

TURKISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND TURKISH NATION BUILDING
(1931-1938)

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UĞUR CENK DENİZ İMAMOĞLU

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submitted by **UĞUR CENK DENİZ İMAMOĞLU** in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy in History, the
Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University**
by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KİRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Ferdan ERGUT
Head of Department
Department of History

Prof. Dr. Ömer TURAN
Supervisor
Department of History

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Mehmet SEYİTDANLIOĞLU (Head of the Examining
Committee)
Hacettepe University
Department of History

Prof. Dr. Ömer TURAN (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of History

Prof. Dr. Yunus KOÇ
Hacettepe University
Institute of Turcology

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nesim ŞEKER
Middle East Technical University
Department of History

Assist. Prof. Dr. Ş. Akile ZORLU DURUKAN
Middle East Technical University
Department of History



I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Uğur Cenk Deniz İMAMOĞLU

Signature:

ABSTRACT

TURKISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND TURKISH NATION BUILDING (1931-1938)

İMAMOĞLU, Uğur Cenk Deniz
Ph.D., The Department of History
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ömer TURAN

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Nation building and the role of history in this process constitute an academic subject. In Turkey in 1930's, the concept of nation building was seen through historiography, too. In this study, which will be prepared to follow this process more closely, first of all, nation and nation building will be examined conceptually. Subsequently, examples of nationalist historiography and historical institutions will be discussed on the basis of Europe. Afterwards, a picture will be presented on the development of nationalism and nationalist research-history institutions in Turkey. Finally, the role of the Turkish Historical Society, which was established in 1931, and its activities in the field of history in terms of Turkish nation building will be elaborated.

Keywords: Nationalism, Nation Building, National History, Turkish Historical Society, Turkish History Thesis.

ÖZ

TÜRK TARİH KURUMU VE TÜRK ULUS İNŞASI (1931-1938)

İMAMOĞLU, Uğur Cenk Deniz

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Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. Ömer TURAN

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Ulus inşası ve bu süreçte tarihin rolü akademik bir konuyu teşkil etmektedir. 1930'lu yılların Türkiye'sinde de tarih yazımı üzerinden ulus inşası tasavvuru görülmüştür. Bu süreci daha yakından takip etmek üzere hazırlanan bu çalışmada, öncelikle ulus ve ulus inşası konuları kavramsal olarak incelenecektir. Akabinde ulusçu tarih yazımı ve tarih kurumları örnekleri Avrupa temelinde ele alınacaktır. Sonrasında Türkiye'de ulusçuluğun gelişimi ve milliyetçi tarih kurumları üzerine bir tablo sunulacaktır. Nihayetinde, 1931 yılında teşkil edilmiş olan Türk Tarih Kurumu ve onun tarih alanındaki faaliyetlerinin Türk ulus inşası açısından oynadığı rol tetkik edilecektir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Milliyetçilik, Ulus İnşası, Millî Tarih, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Türk Tarih Tezi.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM.....	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xi
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Framework of the Study	1
1.2. Review of Literature	6
1.3. Methodology and Sources	24
1.4. Outline of the Study.....	28
2. NATION BUILDING, HISTORY, AND BLOSSOM OF HISTORY	
INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE AND TURKEY	32
2.1. The Concepts of Nation and Nationalism.....	32
2.2. Nation-Building and its Tools	48
2.3. Use of History in Nation Building.....	56
2.3.1. Institutionalization and Nationalization of History.....	63
2.3.2. History Institutions in Nation-Building in Europe.....	69
2.3.2.1. Western and Northern Europe.....	69
2.3.2.2. Eastern and Central Europe.....	78
2.4. Prelude to Journey of Turkish Nationalism	86
2.5. Emergence and Growing of Turkish Nationalist Historiography in Late Ottoman Era	100
2.5.1. Early Attempts	103
2.5.2. Institutions, Learned Societies and Associations	109
3. ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF TURKISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY	128

3.1. Creation of Turkish Historical Society (THS) with Divine Aims	128
3.2. Producing Turkish History Thesis and Disseminating through Publications.....	138
3.2.1. Assignments to Prepare the <i>Outlines of Turkish History</i>	142
3.2.2. Presenting the Thesis in Textbooks	154
3.2.3. A Modern Journal to Spread the Thesis: <i>Belleten</i>	160
3.3. Channels for Discussing the Thesis: Turkish History Congresses	166
3.3.1. First Turkish History Congress	167
3.3.2. Second Turkish History Congress.....	172
3.3.3. Reflections of the Thesis and Debates	184
3.4. Unveiling the History of the “Turks” to Fortify the Thesis.....	190
3.4.1. Archaeological Excavations.....	190
3.4.2. Repercussion on Material Cultural Elements.....	200
4. DEFINING THE TURK, INTERPRETING THE ISLAM AND LEGITIMIZING THE REPUBLICAN REGIME IN TURKISH HISTORY THESIS	204
4.1. Changing Definitions of “Turk” and Content of Turkish-ness in Time in Republican Turkey.....	205
4.1.1. Pillars of Nationalism in 1920s	205
4.1.2. Re-defining in 1930s	210
4.1.3. Point of View of Turkish Historical Society.....	215
4.2. Views on Islam and Islamic Civilization.....	222
4.2.1. Understanding of Islam in Turkey in 1930s.....	223
4.2.2. Contributions to Muslim States in Turkish History Thesis.....	231
4.2.3. Individual Contributions to Islamic Civilization in Turkish History Thesis	235
4.3. Rising from the Ashes: History of Modern Turkey	240
4.3.1. Views on Ottoman History	241
4.3.2. Achievements of the New Turkey	245
4.3.3. Cult of Personality of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk	252

5. CLAIMS OF THE TURKISH HISTORY THESIS ON THE TURKS AS ANCIENT AND CIVILIZED NATION.....	260
5.1. The Claim on “Anatolia as Ancient Turkish Land Populated with Turks”	260
5.1.1. Antecedents of the Turks in Ancient Anatolia.....	261
5.1.2. Archaeological-Anthropological Ties of the Turks with their Central Asian and Anatolian Ancestors	266
5.2. The Claim on “Turks as a Civilized Nation throughout History”	274
5.2.1. Going a Long Way toward World Science	275
5.2.2. Mastery in Artistic and Intellectual Activities	280
5.2.3. Proficiency in Economic Fields	283
5.3. The Claim on “Turks Having a Glorious Past in Pre-Islamic Ages”	288
5.3.1. Advanced Turks in Pre-Historical Ages	289
5.3.2. Increasing Fame of the Turks in Historical Ages	292
5.4. The Claim on “Turkish Language as Indicator of Turkish Civilization”	297
5.4.1. The Sun-Language Theory.....	303
5.4.2. Linguistics in Supporting Historical Claims.....	306
CONCLUSION	313
BIBLIOGRAPHY	322
APPENDICES	
A. FIGURES	388
B. CURRICULUM VITAE.....	392
C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET	394
D. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU	414

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Mustafa Kemal, together with the participants of <i>Türk Ocağı</i> after its sixth General Assembly. TTKA, TTK, Uİ-244-2.	388
Figure 2. Mustafa Kemal in a meeting of Turkish Historical Society. TTKA, Uİ, 244-3.	388
Figure 3. The date of establishment of THS. TTKA, TB., Unclassified document.	389
Figure 4. Handwriting of Mustafa Kemal for the name of the new journal. TTKA, Unclassified document.	389
Figure 5. First page of the list that includes the assignments to write TTAH. TTKA, TTAH-1-49.	390
Figure 6. Mustafa Kemal in the First Turkish History Congress. TTKA, TTK-222-1-1.	391
Figure 7. Mustafa Kemal in Ahlatlıbel Excavation. TTKA, TTK-312-19.	391

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BCA	:Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Cumhuriyet Arşivi
BOA	:Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Osmanlı Arşivi
BTTK	:Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi
CUP	:İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti
ed.	: Editor
HZK	: Hamit Zübeyr Koşay Fonu
İTTK	:İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi
No.	: Number
p.	: Page
TDV	:Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı
THS	:Turkish Historical Society
TTAH	:Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları
TTK	:Türk Tarih Kurumu
TTKA	:Türk Tarih Kurumu Arşivi
Uİ.	:Uluğ İğdemir Fonu
Vol.	: Volume

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Framework of the Study

Nation, nationalism and their derivative concepts have been constituting a major subject in world politics and even in daily lives of the communities for at least two centuries. Yet, starting of academic interest in nation and nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon. Actually, for some researchers, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries coincide with the birth of the idea of nationalism, and the term research is not so compatible for pre-1918 era. Thus, a general look on the bibliographical information on the related studies could make possible to claim that first period started in 1920s on, and in this era, nationalism began to mark a crucial point in scientific studies. Next, the period between two World Wars saw the emergence and development of scholarly research on the field. Then, post-1945 era witnessed the sophistication and diversification of the studies on nationalism with references to concepts of migration, citizenship, feminism etc.¹ On the other hand, besides the chronological one, another classification according to treating and handling the nation and nationalism prevails in the field, too. Hence, primordialism, modernism and ethno-symbolism are the components of this classification.

The word primordial comes from Latin (*primordialis* – *primus* and *ordiri*) and means “first in order; original; existing from the beginning; of earliest origin.”²

When applied to the studies on nationalism, it comes to mean that the nations are

¹ For the characteristics of those periods, see Umut Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları-Eleştirel Bir Bakış* (İstanbul: Doğu Batı Yayınları, 2009).

² Noah Webster, *An American Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield: G.&C. Merriam, 1877), p. 1037. (It will be referred as *Webster's Dictionary* hereafter.)

natural and given entities from the antiquity. Clifford Geertz mentions this “givens” and stresses the importance of community, religion, culture and common social practices. They all make up the primordial contiguity.³ Then comes the second component - that is modernist view, which is also called as instrumentalist approach.⁴ In social sciences, instrumentalism expresses that the explanation of the ideas and facts is due to their benefits instead of their truth or reality. For nationalism studies, it implies the formation and maintenance of nationalism with regard to certain interests.⁵ Put differently, nations should be emphasized for the formation of the state; and nationalism is reasonable after the state formation.⁶ According to the modernist image, what creates the nation and national identity is nationalism (not vice versa); and as it will be revealed, Ernest Gellner and Elie Kedourie approached nationalism through this viewpoint.⁷

Partly criticism and partly synthesis of the former two approaches lead to the third one: ethno-symbolism. It claims continuity in pre-modern and modern communities by emphasizing the importance of myths, memories, traditions and symbols for nations. Myths of ethnic descent and “golden age” in the past are crucial; and mostly historians, philologists, archeologists and poets, namely intellectuals, blaze the trail for the linkage of memories and modern nation, or past and present.⁸ John Armstrong and Anthony Smith, who regard the use of

³ Viera Bacova, “The Construction of National Identity-On Primordialism and Instrumentalism”, *Human Affairs*, 8, (1998): p. 31.

