452-61, on which the above is based.

(CHRISTINE WOODHEAD)

MEZİSTRE, MIZİSTRE, the Turkish name for Greek Mystras, Latin Mistra, a famous Byzantine necropolis on a hill slope west of modern Sparta in Laconia in the Peloponnese [see *MORA*], which was a major centre of late mediaeval Greek civilisation and capital of the "Despotate of the Morea" till the Ottoman conquest. It has numerous Byzantine and Frankish monuments from the 13th-15th centuries, and was immortalised, albeit anachronistically, in Goethe's *Faust*. The name has been connected with the shape of the cone-shaped hill on which it stands.

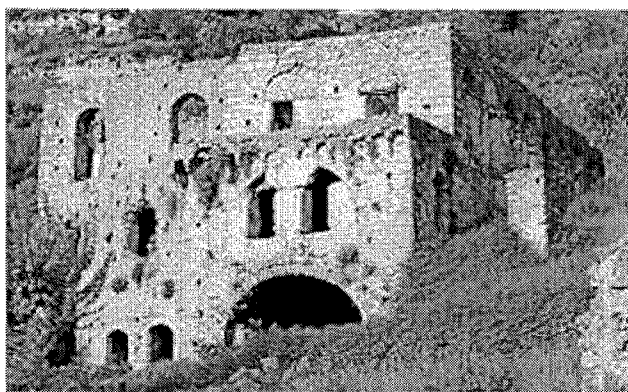
The Frankish castle of 1249 was built by William II de Villehardouin of the Achaia Principality, but passed to the Byzantines in 1262. The ravages of Franks and Turkmens from Western Anatolia (see



MARMARA

This is one of the three points throughout which the visitor can penetrate the outer wall and a tour of the site. A restaurant commands a superb view of the Lacedaemonian plain, of Sparta, the Eurotas and Mt. Parnon. A fountain, containing some water, is situated in the back court. Known as the Marmara (the Marbles), its name derives from the fact that, until the beginning of the present century, a sarcophagus lay on the spot where there is now a cement basin, at the base of the fountain. The Sarcophagus was subsequently removed to the courtyard of the Metropolis. Its style and sculptural motifs indicate that it belongs to the Roman period. Materials from the temples and houses of the abandoned ancient city of Lacedaemonia, as mediaeval Sparta was called, were undoubtedly used in the construction of Mystra. This explains the presence of the sarcophagus in a place where there is otherwise no trace or relic building dating back to antiquity.

LASCARIS MANSION



The edifice constitutes a fine example of a Byzantine mansion, which is traditionally believed to have been the property of the Lascaris, one of the most distinguished families of Mystra.

Two-storied, it was built with considerable taste, if one is to judge from the surviving series of small arches which supported the balcony. The small floor with a vaulted roof was probably used as a stables. Clumsy repairs of a later period have spoiled the original aspect of the edifice. Ruins of Byzantine houses, approximately contemporary to the main mansion, are scattered around it.

FOUNTAIN

Left of the path leading to a level spot shaded by a plane tree are the remains of a Turkish fountain with a pointed arch and an ornamental marble frieze. The paved path that starts near the fountain climbs the hill as far as the Pantanassa. In Byzantine times water for these fountains, which are encountered up to the Palace level (higher up there are only cisterns for rain water), was supplied from the wooded ravine on the opposite slope of Targets.

THE MONEMBASSIA GATE

Mystra

Μυστρα

Over a hundred thousand years ago three plates came together to form the rugged and mountainous Peloponnese. One of the most majestic of the Peloponnesian peaks is Mt. Taiyettos. Flanked by granite peaks and overlooking a fertile valley this mountain is home to one of the most impressive and well preserved Byzantine ruins anywhere. It is the home of Mystra.

The first settlers on Mt. Taiyettos were most likely peasants fleeing ancient Sparta. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Sparta came under numerous Barbarian attacks. Some of the people who wished to remain (it is thought that a major portion of the noble families fled to Mani) retreated to near by Mt. Taiyettos for protection since it is a much more defensible location.

Little was known about this early settlement on the mountain. The main reason for that is because of the scarcity of building materials. These settlers brought blocks from the ruins of Sparta. Later on, the stones that made up the homes of the early settlers were reused again and again to build churches, walls and homes. Therefore, in one building you may have stones with markings dating from several different periods. Because of this, little was left by this early settlement because its buildings were recycled during latter phases of building.

What is known is that these people fleeing the ruins of Sparta were not the only people to note the defensibility of Mt. Taiyettos. With unscalable peaks behind it and a large plain to the other three sides William Villehardouin, a French duke thought to build a fortress on the peak. The fortress was built using stones from homes already at the site, then known as Myzithras. His dream was to build an invincible fortress in which to live and govern. This was one of three fortresses in the Peloponnese built by the duke. He believed he would use this as a foothold to spread French Dominance. His dream was short lived. He began it in 1249 and by 1262 he was forced to trade his fortress at Mystra to the Greeks for his life.

For the first couple of decades thereafter, the French tried very hard to retake the city. This had two effects. The first was the remaining people of Sparta fled to the protective walls, thus causing the need for expansion. Second, the military magistrate saw the need to expand the defensive walls not once but twice.

From 1262 to 1348 Mystra flourished under Byzantine rule. It grew in importance from a military bastion to the regional capital of the Peloponnese. As the city grew in importance so did Mystra. There was a domestic effect to all this growth. Mystra grew as a cultural center as well. Civil and religious leaders emerged. As a result, various churches and monasteries were built in the city. As a result various holy orders and the bishop of Lacedaemonia moved into the city.

All this work increased the importance of the city. It was no longer a backwater but a major city. Emperor John VI, of the Byzantine Empire, sent his second son to oversee the city and the region. (It was under constant attack by the French and Turks and needed some stability) He reorganized the region, forming a Despotat