



## **BOOK REVIEW**

Ryan Gingeras, *Ebedi Şafak (Atatürk Dönemi Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi)*,  
Translated by Barış Bora Güç, İstanbul: Mitra, 2024.496 p.

In this study, the author of the work being reviewed, Ryan Scott Gingeras, is a researcher with works on the Ottoman period and post-Ottoman Middle East/Turkey. Gingeras's doctoral thesis deals with the ethnic elements during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. His doctoral thesis is titled "Imperial Killing Fields: Revolution, Ethnicity and Islam in Western Anatolia, 1913-1938" (Gingeras, 2006).

Continuing his research at the Naval Postgraduate School, Ryan Scott Gingeras is known not only as an academician with studies on Modern Eastern Europe and the Middle East but also as a contributor to publications such as the New York Times, Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, and International Journal of Middle East Journal. However, Ryan Gingeras is especially recognized for his works on the late Ottoman Empire and Atatürk. Among these works are Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923 (2009), Heroin, Organized Crime and the Making of Modern Turkey (2014), Fall of the Sultanate: The Great War and the End of the Ottoman Empire (2016), and The Last Days of the Empire (2022).

The book, published with a paperback cover, consists of a total of 496 pages. It is divided into an introduction and six chapters, ending with an index section. The book does not include a conclusion or bibliography section. The author has limited references to footnotes. Furthermore, the book contains 14 photographs and 3 maps.

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The author mentions that while naming his work, he was inspired by the line “*Be not afraid! The flying red banner is eternal in these dawns...It is the star of my nation, and it will forever shine.*” from Turkey’s national anthem written by Mehmet Akif Ersoy and thus titled the work “Eternal Dawn”.

In the “Giriş Dolmabahçe” (Introduction Covered Garden) section (pp. 23-40), the construction process of Dolmabahçe Palace and its significance for the state are discussed. The section also provides information on the state of the Ottoman Empire in its final period, Atatürk’s arrival at this palace, and its use for hosting foreign dignitaries. Through this approach, the author analyzes the transition from empire to republic by examining the relationship between Dolmabahçe Palace and Atatürk.

The author discusses the historical events leading to the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and its founding leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in this work. This book provides an assessment of the Atatürk era and Turkish history from the perspective of various communities, shedding light on the period from different angles. What sets this book apart from other works on the subject is its focus on the events and relationships between the Anatolian people and the state. However, despite covering a long and comprehensive period, the author’s sources are not equally extensive. The book does not include a bibliography and is primarily based on research works rather than firsthand and primary sources, except for some sections. In this regard, the book has the characteristics of a compilation. Several examples further illustrate the book’s nature as a compilation. For instance, on page 246, under the subheading “Politics and Personality in Gazi’s Assembly,” the first paragraph does not align with the title and other paragraphs, standing out as disconnected from the main text. Such instances where the transition between paragraphs lacks coherence and a consistent narrative structure are notable.

Indeed, the author sometimes contradicts himself. On page 112, the emphasis is on team effort in Mustafa Kemal’s success, while on page 118, a different profile of Mustafa Kemal Pasha as a natural leader who asserted his leadership is highlighted.

One significant error involves the photo labeled as “Atatürk in Bayburt” (Photo 3.1). The information provided is incorrect because Mustafa Kemal never visited Bayburt. The photo was taken in 1930 during a visit to Trabzon Türk Ocağı but was misrepresented in the book as being taken in Bayburt. As an academic, the author is expected to meticulously verify the accuracy of the photos and quotes included in his work. This aspect reveals serious academic and scientific errors in the book. The author has made similar mistakes in his book “Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: Heir to the Empire,” where he attributed a quote

to Atatürk without properly verifying the source's reliability or authenticity. This constitutes a breach of academic ethics for a historian.

Moreover, in another part of the book (p. 214), the author presents a historical event without providing a source. He discusses the clothing ban in Aydın in 1927 and mentions that this ban was lifted eight years later. He states that the public did not comply with this law, but no document or source is cited to support this information.

The author approaches the establishment of the Republic of Turkey and Atatürk with a biased perspective, constructing his work accordingly. It is a crucial principle in the discipline of history to critically evaluate historical events considering the international and national context and the conditions of the time. However, it is evident throughout the book that the author does not adhere to this principle and takes a partisan stance. For example, on page 230, the author states that the settlement policy was implemented as a tool for Turkification and assimilation. The author comments that *"implementing a settlement policy that excluded unwanted races and eliminated foreign terms was a task that required extreme caution"* (p. 230).

Another serious error is the author's assertion that the Balfour Declaration, announced in 1917, was declared in 1916 (p. 326). Another example can be found on page 377, where the author mentions a record concerning Circassian immigrants but fails to provide any reference, document, or source information. In response to the author's biased and misleading quotations and interpretations, the publisher's editor could not refrain from commenting and stated in a footnote: *"What the peasant in this story refers to is the elimination of reactionary forces by the Republic. This interpretation is entirely due to the author's own ill intentions or ignorance"* (p. 440). In this way, Gingeras presents a work that is far from scientific, misleading, biased, and deceptive to the reader by taking quotations out of their original context and placing them within his own fabricated structure, thus distancing himself from scholarly ethics and historical accuracy, resulting in a politically manipulative piece.

However, another crucial point to note is the publication of such a manipulative and historically misleading work by Oxford University. It is evident that a well-established and reputable scientific institution like Oxford University should critically review the works it publishes more meticulously with the help of expert editors in the field. If Oxford University is not demonstrating a biased stance on the history of the Republic of Turkey and its founder, and more importantly, if it is not producing scientific outputs that adhere to the principles and ethical standards of science, it risks losing its prestige and reputation.

## References

- Gingeras, R. (2006). Imperial killing fields: Revolution, Islam and ethnicity in Western Anatolia (1913–1938). University of Toronto Press.
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