⁴ Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları-Eleştirel Bir Bakış*, p. 77.

⁵ Brendan O’Leary, “Instrumentalist Theories of Nationalism” in *Encyclopedia of Nationalism*, ed. Athena S. Leoussi (New Brunswick&London: Transaction Publishers, 2000), p. 148.

⁶ O’Leary, “Instrumentalist Theories of Nationalism”, p. 149.

⁷ Anthony D. Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, trans. Sina Şener, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), p. 117.

⁸ Daniele Conversi, “Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach”, in *Nationalism and Ethnosymbolism-History, Culture and Ethnicity in the Formation*

symbols as more influential than nationalist principles,⁹ are substantial authors of this approach. These different approaches are also important for both the process and study of nation-building.

Related to the nationalism studies, the research on nation building has begun to form point of investigation. It is for sure that that building processes can be evaluated with references to a number of factors including economy, civil society, monopolization of the authority of using arms, providing public goods, assimilation of the “non-core” groups of the state, external intervention etc.¹⁰ Indeed, the role of history in nation building is an incontrovertible fact, either in primordialist, modernist or ethno-symbolist approaches. Decorating the people in a given territory with national pride to turn them into self-glorifying members of a nation requires laying emphasis on (or even inventing when absent) a suitable history. The sense of “we accomplished much in the past” among the people would be the key to ensure solidarity in “now” and “future” for the nation states. Therefore, the nation states -before and immediately after their establishment- gave priority to remind their compatriots their glorious past to motivate them for acting with a common will. It is known that the past to remember would be actual, partly correct, or it may have never existed as it was reflected later. Then, re-interpreting it with modern concerns or creating it from scratch would be needed. Consequently, this process of referring to history with the aims of building nation and creating common identity became subject of research in

of Nations, ed. Athena S. Leoussi & Steven Grosby (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), p. 21-22.

⁹ Conversi, “Mapping the Field: Theories of Nationalism and the Ethnosymbolic Approach”, p. 22.

¹⁰ For those factors, see Harris Mylonas, *The Politics of Nation-Building: Making Co-Nationals, Refugees, and Minorities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Andreas Wimmer, *Nation Building: Why Some Countries Come Together While Others Fall Apart* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018); *Nation Building-Beyond Afghanistan and Iraq*, ed. Francis Fukuyama (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2006); *Nation-Building, Identity and Citizenship Education: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, ed. Joseph Zaida, Holger Daun & Lawrence J. Saha (Dordrecht, London: Springer, 2009).

modern times. As it is also touched below, a broad academic literature flourished in the field.

In parallel to that, emergence point of this study is related to scholarly interest to see the process of using history and historical discourse as a tool of political and cultural aims in early Republican Turkey. As İhsan Fazlıoğlu uttered in a conference,¹¹ between 1860 and 1914, a civilization table was set up in Western Europe. Nations that wanted to be at this table later on had to show their contributions to sciences or civilization. For that aim, referring to history was a must. Accordingly, new Turkish state of the twentieth century, which inherited failures in various fields for the past few centuries, wanted to prove itself by focusing on history. Hence, it would be possible to develop a political-cultural discourse against “outsiders”, as well as transforming the “insiders” into a nation. Turkish Historical Society¹² (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*) was at the center of this program in 1930s. Thus, the topic of “Turkish Historical Society and Turkish Nation Building (1931-1938)” was adopted and the survey began. It will be touched throughout this study that the project called as Turkish History Thesis (*Türk Tarih Tezi*) was at its height between 1931 (date of establishment of Turkish Historical Society) and 1938 (passing of Atatürk, which impoverished the thesis), and later period saw the shift in paradigm in historical and political rhetoric. Accordingly, the given timespan was specified as point of focus. Nonetheless, this kind of study necessitates to set the thematical and historical bases of the subject, which results in inclusion of a part on the birth and evolution of nationalist historical narrative in Europe and Turkey.

In this context, it has come out that development of nationalism influenced the way of writing history, which gradually carried the traces of a nationalist discourse from the nineteenth century on. After a duration of independent and

¹¹ İhsan Fazlıoğlu, “Masada Yer Bulmak: Bilim Tarihi ile Bilim Felsefesi’nin İdeolojik ve Psikolojik Tarihi Üzerine”, a conference given on 24.11.2022, in Turkish Historical Society. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3LrSLRG9gVo>, 15.01.2023.

¹² Also abbreviated as THS in this study.

separate studies on national historiography prepared by certain individuals; emerging research institutions on history -mostly supported by regional or central rules- fostered the national historiography in Europe to increase national awareness of the people about their own nation. This process in Europe could be considered as epoch-making in its own field and should definitely comprise a basis for further studies on the subject.

Moving from this point, flourishing of Turkish nationalist historiography deserved attention. Actually, it is a course including certain phases as suggested by Miroslav Hroch who aimed at modelling the making of the nations in Europe. Roundly, for him, first phase marks the cultural awakening through the assets of a nation. It is followed by the politization of the discourse with patriotic sentiments. Finally, adoption of the national consciousness by the large masses come to fruition. It would appear that development of Turkish History Thesis was outcome of such a process compatible with the depiction of Hroch. After the rise of academic-cultural Turkish nationalism in Turkey in the mid-nineteenth century; political nationalism with high words increased in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. 1930s in newly established Turkey saw the utmost phase of the procedure with the efforts for massification of the political-cultural rhetoric of the government. It is not surprising that history and historiography were components of all the phases touched above in Turkey and changed shapes in comply with the needs of each phase.

Being aware of this background and evolution, this work is an attempt to see the role of Turkish Historical Society within a program of national historiography sponsored by the state, and to define the claims of Turkish History Thesis with evaluating the published and unpublished sources of the Society. In the meantime, some questions that have been unanswered or misinterpreted so far are tried to be responded or revisited through various materials some of which had not been used before: As claimed in many studies, is there a complete break with the Islamic and Ottoman past in the understanding of history of the 1930s? Did the institution adopt a racist approach in its projects as expressed in

numerous works? Were the studies carried out solely in order to meet national demands or were the standards of universal historiography of the age reckoned? In which ways Turkish Historical Society may have benefitted from the previous cases in Europe and Turkey to promote a historical narrative to awaken national feelings?

Identifying the basic points of the history thesis and answering those questions could give a new impulse to the studies on instrumentalization of history in increasing national feeling and making of identities.

1.2. Review of Literature

The literature review here should involve two subjects which this study aims at conjugating in following chapters. One of them is the research on use of history and history institutions in nation building, while the other includes the works on Turkish Historical Society and its activities with a national historiography in its earlier period.

First, the investigation of history and history institutions as a tool in formation of identities and nation has been subject to academic concerns in Western world for several decades. One of the trailbreakers of the field, the edition of Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan and Kevin Passmore¹³ intends to show how history and historians developed a discourse to legitimize the nation state in France, Italy, Germany and Britain against various ideological threats. According to the work, for instance, the pursuit of national identity in the unified Germany, unity of the Italians, and legitimation in post-Revolution era in France had been fortified with history. The essays of the edition reveal the belief and perception that internationalism or other “hostile” ideas of the age against any of the European country could be tackled with more emphasis on national identity which had to be solidified with a national history.

¹³ *Writing National Histories-Western Europe Since 1800*, ed. Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan & Kevin Passmore (London & New York: Routledge, 1999).

Then, a huge project of “Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in 19th and 20th Century Europe” funded by European Science Foundation between 2003 and 2008 brought forth to seven books from 2008 to 2015. These works clearly display the role of actors and institutions in national historiographies for a national integration in a number of countries. As a product of that project and part of “Writing the Nation Series”, *The Contested Nation* was edited in 2008.¹⁴ The work seeks to analyze the support of historical narrative in formation of identities in most of the European states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Then, overlapping and conflicting historical narratives on contested territories were perused by a group of historians within *Disputed Territories and Shared Pasts* in 2010.¹⁵ Utilization of past for political aims and seeking or creating roots in Scandinavia, the Benelux, Balkans and Central Europe was thoroughly probed in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*.¹⁶

A monumental work of “Writing the Nation Series” came in 2012 with *Setting the Standards*.¹⁷ This work divides its subjects both in thematic and geographical way to cover the development of national historiographies in Europe. Thus, creation of the national archives; emergence of historical journals; source publications; opening of history museums; establishment of local and regional learned societies, national history associations and academies of sciences; and development of universities and international network of the researchers in various countries of the old continent were reflected as the gradual steps of

¹⁴ *The Contested Nation-Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger & Chris Lorenz (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

¹⁵ *Disputed Territories and Shared Pasts-Overlapping National Histories in Modern Europe*, ed. Tibor Frank & Frank Hadler (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

¹⁶ *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States-History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, ed. R. J. W. Evans & Guy P. Marshal (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

¹⁷ *Setting the Standards-Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography*, ed. Ilaria Porciani & Jo Tollebeek (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

national historiographies and integrity in Europe. Then, *The Past as History*¹⁸ provides a comparative analysis of historiography of pre and post eighteenth century, with the increasing national sentiments of the latter. Moreover, institutionalization and professionalization of national histories is also taken into consideration both for prominent and smaller nations in Europe.

While the sixth book of the series¹⁹ deals with the claim that historiographies carry the traces of transnationalism and globalism, as well as national discourse; one of the most striking (and related to this study) product of the project, *Nationalizing the Past*²⁰ questions the real role of the historians for national historiographies to shape the nation. In this volume, works and narratives of national historians chosen across from the European countries are investigated with regard to their construction of historical discourse, efforts for integration of various groups into a nation, and their relations with the authoritarian governments especially during the twentieth century. Consequently, it is clear that the project of “Representations of the Past” marked an epoch on the research of use of history (and historians and history institutions) in formation of nations and national identities in Europe with seven grand works.

Simultaneously, similar works were also produced on the field. Absence or inadequacy of related studies on peripheral cultures motivated Monika Baar to prepare her research of *Historians and Nationalism*.²¹ Baar selected five historians (Joachim Lelewel from Poland; Simonas Daukantas from Lithuania;

¹⁸ *The Past as History-National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe*, ed. Stefan Berger & Christoph Conrad (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹⁹ *Transnational Challenges to National History Writing*, ed. Matthias Middell & L. Roura Aulinas (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

²⁰ *Nationalizing the Past-Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, ed. Stephan Berger & Chris Lorenz (Basingstoke & Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²¹ Monika Baar, *Historians and Nationalism-East Central Europe in the Nineteenth Century*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Frantisek Palacky from Czechia; Mihaly Horvath from Hungary and Mihail Kogalniceanu from Romania) to expose the activities of historians for cultural integration in their countries through their historical narratives. Thus, it is frankly revealed that unity among the citizens of aforementioned five countries in East Central Europe in the nineteenth century was related to history and national historiography to an extent. With a congruent approach, Susana Carvalho and François Gemenne produced their work on national histories.²² This edition contemplated uncovering the references to and use of past to reinforce the national identities in different countries from Eastern Europe to America, Africa, Middle East, China and Australia, in addition to the Western Europe. Presentation of history in cultural and political affairs in selected countries constitutes a theme of the work.²³

Besides those analytical works on the subject, certain published or digital databases and encyclopedia gathered up basic information on development of national historiographies in different parts of the world.²⁴ These sources provide main points and processes in the development of professional and national historiography in certain countries with regard to creation of history departments at universities, museums, archives, history institutions and academy of sciences. Hence, seeing the interaction and developments on the field in the present examples could be easier.

²² *Nations and Their Histories-Constructions and Representations*, ed. Susana Carvalho & François Gemenne, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²³ For some other works in the field, see *History Education and the Construction of National Identities*, ed. Mario Carretero, Mikel Asensio & Maria Rodriguez-Moneo (Charlotte: IAP, 2013); Biljana Popovska, "The Role of Teaching History for a Nation-Building Process in a Post-Conflict Society: The Case of Macedonia." *Connections: The Quarterly Journal*, 12/1, (2012): p. 51-64; Kabir Mohammed, "The Role of History, Historiography and Historian in Nation Building" *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 2/7 (2013): p. 50-57; *Nation Building: Five Southeast Asian Histories*, ed. Wang Gungwu (Iseas Publishing, 2005).

²⁴ See *Atlas of European Historiography, The Making of a Profession 1800-2005*, ed. Ilaria Porciani & Lutz Raphael (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); and Digital Atlas of European Historiography at <https://www.daeh.uni-trier.de>, 28.05.2022.

As a consequence, it is obvious that the scholarly research on use of history and influence of historiography in creating national awareness seems satisfying; and there is no doubt that this kind of investigation has been going on. However, this is more valid for the Western world, as one can easily see that aforementioned works mostly cover the processes in Europe, specifically the Western Europe. Of course, such studies are also carried out in non-Western countries and other continents, but it is understood that studies that present different examples in the world with larger scope are more limited. Therefore, it may not be overstatement to claim that there is a deficiency of research on the use of history in creating national awareness in many other countries of today's world, including Turkey, which actually could provide a fulfilling example.

The second subject of this review involves the studies on Turkish Historical Society, the Turkish History Thesis and the activities of the THS. First of all, it is seen that certain books and theses that reveal the history and works of the institution have been prepared. Subsequently, different types of works were created for the characteristics of the Turkish History Thesis or specifically for the works of the institution (for example, congresses, books, archaeological excavations, etc.). But it should also be noted that there are also studies on Turkish national historiography regarding the process before the establishment of the Turkish Historical Society.

In terms of the last group cited above, it would be useful to mention four studies. First, book of Hasan Akbayrak²⁵ is significant to show the journey of national historiography in Turkey until 1931. The author firstly provides the picture of history writing in the classical period of the Ottoman Empire and then deals with the subject depending on the processes of nationalization and modernization. In this context, the institutions and associations established to research and write national history during the Second Constitutional Era and the first years of the Republican administration, the journals of these institutions, and the historians

²⁵ Hasan Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine-Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Tarih Yazımı* (İstanbul: Kitabevi Yayınları, 2012).

who took part in this process are explained. The historical institutions that the Republican administration took over from the Ottoman Empire and the changes in the understanding of history in terms of the empire and the republic are also included in the text. Although the Turkish Historical Society and its place in this process, with the exception of a few pages, are not mentioned in the study, it is highly important in terms of reflecting a detailed panorama of previous periods. A similar plan is also revealed in the work of Mustafa Oral.²⁶ In the study, firstly, after reflecting the history of general understanding of history in the west and east (and the Ottomans), the nationalist history societies established in the Second Constitutional Period are mentioned. Then, operations of the *Türk Tarih Encümeni* (Turkish History Committee) formed after the proclamation of the Republic and the newly established *Türkiyat Enstitüsü* (Institute of Turcology) are explained, as well as the subjects in the history textbooks of the 1920s are shown. This work, which is important in terms of reflecting the relevant process before the Turkish Historical Society, is also significant in terms of showing the contributions of the developments in the western world to Ottoman and Turkish historiography. On the other hand, this work could be considered as first part of his later book on Turkish History Thesis which will be dealt below.

Next, master's thesis of Emine Mutlu on *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni* and *Türk Tarihi Encümeni*²⁷ could be counted as a prologue to the subject since it covers history institutions of the late Ottoman and early Republican periods, from which Turkish Historical Society would inherit. Thus, it is important to see the intellectual accumulation of pre-1930 era and to establish connections between times and institutions. Finally, Ahmet Özcan's book also contains basic

²⁶ Mustafa Oral, *Türkiye'de Romantik Tarihçilik* (İstanbul: Yeni İnsan Yayınları, 2014).

²⁷ Emine Mutlu, *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni'nden Türk Tarihi Encümeni'ne (1909-1931)*, Master's Thesis (Atatürk Üniversitesi, 2011).

information on the subject in terms of presenting a clear list of Ottoman and Republican historical institutions.²⁸

When it comes to post-1930 era and issue of Turkish Historical Society, it is known that a large academic repertoire has been created by various researchers, although most of them was produced during the last half century.²⁹ Then, as it is touched above, some studies were prepared to introduce the history and activities of the institution directly. Of these, one of the first works on Turkish Historical Society belonged to Uluğ İğdemir who worked as Secretary-General of the Society for a long time³⁰ and witnessed emergence.³¹ In this work, İğdemir explained the course of establishment of Turkish Historical Society as a primary witness. Organizational structure and the issue of naming of the Society, first meetings of the members to set the goals, instructions and expectations of Mustafa Kemal from the institution were recorded by the author in a semi-official rhetoric. The book was also a tribute to the golden anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Turkey. Hence, as an “indicator of success of the Republic” in cultural affairs, the work listed the activities of the Society from 1931 to 1973 as a certificate of achievement. Books, journals, congresses and archaeological excavations of the Society were introduced, as well as its library,

²⁸ Ahmet Özcan, *Türkiye’de Popüler Tarihçilik 1908-1960* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2011).

²⁹ Nonetheless, the introductory pieces on Turkish Historical Society, its activities and on the interest of Atatürk in history and the Society have been published in its own journal during the earlier stages of the process. See Afet İnan, “Atatürk ve Tarih Tezi”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 243-246; “Türk Tarih Kurumunun Kuruluşuna Dair”, *Belleten*, XI/42, (1947): p. 174-178; Hasan Cemil Çambel, “Atatürk ve Tarih”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 269-272; Ekrem Akurgal, “Tarih İlmi ve Atatürk”, *Belleten*, XX/80, (1956): p. 571-584; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, “Türk Tarihi Yazılırken: Atatürk’ün Alaka ve Görüşlerine Dair Hatıralar”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 349-353.

³⁰ Between 1931 and 1982, İğdemir held various positions such as editor-in-chief, secretary-general and director-general of THS. Therefore, he is one of the longest serving bureaucrats in the history of Republic of Turkey.

³¹ Uluğ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyet’in 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1973).

members and international relations with equivalent institutions. Although the work is far from being a scholarly publication -indeed the work makes no such claim- it is still remarkable for including first hand sources and witnessing about the creation of the Society, and for providing information for its earlier activities in an ordered way.

Following İğdemir, Fahri Çoker took the study further regarding the chronological sequence.³² After briefly covering the period dealt by İğdemir, Çoker provided an insight for the activities of the Society for the period between 1973 and 1983. Similarly, books, congresses and other scholarly activities of the institution are presented for the reader. However, as distinct from İğdemir, Çoker also listed the members of the Society from its establishment to the date of publication of his work. In this way, compact information on the profession and expertness of the founding members of the Society, and development of the membership in number and international area in time could be seen. It is important to keep in mind that both İğdemir and Çoker were the officials of Turkish Historical Society (without possessing academic background) and did not question the policy behind those activities, nor did they analyze the projects carried out by the Society systematically. Issues such as the political and cultural conditions of the period, the desire to present the work as an annual report rather than an analytical study, and the possibility that the material that would enable more detailed analysis was not classified may also have led to the preparation of these studies with descriptions rather than interpretations and analysis. Still, those works provided valuable information on the history and activities of the institution from the eyes of the actual witnesses.

³² Fahri Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu: Kuruluş Amacı ve Çalışmaları* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1983). He was a military officer and also acted as the advisor to President Cevdet Sunay and Fahri Korutürk and took part in the administration of THS.

In addition to them, the research of Arzu Yüzer focused on the works of Turkish Historical Society during the reign of Atatürk.³³ In this work, Yüzer firstly cast an eye on the understanding of history during the Ottoman era. Later on, she mentioned the views of Atatürk on history, which eventually gave way to the establishment of a history institution in Republican Turkey. Another chapter was allocated by the author for the foundation, aims, organization and working program of the Society. Finally, the last chapter deals with the books, journals, congresses, archaeological excavations, archive and library material and exhibitions of the institution between 1931 and 1938. Although an orderly plan was provided for the activities of the Society for a specified timespan; understandably, the limitation of a master's thesis may have prevented the broader study of those subjects. Hence, detailed elaboration of a wide range of activities through published or unpublished works of the Society seems missing for the research.

Besides those descriptive works, analytical research on the Society increased in last thirty years. The activities of the Turkish Historical Society in the 1930s were evaluated within the framework of the program called the Turkish History Thesis. Therefore, there are many studies in which this thesis is centered and activities are evaluated accordingly. But it should be kept in mind that the Society never officially declared the meaning, content and aims of Turkish History Thesis, but it gave hints through publications, conferences, and debates. So, most writers of the subject tried to describe and explain the thesis because of its ambiguity. One of the most famous pieces on the field belongs to Büşra Ersanlı.³⁴ In her frequently-cited work, she depicted the Western effect and Ottoman legacy in formation of the Turkish national historiography and activities of Turkish Historical Society in 1930s. Ersanlı mostly utilized the books of the THS and the discussions of the History Congresses in her research.

³³ Arzu Yüzer, *Atatürk Döneminde Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Yapılan Çalışmalar (1931-1938)*, Master's Thesis, (Marmara Üniversitesi, 2006).

³⁴ Büşra Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih-Türkiye'de "Resmi Tarih" Tezinin Oluşumu (1929-1937)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2003).

The comprehensive observation on the publications of the Society and minutes of the congresses made the book of Ersanlı a classical one on the field of Turkish national history writing which was promoted by the state. The work is also useful as it included references to the British, Finnish and Hungarian national historiography and history institutions to establish connections with the Turkish case. However, when one looks at the work in general, it is seen that this connection is shortly discussed. Of course, the subject could be expanded with examples from more countries. Next, according to Ersanlı, Turkish History Thesis was a discourse that did not recognize any method and was constructed for political purposes. Accordingly, it is claimed that Turkish historiography could not establish a tradition in this period. Looking from today, it can be claimed that the works of the institution are not suitable for scientific methods, but when it is considered in its own period, it is understood that science and scientific methods were tried to be followed, and certain conditions were expected to be complied for history writing of the period. Then, a different work of the same author³⁵ provides a more explicit description of Turkish History Thesis based on six claims. Still, as it will be shown below, especially those “claimed” claims on the history of Islam and Ottoman Empire arisen by Turkish Historical Society require certain revisions after a closer look at the works and discourse of the Society in 1930s. Nevertheless, these works are the milestones in the study of the Turkish History Thesis, and they clearly revealed the debates that took place in the period.

Ersanlı's claim that the history thesis hinders scientific development is challenged by Zafer Toprak, who produced a comprehensive book on scholarly side of Turkish History Thesis.³⁶ This work provides the developments of sciences (such as anthropology, archaeology, biology, anthropometry, and linguistics) in Turkey with relations to journey in Europe. Then, the author

³⁵ Büşra Ersanlı, “Bir Aidiyet Fermanı: Türk Tarih Tezi”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce-C. 4, Milliyetçilik*, ed. Tanıl Bora (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2002), p. 800-810.

³⁶ Zafer Toprak, *Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları 2021).

examines how these sciences were used in the national historiography of the 1930s and in the history thesis. According to the author, this process means a scientific and cultural revolution in Turkey, contrary to the claims that label that period as “dark” or “catastrophic”. Toprak claims that the cultural transformation in Turkey was shaped not only by the ruler, Atatürk, but also with the ideas of the scientists of the Western world. The fact that *History* textbooks began with topics such as geology, the solar system, the formation of the world and evolution is also a sign of this transformation. For the author, the Turkish History Thesis followed the scientific methods that were valid in many parts of the world at that time, and with its subjects and methodology, it meant an important stage in Turkish historiography.

Next, the equivocacy about Turkish History Thesis can be encountered in Mustafa Oral’s work³⁷ that was produced from the dissertation of the author. In his research, Oral aims at explaining the formation of the history thesis through the books and congresses of the Society; and tries to reveal the influence of the thesis on linguistic studies, university reform, and activities of Faculty of Letters (*Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi*), Institute of History of Turkish Revolution (*Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü*) and Ankara Ethnography Museum (*Ankara Etnografya Müzesi*). The projects of the Society and related discussions within the Society and intellectual spheres in 1930s were covered in the work based on the sources of the era. Though a complete picture of the thesis and its evolution in time may have gone unnoticed, it is valuable in terms of showing that the mobilization in the field of national history spread to the country and affected different institutions.

³⁷ Mustafa Oral, *Türk Ulusunun İnşası-Ortak Tarih Söylemi* (İstanbul: Yeni İnsan Yayınları, 2015).

Ahmet Şimşek published an article dealing with Turkish History Thesis and its explanation.³⁸ First, he tries to explain what the thesis is, and propounds the basic claims of the thesis based on the discourse of Turks as a brachycephalic race of people who established and contributed to civilizations. Although it is important to show a part of the picture, whole of the thesis seems incomplete. Then, he puts forward the background and needs for the formation of the thesis. For him, “internal” and “external” reasons should have played role in the creation of thesis, which seems logical and is touched in our study, too. Finally, the author reveals the critics directed to the thesis by contemporary and later historians. Of course, although this part is important, we also include criticisms obtained from the archive in our own work, which have not been mentioned much before.

Turkish History Thesis and its diverse reflections constituted subject for certain other articles. To illustrate, while Nadir Özbek examined Zeki Velidi's attitude towards the thesis, he also presents a narrative about the characteristics of the Turkish History Thesis.³⁹ This study is valuable in that it reflects the characteristics of the thesis, the criticisms (mostly the ones directed by Zeki Velidi), the discussion environment in the First Turkish History Congress, and the fierce struggle between the defenders and the critics of the thesis. Suavi Aydın's article on the subject is also valuable in terms of some of the claims he proposes regarding the thesis.⁴⁰ First, Aydın mentions the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) as one of the important tools and areas in which the thesis spread. Accordingly, he shows certain conferences given in the People's Houses to support the thesis. For him, a conference of Agop Dilaçar on Turkish race and Hatay people was the reflection of the thesis to legitimize the joining of Hatay to

³⁸ Ahmet Şimşek, “Türk Tarih Tezi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme”, *Türkiye Günlüğü*, 111, (2012): p. 85-100.

³⁹ Nadir Özbek, “Zeki Velidi Togan ve ‘Türk Tarih Tezi’”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 8/45, (1997): p. 20-27.

⁴⁰ Suavi Aydın, “Türk Tarih Tezi ve Halkevleri”, *Kebikeç*, 3, (1996): p. 107-130.

Turkey. Next, the author opposes Ersanlı's claim that Turkish official historiography began with the *Speech (Nutuk)* of Atatürk, and states that a book published in 1922 by the state (*Pontus Mes'elesi*), in accordance with the official history thesis, took Anatolia's Turkishness back to the early ages. Therefore, he utters that the Turkish History Thesis was not constructed in a completely new way in the 1930s and that it also reflects the claims from previous periods. Finally, the author tries to show that the Turkish History Thesis is not a racist program specific to Turkey or its Republican regime, and that it was the product of an approach that contained racial elements but was also valid in many other places in the world of that day.

Apart from those investigations, works of Şefik Taylan Akman⁴¹ and Yunus Emre Özkul⁴² seem beneficial to understand the Turkish History Thesis. These pieces reflect both the issues discussed in the 1930s and interpretations of the thesis in the literature that developed later by other researchers. The reasons for the emergence of the thesis, its political-ideological connections and the debates on racism are discussed through the sources of the period and later works.

As the application areas of the Turkish History Thesis, certain activities of Turkish Historical Society have constituted base for works, too. At this point, congresses became a subject of analysis. As it is known, Turkish History Congress has become a scholarly tradition that has survived into the twenty-first century. During the lifetime of Atatürk, first and second Turkish History Congresses were held in 1932 and 1937 respectively. Then, to illustrate, Ceren Arkman's thesis - shaped by the narrative of Anderson's "imagined communities" and of Smith's national legends- aims to show the formation of the Turkish History Thesis through the topics discussed in the First Turkish History

⁴¹ Şefik Taylan Akman, "Türk Tarih Tezi Bağlamında Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Resmi Tarih Yazımının İdeolojik ve Politik Karakteri", *Hacettepe Hukuk Fakültesi Dergisi*, 1/1, (2011): p. 80-109.

⁴² Yunus Emre Özkul, "Akademik Literatürde Türk Tarih Tezi Sorunsalı", *İzmir Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 1/1 (2019): p. 38-50.

Congress.⁴³ Yet, with the strong theoretical background in the study, it could be expected that the topics discussed at the congress would be evaluated in more detail. Another master's thesis was written by Kenan Pala on the Turkish History Congresses in 1930s⁴⁴. Pala dealt with the reason of gathering the congresses, the subjects covered in the sessions, attendants of the events, and role of the congresses in the formation of Turkish History Thesis. Consequently, the author made a comparison between the first and second Turkish History Congresses with regard to attendants, subjects and presentations. However, as it will be shown in following chapters, the process of preparing the congresses could be traced from the archival sources of the Society. Therefore, lacking those documents could be seen as a disadvantage of the work. Next, although it was prepared in terms of architectural history viewpoint and the narrative is not entirely a history work, master's thesis of Merve Özkılıç⁴⁵ includes extensive photographs from the archive of the Society that reveal the materials of the exhibition in the congress, which makes it an important inventory.

History textbooks of Turkish Historical Society are also considered as concrete reflections of the history thesis. A renowned work on the field was compiled by Etienne Copeaux in French and later translated to Turkish.⁴⁶ The book is crucial to show how the Turkish government used historical discourse in textbooks to decorate its citizens with national feelings from 1930s to 1990s. Yet, though the title of the book includes “Turkish History Thesis”, the work does not provide an apparent portrayal of the thesis. On the other hand, whereas the claim of the

⁴³ Ceren Arkman, *The Launching of the Turkish Thesis of History: A Close Textual Analysis, Master's Thesis* (Sabancı University, 2006).

⁴⁴ Kenan Pala, *Atatürk Dönemi Türk Tarih Kongreleri*, Master's Thesis, (Ondokuz Mayıs Üniversitesi, 2008).

⁴⁵ Merve Özkılıç, *1937 İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi Sergisinde Arkeoloji, Sanat Tarihi ve Mimarlık Tarihinin Temsili*, Master's Thesis (İstanbul Teknik Üniversitesi, 2016).

⁴⁶ Etienne Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine*, trans. Ali Berktaş (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000).

author regarding a shift from Turkish History Thesis to Turkish-Islamic discourse after 1938 makes sense, the elaboration of connection between Turkish History Thesis and Islam and Ottomans between 1931-1938 seems to need certain revisions, which we aim to show in this work. According to the author, Turkish historiography of 1930s sharply ignored and discarded the Islamic and Ottoman history of the Turks. Yet, the more plausible comment is that this issue is not completely disregarded but reflected in a new interpretation. Moreover, although main thesis of the author is that the Turkish historiography in the 1930s turned into a Turkish-Islamic synthesis by the 1940s,⁴⁷ Yücel Kabapınar asserts that though the Turkish history thesis in the 1930s underwent some minor revisions, it has survived into the 1990s textbooks by preserving its basic claims, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly.⁴⁸

In addition to them, application of *History* textbooks in 1930s school education was assessed by Mesut Çapa.⁴⁹ For the author, history lessons had become an important part of citizenship education. In the study, it is stated that the history textbooks of the 1920s were found insufficient, and then the textbooks shaped around the Turkish History Thesis were followed successfully in schools. Another important point is the comment of the author that -contrary to many claims in this direction- *History* textbooks do not use derogatory and humiliating expressions for other nations. In support of this view, the author states that Muzaffer Göker -a Secretary General of the Society- proudly noted in an

⁴⁷ A large review has been written against some of the claims in the work and the discourse used. Erdoğan Merçil, “Etienne Copeaux-Tarih Ders Kitaplarında (1931-1993) Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine”, Book Review, *Belleten*, LXIII/236, (1999): p. 279-291.

⁴⁸ Yücel Kabapınar, “Başlangıcından Günümüze Türk Tarih Tezi ve Lise Tarih Kitaplarına Etkisi”, *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1, (1992): p. 143-178. Also see Celal Metin, *Türk Tarih Tezi ve Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Tarihi (1923-1960)*, Master’s Thesis (Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1998). Tercan Yıldırım prepared a dissertation on history textbooks in Turkey from the Constitutional era to modern times, *Meşrutiyet’ten Günümüze Tarih Ders Kitaplarında Türk Kimliğinin İnşası*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Marmara Üniversitesi, 2014). Similar to Copeaux, the author claims that Ottoman-Islam past of the Turks was totally ignored in Turkish History Thesis.

⁴⁹ Mesut Çapa, “Cumhuriyet’in İlk Yıllarında Tarih Öğretimi”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılâp Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, 29-30 (Mayıs-Kasım 2002): p. 39-55.

international history education congress convened in Paris in 1932 that the *History* textbooks were written in a friendly manner. Similarly, İsmail Hakkı Demircioğlu tries to give a portrait of history of history education in Turkey, including the Turkish History Thesis and its reflections in the textbooks.⁵⁰ Despite the ordered narrative in the work, it should be stressed that the study is mostly based on the secondary sources.

The handling of the religion (Islam) in the Turkish History Thesis also formed the basis of certain studies. According to the prevailing view for many years, the relationship between the Turkish History Thesis and Islam was extremely problematic. Yet, a number of publications aimed to put the subject on a more reasonable ground. The article of Zorlu Durukan is among those.⁵¹ After the author suggested six claims of Turkish History Thesis, she dealt with the evaluation of Islam through *History* Textbooks. In this study, the author has revealed that religion was placed in a national narrative of history, that although the emphasis on ethnic roots increased, the Islamic past was not rejected, but included in Turkish history with a new interpretation. On the other hand, the author states that the language used for Islamic elements in the books that reflect Turkish History Thesis was outside of the standard Islamic understanding and discourse. Still, this situation could be seen as a repercussion of the new interpretation of religion. Similarly, Aynur Temiralay asserts that “Islam shaped by the Turks” was among the main arguments of the history thesis, and concepts such as rationality, democracy, freedom of thought and respecting women were combined in this new interpretation of religion.⁵² Parallel to this, article of Yeşim

⁵⁰ İsmail Hakkı Demircioğlu, “Türkiye’de Tarih Eğitiminin Tarihi”, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, 6/12 (2008): p. 431-450.

⁵¹ Ş. Akile Zorlu Durukan, “‘The Religion of Muhammad’: Early Turkish Republican Ideology and the Official View of Islam in 1930s History Textbooks”, *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, 14/41, (Summer 2015): p. 22-51.

⁵² Aynur Temuralay, *Türk Tarih Tezi’nde İslam Düşüncesinin Ele Alınışı*, Master’s Thesis (Marmara Üniversitesi, 2008).

Bayar also claims that Turkish nation building process established a modern version of Islam and inserted it into the narrative of national historiography.⁵³

Another issue regarding the Turkish History Thesis is the debate on whether the thesis is related to racism. In this context, there are references to the Turkish Historical Society and the history thesis in some works published on the characteristics of Turkish nationalism. Then, Nazan Maksudyan allocated a sub-chapter to the history thesis in her work.⁵⁴ According to the author, Turkish History Thesis was promoted by the state to build the Turkish nation, and a national historiography program was prepared in comply with that intention. For her, the presentations in the First Turkish History Congress and anthropological research of Şevket Aziz Kansu could reveal the racist side of the history thesis. In a similar vein, Ahmet Yıldız also asserts that⁵⁵ in the First Turkish History Congress Afet (İnan), Şevket Aziz and Reşit Galip; in the second, Hasan Reşit, Dr. Nurettin and Eugene Pittard submitted papers that re-built the nation on the base of ethnic roots. Next, Howard Eissenstat points the racial discourse on early phases of Turkish nationalism in Republican era.⁵⁶ However, although it is generally accepted that racial intonations were visible within the activities of the Society, labeling the thesis as completely racist would require the evaluation of all other activities of the institution. So, when we look at other materials, interpretation of the subject may differ, and this will be mentioned in our study. Within this framework, Soner Çağaptay deals with the definition of Turkish-ness and the characteristics and scope of nationalism in his work, which also includes

⁵³ Yeşim Bayar, “The Dynamic Nature of Educational Policies and Turkish Nation Building: Where Does Religion Fit In?”, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 29/3, (2009): p. 360-370.

⁵⁴ Nazan Maksudyan, *Türklüğü Ölçmek-Bilimkurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Irkçı Çehresi 1925-1939* (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2007).

⁵⁵ Ahmet Yıldız, “Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene” *Türk Ulusal Kimliğinin Etno-Seküler Sınırları (1919-1938)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001).

⁵⁶ Howard Eissenstat, “Erken Dönem Türk Milliyetçiliğinde Irkçı Düşünce”, trans. Ahmet Akşit, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 165, (2007): p. 46-53.

the Turkish History Thesis. For him, although racial expressions were found in nationalist historiography, this actually showed only a part of a nationalism based on or combined with different principles.

Certain other thesis and research have also included some parts on the activities of Turkish Historical Society and its role in cultural life or formation of identities. The Turkish Historical and Language Societies during Atatürk and İnönü's era,⁵⁷ archaeological excavations organized by the Society in 1930s,⁵⁸ and significance of Turkish Historical Society for social-cultural policy of Turkey in 1930s⁵⁹ were covered by researchers. Then, in his study on the making of identity in Republican Turkey, Kasım Doğan allocated a sub-chapter to Turkish Historical Society as a place for creating identity with reference to history.⁶⁰ In this part, the author gave a description of Turkish History Thesis based on previous studies, mostly that of Ersanlı. Next, Suavi Aydın dealt with the national historiography of early Republican era within the question of historiography in making of cultural identities.⁶¹ It is obvious that the studies on Turkish Historical Society, its activities, its role in cultural-political sphere of Turkey, and its history thesis are continuing to be carried out both in academic and popular publications.

⁵⁷ Ahmet Haşim Altınışık, *Atatürk-İnönü Dönemi Kültür Politikaları Temelinde Türk Tarih ve Türk Dil Kurumu*, Master's Thesis (Ahi Evran Üniversitesi, 2011).

⁵⁸ Zeynep Omay Koca, *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Arkeolojiye Bakış (1923-1940)*, Master's Thesis (İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2012); Latif Gökalp, *Türkiye'de Cumhuriyetin İlk Yıllarındaki Arkeolojik Kazılar*, Master's Thesis (Ahi Evran Üniversitesi, 2013).

⁵⁹ Seda Bayındır, *Atatürk'ün Sosyo-Kültürel Politikaları (1931-1938)*, Ph.D. Dissertation (İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2004).

⁶⁰ Kasım Doğan, *Cumhuriyet Dönemi Kimlik İnşası*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Sakarya Üniversitesi, 2008), p. 98-103.

⁶¹ Suavi Aydın, *Kültür-Kimlik Modelleri Açısından Türk Tarih Yazımı*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1997).

There is no doubt that those aforementioned works contributed to the knowledge on the history of Turkish Historical Society in its earlier period in 1930s. Thanks to the fact that such works have been written before, new studies that deal with the subject from different angles can be prepared today. However, for most of the aforementioned studies, a drawback in the analysis based on the primary and various sources of the Society leaps to the eye. In other words, it is not highly possible to see references to the documents from the own archive of Turkish Historical Society, which could enhance the subject. Furthermore, the Society published a bulk of books, journals, conference minutes and reports in 1930s. Therefore, it is supposed that any study on the subject could cite to those sources in a considerable extent. Next, most of the works that intended to describe and analyze the Society and its history thesis did not place the creation and activities of the Society in a narrative which would give credit to previous European examples. This situation resulted in ignoring the rich intellectual heritage that the Society may have benefitted. Moreover, the possibility of determining similarities and differences between Turkey and other countries in terms of use of history and historical associations, and possible interactions also disappear when excluding the precedent cases. Consequently, these drawbacks resulted in embodiment of this study to determine its methodology and sources.

1.3. Methodology and Sources

The importance attributed to the science of history in the construction of the Turkish nation and Turkish national identity as a projection of the state administration in Turkey in the 1930s is widely known. In this direction, it has been revealed in many studies that Turkish Historical Society was brought into being by the state itself and that the institution started to work in line with a history thesis. In this study, which is initiated with the aim of following aforementioned process more closely, first of all, it was necessary to examine the theoretical and practical background in the world and in Turkey. Therefore, a thematical and chronological approach is applied to deal with the subject.

With regard to the thematical side, the concepts of nation, nationalism and nation building were evaluated in a theoretical way. Emergence of the terms, their evolution and transformation in different times and places were stressed. Then, practical ways of nation building were introduced. Role of history at this point makes great sense for the course of this study. Hence, concrete examples of use of history and historical associations in building the nation were suggested to reflect the related process in the nineteenth century Europe. Since the Turkish case could not have been totally indifferent to this phase, introducing the base of the subject was of vital importance.

Then, the subject shall not float on a timeless space and should be settled in a meaningful context. Therefore, in contrast to many works that start with examining Turkish Historical Society without giving credit to previous processes, this study intends shedding light on the background both to see continuation and breaking points, and interactions. It is understood by this means that Turkish Historical Society and Turkish case of national historiography could not be excluded from the adventures of previous centuries and decades at home and abroad although it naturally bears its own characteristic features.

There is no doubt that this study has certain handicaps. First of them is about insufficiency of adequate comparisons. Although the related process in Europe and Turkey before the establishment of Turkish Historical Society is provided to see the interactions, the limitations of the study would not allow comprehensive comparing between history institutions in Europe and Turkey, including Turkish Historical Society. Doubtlessly, that would make sense even if it requires a distinct monography. Yet, it is also needed to state that inadequacy of the sources on foreign historical institutions in Turkey played a role for that. Secondly, the influence on and response of the population and institutions in Turkey regarding the claims of Turkish Historical Society require a separate research though it is hard to quantify it. This study focuses on the discourse of the Society to create a national awareness among the citizens of Turkey, but the reaction of the addressee would constitute a subject of another research, too. Yet,

it was found in archival material that the institutions of Turkey in 1930s highly respected the Society and acted in comply with its instructions. This could give idea that the project of the Society (or the state) was not one-sided and got meaning mutually. Still, in order to minimize those handicaps, a coherent narrative from the Introduction to Conclusion with manifold sources is aimed.

As it was insinuated, various archival records, first hand and secondary sources in different forms were used in this study. Those sources vary by the chapters and introducing them with regard to the subjects could make sense. Then, the part on nation building and use of history and history institutions in Europe mostly rely on the secondary sources prepared by various researchers. The books and articles on nation and nationalism from the mid-nineteenth century to modern times were utilized. In addition to them, editions on use of history and historical associations in nation building with the contributions of experts of the field helped to show the evolution of the subject in Europe. Moreover, certain databases and encyclopedia that reflect the milestones of historiography in the Western world were also cited in this part.

The parts on Turkish nationalism and development of nationalist historiography in Turkey is based on both archival material and secondary sources. The works that reflected the cultural/political Turkish nationalism and that were composed by the influential figures in person in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were tried to be examined from the original sources to an extent. The, the activities and publications of individuals who promoted Turkish national historiography, and establishment and projects of institutions-associations that shaped the historical narrative in Turkey were supported with archival documents. In addition to them, secondary sources (books, master's-Ph.D. thesis and articles) generated by the specialists in the field were also taken into consideration in analyzing the subject.

Next, the chapters on the establishment, activities and claims of Turkish Historical Society include vast of primary sources most of which had not been

used before. In addition to 4-volume *History* textbooks and *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (*Outlines of Turkish History*) (which are frequently used on studies on Turkish History Thesis), unpublished drafts of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* that is preserved in the archive of Turkish Historical Society are elaborated to support the narrative. Those drafts constitute thousands of papers in Ottoman and Latin scripts and include essays of various authors on many parts of (fictive or actual) Turkish history from the ancient ages to modern era. Furthermore, the critics directed to the *Outlines of Turkish History* by the examiners were obtained from the archive of the Society, too. They are crucially important to see the reaction of the intellectuals of Turkey toward the works of the Society. Moreover, activity reports, working programs, letters between the members of the Society, and roster of division of labor to carry out the projects of the Society are also examined in this part. In addition to them, the efforts of the institution to preserve the material cultural elements; and the process of preparation of first and second Turkish History Congresses (decisions on who would be invited, who would make presentations, efforts to increase foreign scientist participation etc.) could be traced from the archive. Thus, it is possible to argue that archival material of Turkish Historical Society has been source of a study on the Society to this extent for the first time.

Finally, 8 issues of *Belleten* of Turkish Historical Society and 17 books published between 1932-1938 are also assessed to determine the claims of the Society. Besides these, minutes and proceedings of the first and second Turkish History Congress and reports on the archaeological excavations construct the sources for this part. Therefore, despite including references to secondary and modern sources, too, it is mostly based on primary and original records as much as possible. Eventually, in order to reinforce the narrative, certain photographs and other visual materials were added to the study.

1.4. Outline of the Study

This study which focuses on the contributions of Turkish Historical Society to create a national awareness in Turkey through historical discourse will consist of six chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion.

After the Introduction, the second chapter starts with a theoretical framework on the description and sorts of nation and nationalism, since these concepts directly form the basis of nation building. Emergence and evolution of the nation in a sense of belonging, then the interaction between nation and nationalism are covered in this part. It should be kept in mind that there was not (and is not) one type of nationalism that is valid everywhere. Thus, different sorts of nationalism in various places -or even in the same place- could exist simultaneously. This results in the diversity of points that each nationalism could stress. Unity in race, language, belief, tradition; a common past or wish for common future could be among those point of stresses. As it will be shown, certain cases can constitute example for any of those points; even one case could show the characteristics of approaches that seem contradictory. This diversity influences the process of nation building inevitably. Accordingly, assorted instruments can be applied when building the nation. So, this part also looks at those instruments with the main lines and attaches priority to the role of history in nation building. It is understood that while history came to the forefront as a professional field, it turned into a nationalist manner in the nineteenth century.

Then, national historical discourse incisively served for the making of national identities in Europe. Moving from this point, this chapter also investigates the role of historians and history institutions in Western-Northern and Eastern-Central Europe in creating the sense of nationality through historical writing and related tools, such as museums, archives, libraries which could foster the national rhetoric of historiography. Since the existing literature on emergence and development of nationalist historiography in Turkey hardly includes references to the process in Europe, the chapter seems fundamental to set the

subject on historical perspective. Finally, the focus point moves to Turkey. Then, a prologue to Turkish nationalism is mentioned to prepare the ground of the narrative. It examines the early Turkish nationalism mostly associated with cultural-literate points which later evolved to political character. Next, the narrative aims to probe the emergence and growing of Turkish nationalist historiography. After covering the understanding of history and patterns of writing it in the Ottoman Empire, the contributions of certain individuals to the advancement of nationalist historiography are dealt. In order to show the heritage of which late Turkish Historical Society would take advantage, the role of bureaucratic, educational and cultural organizations and distinct associations that shaped the national historical narrative were introduced.

After thematical and historical corner stones, the third chapter goes on with the establishment of Turkish Historical Society. The needs, aims and course of foundation of a history institution in the young Turkish Republic are examined through primary and secondary sources. Actually, the Society was established by the members of the ruling elite of the country, which is a crucial point to understand the relation between the governing clique and the Society, which was formally established as an independent association. This relation is the key to comprehend the state-sponsored historiography to spread a national pride among the citizens of the country who had been treated as ummah for centuries. Then, as tools of this campaign, the activities of Turkish Historical Society in 1930s are examined. Firstly, the guide of historical studies of the Society, four-volume *History* textbooks and *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (*Outlines of Turkish History*), and certain other books disseminated between 1932-1938 (and their critics) are dealt. Secondly, eight issues of *Belleten* -the journal of the society- in related timespan are covered through the published articles. Next, attendants and presentation of the first and second Turkish History Congresses are evaluated. Finally, the role of archaeological excavations ruled by the Society and the efforts to preserve the historical monuments in reinforcing the historical narrative is touched through the reports and articles.

Evaluating the subjects and discussions reflected in the aforementioned activities in detail brought about the fourth and fifth chapters which aim at displaying the claims of Turkish Historical Society to create a national awareness originated from history. Accordingly, apparent or covered, six basic claims of the Society were identified from the sources touched above. Those claims emphasize the Anatolia as ancient Turkish homeland, portray the Turks as members of a highly civilized nation, treat the Turkish language as a rich source, envisage a glorious and heroic history for the Turks both before and after adoption of Islam, and highlight the history of modern Turkey as an illustrious page of Turkish history. Within this framework, the fourth chapter includes the claims on the relations between the Turks and Islam, and on modern republican history within the national thesis of the Society. But firstly, the debates of nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s in Turkey are mentioned here in order to determine who is the Turk to whom such a history is attributed. Next, the view to Islam and Ottomans is also handled here. Hence, after understanding the definition and characteristics of the Turk, the ties of Turks with Islam and the Ottoman Empire are re-evaluated. Eventually, the narrative of the history thesis on the Republican era and its achievements as the most important development in the recent history of the Turk both to create a source of legitimacy for the regime and to indoctrinate the citizens, is discussed here.

The fifth chapter, on the other hand, deals with the approach that reflects the Turks as a civilized nation throughout history in the history thesis. Here, first of all, the Turkish-ness of Anatolia is emphasized. Subsequently, references to different sciences (again archaeology and anthropology) are shown to support the claim. Then, the pieces of major project of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* -most of which have not been used before- are also dealt here in order to show the content of the history thesis including numerous fields of civilization from economy, to science, agriculture, art and even sports. Next, as a response to long-standing view that the history of the Turks was poor before the Islam, the formation of the narrative that attributed thousands of years of glorious history to the Turks is reflected. Finally, studies on Turkish and linguistics, both as a strong

reflection of Turkish civilization and supporter of the claims in the history thesis according to the Society, are also mentioned here.

In the Conclusion part, findings and comments about the case will be presented, along with assessments for further studies on the subject.



CHAPTER 2

NATION BUILDING, HISTORY, AND BLOSSOM OF HISTORY INSTITUTIONS IN EUROPE AND TURKEY

2.1. The Concepts of Nation and Nationalism

Beginning with term and concept definition is an inseparable part of the scientific studies. This is both important and necessary for social sciences. Particularly, nation-related subjects make the definition issue more crucial, since there has not been a consensus on the description of the basic concepts of the field. Hence, any study on nation-building process would firstly and inevitably require setting some basic terms. Doubtlessly, “nation” and “nationalism” deserve attention at first.⁶² As the latter derives from the former one, “nation” seems to play the key role. One should bear in mind that historians, political scientists and sociologists have still been disputing over the definition of nation for a century. Inescapable failure for one and generally accepted terminology in this field is paradoxical for international studies on nations and nationalism.⁶³ As

⁶² However, one should be aware of the fact that terms and concepts are never found sufficient and are usually reproduced. Accordingly, this situation brings about a chaos of terminology. To illustrate, different studies on nationalism would include terms like *nation*, *nationalism*, *nationality*, *nationhood*, *ethno nationalism*, *ethnic nationalism*, *civic nationalism*, *ethnicity*, *ethnic group*, *ethnic category*, *ethnic core*, etc. Even these sometimes seem inadequate for researchers and then, they use words from another language, as Anthony Smith did it by importing the word *ethnie* from French in his (English written) studies. Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları*, p. 23.; Similarly, Peter Sugar starts his work by defining the words *people*, *nationality*, *patriotism* and *country* as they are also related to study of nationalism. Peter F. Sugar, “External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism” in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, ed. Peter F. Sugar & Ivo J. Lederer, (Seattle&London, University of Washington Press, 1994), p. 3-6.

⁶³ Miroslav Hroch, *Avrupa’da Milli Uyanış*, trans. Ayşe Özdemir, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), p. 21.

Benedict Anderson similarly states, nation, nationality and nationalism have notoriety in term of definability.⁶⁴

Still, setting off with lexicographic approach would provide an insight. “Nation” comes from the Latin word “natio” (from *nasci*, *natus*) meaning “to be born”.⁶⁵ In *The Royal Spanish Academy’s Dictionary*, terminology of state, nation and language had not been used before 1884. At this period, *nacion* simply meant “the total of residents in a state, country or foreign kingdom” and also “a foreigner”. Yet, after 1884 edition, its meaning covered “a state or political unit with a common administration center above everything” and “the people who lived in the lands of that unitary state.” *The Royal Spanish Academy’s Dictionary* did not have the exact meaning of the nation until 1925 when it was defined as “the collectivity of the people who have same ethnic roots, usually speak same language and share a common tradition.”⁶⁶ As Castile was one of the oldest “nation states”, the evolution of the related words in Spain is noteworthy. Similarly, the word “nation” in old French dictionaries was related to birth, descent and position; and “natie” in medieval German again referred to birth and descent; but the “nation” was not thought as the people who constitute a state.⁶⁷ A modern dictionary of the mid-twentieth century, *Oxford Dictionary*, records the meaning of nation as “a distinct race or people, characterized by common descent, language, or history, usually organized as a separate political state and occupying a definite territory.”⁶⁸ As it is obvious, there has been a change in the meaning and nation began to be associated with “state” in time.

⁶⁴ Benedict Anderson, *Hayali Cemaatler: Milliyetçiliğin Kökenleri*, trans. İskender Savaşır (İstanbul: Metis, 1995), p. 17.

⁶⁵ *Webster’s Dictionary*, p. 875.

⁶⁶ Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik-Program, Mit, Gerçeklik*, trans. Osman Akınhay (İstanbul: Ayrıntı, 2017), p. 31.

⁶⁷ Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 32-33.

⁶⁸ *The Oxford Universal Dictionary Illustrated*, prepared by William Little, H. W. Fowler & J. Coulson, ed. C. T. Onions (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 1311.

Apart from these “objective” dictionary definitions, there are of course subjective definitions and explanations varying to researchers according to their approaches to nation. However, it is crucial to stress that experts on nationalism, who hardly arrive at a consensus, agree at one point, which is the deadlock of the issue of definition on nation-nationalism studies.⁶⁹ Yet, the most quoted description of the nation in the twentieth century was suggested by Benedict Anderson as such:

In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest of them encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, if elastic boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. No nation imagines itself coterminous with mankind. The most messianic nationalists do not dream of a day when all the members of the human race will join their nation in the way that it was possible, in certain epochs, for, say, Christians to dream of a wholly Christian planet. It is imagined as sovereign because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. Coming to maturity at a stage of human history when even the most devout adherents of any universal religion were inescapably confronted with the living pluralism of such religions, and the allomorphism between each faith's ontological claims and territorial stretch, nations dream of being free, and, if under God, directly so. The gage and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state. Finally, it is imagined as a community, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.⁷⁰

Next, Ernest Renan, in his famous conference, tries to understand “what is a nation?” and starts with his objection against its intermixing with the race. For him, there were not nations in the Antiquity. He asserted that Egypt, China and ancient Chaldea were not nations. Athens and Sparta could be called as the

⁶⁹ Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları*, p. 72.

⁷⁰ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), p. 5-7.

centers of patriotism but they were limited territories. Spain and Italy, before Roman conquest, were only people masses without dynasties and central administrations. However, he claims that France, Germany, England, Italy and Spain, after many adventures, set off toward their national existence. The fusion of the people inside a state is an important factor for this.⁷¹ In the last part of the conference, he offers his definition for the nation: It is a soul and a spiritual existence; and is formed by two elements. One of them is the common and rich legacy of memories, while the other is the consent to live together and to go on investing the received heritage. A past, full of heroism, big men and glories is the social capital on which an idea of nation could be established. Consequently, common glories in the past, receiving honors, having a common will at present, having succeeded important things and wishing the same for the future are the basic elements of being a nation. After his clear definition and while he ends his speech, Renan also adds that the nations are not perpetual entities, they have beginning and they will –maybe be replaced by a European confederation-disappear.⁷²

As it could be understood from the term “imagined”, Anderson claims that the nation is an invented concept. Then, Renan points the “constructed” character of nation. In this context, a number of intellectuals such as Miroslav Hroch, Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm and Anthony Smith and many others have discussed on the historical existence / ancientness / naturalness / fabrication / modernity of the nation.⁷³ In sum, it would be safe to argue that if there is one truth about nation, it is the undefinable character of the term (despite various efforts and different approaches of researchers to understand and to define it). On the other hand, in

⁷¹ Ernest Renan, “What is a Nation?”, text of a conference delivered at the Sorbonne on March 11th, 1882, in Ernest Renan, *Qu’est-ce qu’une nation?*, trans. Ethan Rundell (Paris: Presses-Pocket, 1992).

⁷² Renan, “What is a Nation?”.

⁷³ For detailed description on primordialist, modernist and ethno-symbolist approaches to nation, see Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları*, Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik*.

today's world, the modernity of the nations (rather than their claimed timeless, ancient and natural character) and their roots in ethnic core are highly approved in the field. As it will be shown, nationalism and nation-building would mostly concentrate on the ethnic core of the nations.⁷⁴

Then, it seems proper to move on the concept of nationalism.⁷⁵ Surprisingly, despite its huge effect on community life and world politics in last two centuries, starting of academic interest in nationalism is a relatively new phenomenon. Even the emergence of an academic journal on nationalism studies occurred in 1974 with *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism*. Two reasons are suggested for this “late interest”. First, nationalism has not been seen too significant to be subject of academic research and its importance was ignored. Second, it was thought to be available only in third world countries and it seemed relevant to the ideologies that cause conflicts or the actions of ethnic

⁷⁴ It is certain that other parts of the world provide different “nations” both theoretically and in practice. To illustrate, for Arab world, “nation” and “ethnic and religious community” are closely related and differentiating them is not easy. Arab identity is composed of linguistic, cultural and religious elements. Oral Sander, *Siyasi Tarih-İlkçağlardan 1918'e* (Ankara: İmge, 1989), p. 53.

⁷⁵ Basic works of the field according to chronology could be summarized as such: Carleton Hayes, *Essays on Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1926); *The Historical Evolution of Modern Nationalism* (New York: Macmillan, 1931); Louis Snyder, *The Meaning of Nationalism* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1954); Hans Kohn *Nationalism-Its Meaning and History* (New York: Van Nostrand, 1955); *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Collier, 1967); John Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983); Eric J. Hobsbawm - Terence Ranger (ed.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Anthony D. Smith, *Theories of Nationalism* (London: Duckworth, 1983); Miroslav Hroch, *Social Preconditions of National Revival in Europe: A Comparative Analysis of the Social Composition of Patriotic Groups among the Smaller European Nations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986); Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991); Anthony D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin, 1991); Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994); Craig Calhoun, *Nationalism* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1997); *The Ethnicity Reader-Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Migration*, ed. Montserrat Guibernau & John Rex (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997); Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed* (Los Angeles: University of Columbia, 1996), *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London: Harvard University Press, 2006) etc. As it can easily be understood, the foremost literature on the subject is mostly written in (or translated to) English. This shows the hegemony of Western world and understanding in the field of nationalism studies.

minorities against the settled states.⁷⁶ However, it gradually began to constitute the central point in scientific studies. Moreover, academic journals focusing on nationalism increased in last decades.

Certain historians, sociologists and political scientists (with divergent ideological mindset) suggested definition and content of nationalism. Regardless the chronological order, portraying the views of certain of them thematically could contribute to see the basic approaches. Then, Hans Kohn portrays nationalism as “[...] a state of mind, in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due the nation-state. A deep attachment to one’s native soil, to local traditions and to established territorial authority has existed in varying strength throughout history. But it was not until the end of the eighteenth century that nationalism in the modern sense of the word became a generally recognized sentiment increasingly molding all public and private life.”⁷⁷ Accordingly, common descent, language, territory, customs and tradition, and religion would be factors to distinguish nationalities from the others; however, they are not crucially required. Kohn gives the examples of the USA (not having a common descent) and Switzerland (having four languages) as nationalities and concludes that an active corporate “will” is the essential part of the nationalities and that “will” is called as nationalism.

Next, Anthony Smith defines⁷⁸ the various meanings of nationalism as the process of formation and maintenance of nations and nation states, the conscious of belonging to a nation and having a longing and emotions for the security and prosperity of a nation, a language and symbolism for nation and its role, a cultural doctrine for nations and national will, and an ideology including

⁷⁶ Özkırımlı, *Milliyetçilik Kuramları*, p.12-15.

⁷⁷ Kohn, *Nationalism*, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p. 118-119.

formulas for the realization of national goals and will; and, a social and political movement to achieve the aims of the nation and to verify the national will.⁷⁹

The time of emergence of nationalism brings about discussions. Despite the general opinion that the birth (or acceleration) of the nationalism was related to the French Revolution in the eighteenth century, it is not possible to determine it punctually. Division of Poland (for Lord Acton), the American Revolution (for Benedict Anderson), the English Revolution (for Hans Kohn), Johan Gottlieb Fichte's *The Addresses to the German Nation* (for Elie Kedourie) could be suggested by researchers as the period that the nationalism was born; yet, this shows only differences of their ideas on the character of nationalism; and first appearance of the nationalism remains vague.⁸⁰ For example, according to Kohn, before the age of nationalism, there were reflections close to nationalism. Despite its modernity, the roots of nationalism could be traced back to Ancient Hebrews and Greeks as they were aware of their differences from other peoples.⁸¹ Nonetheless, dedication to and depending upon the national body, namely nationalism in today's meaning, is a modern phenomenon.

For Hugh Seton-Watson, the nationalism, in modern terms, did not exist before the sixteenth century or the French Revolution. Though the differences in terms of language or religion were seen often, they were not thought as a nationalism that would bring national dependence.⁸² Despite the nationalism did not completely abolish the commitment to the religious community and the ruler, it

⁷⁹ This work inevitably focuses on social-cultural traits of nationalism. However, it is a large phenomenon covering various fields. To illustrate, for its economic side, see Sam Pryke, "Economic Nationalism: Theory, History and Prospects", *Global Policy*, 3/3 (September 2012): p. 281-291.

⁸⁰ Smith, *Milli Kimlik*, p. 137.

⁸¹ Kohn, *Nationalism*, p. 9-11.

⁸² Hugh Seton-Watson, "Milliyetçilik ve Çok Milletli İmparatorluklar", text of a conference delivered at Ankara University-Faculty of Letters on 24 March, 1961, *Belleten* 111, trans. Yuluğ Tekin Kurat, vol. XXVIII, (July 1964): p. 525.

brought the concept of a will of the nation and replaced the former commitments in time. Accordingly, the struggle between the Christians and the Muslims in the nineteenth century Volga Region began to be considered between the Russians and the Tatars. For sure, they had not forgotten or left their religions, but what increasingly motivated them and shaped their political behaviors was their nation.⁸³ Similarly, after the nineteenth century, nationalism oriented the loyalty of the soldiers in the armies. Most of the soldiers fought for the fatherland, instead of money or escaping the problems at home. As the Japanese did in 1905, they fought with an unprecedented spirit.⁸⁴

In his work, Hobsbawm speaks of proto-nationalism, too. Under certain circumstances, it is supposed to ease the task of nationalism. Then, he arrays certain factors for the occurrence of proto-nationalism. Language is one of them. If it could be a mediator among the members of a group, a community could emerge. Then, if that community matches up with a territorial state area and vernacular region, it could serve for emergence of a broader nation.⁸⁵ Yet, as Hobsbawm himself confesses, language is not sole or the most important component.⁸⁶ Ethnic roots and religion are counted as the part of proto-nationalism, too, though they are not seen as the essential ones. For Eric Hobsbawm, almost the most determinant criterion of proto-nationalism is the conscious of belonging (to a permanent political unit).⁸⁷

⁸³ Seton-Watson, “Milliyetçilik ve Çok Milletli İmparatorluklar”, p. 526.

⁸⁴ Michael S. Neilberg, *Dünya Tarihinde Savaş*, trans. Mehmet Tanju Akad, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı, 2011), p. 80-81.

⁸⁵ Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 82.

⁸⁶ Anderson claims that the barons who forced King John to sign Magna Carta did not speak English, (nor they described themselves as English) yet, 700 years later, they began to be described as patriots. See *Imagined Communities*. Similarly, it is known that only a quarter of the French people could speak French during the Revolution. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 60.

⁸⁷ Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 100-106.

All those attempts to understand and explain the character of nation and nationalism could form a part of the picture. Therefore, it is possible to infer from these discussions that base of being nation could differ in time and place with emphasis on imagination, ethnic roots or common past and will. Moreover, the principles of nationalism are also grounded on discourses in different tones, from loyalty to the homeland to feeling of belonging to a nation, from territorial sovereignty to a common language and feeling etc. This situation prevented the formation of a single and general theory and paved the way for different types of nationalism to be proposed by researchers. Indeed, the richness of the literature in this field, as well as the fact that almost every related study first starts with redefinitions, is one of the results of the mentioned subject. Again, it has also been instrumental in making the processes of nationalism and nation building in different countries (i.e. Turkey for this study) a subject of investigation.

Next, in addition to the abundance of suggestions to clarify nationalism, it is clear that different types of nationalisms should be determined. First, Hans Kohn's renowned typology refers to "Western" and "Eastern" duality. For Kohn, western type of nationalism is rational and institutional while the latter is organic and mystic.⁸⁸ The western type emerged in England, France and the USA by the middle classes and envisions the nation as the unity and institutionalism of the people willing to live under the same government and laws. On the other hand, a developed middle class was not available in the East; thus, leading group was a number of intellectuals. They see the nation as an organic unity having a soul and mission. Not only in Asia, this type prevailed in Central and Eastern Europe, too.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ While the law is preliminary in the West; local culture, language and traditions have a more significant place in the East; hence, lexicographers, philologists and folklorists had crucial roles in the nationalisms of Eastern Europe and Asia. Smith, *Millî Kimlik*, p. 29. However, more detailed analysis and transitivity will be seen below.

⁸⁹ Kohn, *Nationalism*; also, in Smith, *Millî Kimlik*, p. 131-132.

Though the nationalism would be divided to “Western” and “Eastern” types for some, it is also possible to see differences within the Western type. One of the highly reputed distinctions is the “German” and “French” type of nationalisms.⁹⁰ The *Essay on the Inequality of Human Races* of Joseph Arthur Gobineau (published in 1850’s) suggested that the white race is superior to the yellow and black races; and the civilizations in the world were established thanks to the white race.⁹¹ In this conception, the ties that create a nation are material and concrete as the race, language, religion and culture, and it does not attach importance to the will of the people to form a nation. Johann Gottfried von Herder had similar ideas though he lived before the publication of the work of Gobineau. For Herder, “the nations were not just a collection of individuals, but organisms, comparable to plants or the diverse flowers in the garden of humanity, whilst simultaneously showing affinity with humans through their dynamism and morphology: they grew, had a spirit and a lifespan.”⁹² On the other hand, as seen in the definition of Renan for the nation, the French approach to the nationalism is mostly based on the will of the people. Despite the race and language differences, a common past and consent for a common life prevail here. This clearly shows the French approach to what nationalism is and what it is not also.

⁹⁰ Indeed, placing the German nationalism within Western type of nationalism could be discussed. For Sugar, German nationalism has as much common points with East as it has with Western Europe, “External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism”, p. 20. Yet, whatever the classification is, comparing the French and German types of nationalism deserves attention.

⁹¹ As it will be seen below, this kind of supercilious approaches became influential in creation of Turkish History Thesis as a reaction of the Turks.

⁹² Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 109.

Within this framework, Rogers Brubaker has done extensive work on the comparison of French-German nationalisms, and his approach also helps to understand other nationalisms based on the points of that comparison.⁹³

Accordingly, he starts comparing with the discourse on the problem of Alsace. Whereas the German claims emphasized the “German-ness” of Alsace with linguistic and ethno-cultural references, French intellectuals stressed the will and political preferences of the population in the region. As the French Historian Fustel de Coulanges addressed, “It is possible that Alsace is German in terms of race and language, but it is French in terms of nationality and homeland perception.” The same issue was mentioned in the letters written to Strauss by Renan, in which the latter stated that it would be dangerous to adopt a racist approach with ethnographic and linguistic policies in the determination of borders and warned that the Slavs who followed the same method would also pose a danger to the Germans. Therefore, while nationalism was an ethno-cultural element in Germany, it had a political dimension in France. It is also classified in the literature as ethnic and civic forms of nationalism.

Next, French understanding of nationalism was state-centered and assimilating, while the German type was *volk*-centered and dissimilating. It resulted from the fact that the nation-state in France was gradually shaped around one political and cultural center. The medium of the central government (school, army, administration, transportation network etc.) contributed to growing of nationalism through one center. On the other hand, for the Germans, feeling of nationality had developed before the nation-state and did not have a political character at the beginning. Hence, German nation developed as an organic community in terms of cultural, linguistic and ethnic elements, rather than

⁹³ Brubaker’s views described here are compiled from his following works: Rogers Brubaker, *Fransa ve Almanya’da Vatandaşlık ve Ulus Ruhu*, trans. Vahide Pekel (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi Yayınları, 2009); “‘Civic’ and ‘Ethnic’ Nationalism” in *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Massachutes, and London: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 132-146; “Fransa ve Almanya’da Göç, Vatandaşlık ve Ulus-Devlet: Karşılaştırmalı Bir Tarihsel Analiz”, in *Vatandaşlığın Dönüşümü-Üyelikten Haklara*, ed. Ayşe Kadioğlu, trans. Can Cemgil (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2008), p. 55-91.

political values. After 1871, *Deutsches Reich* took initiatives to develop national consciousness in political terms.

A related quote can contribute to a better understanding of the subject: “the wish for all citizens of Utopia to speak Utopian, and the desire to make everyone who speaks Utopian citizens of Utopia are different things.” The former one represents the French version of nationalism, whereas the latter implies the German way. Still, one should bear in mind that there can be transitional approaches at each case.

Another reputed typology focuses on Eastern European nationalisms and distinguishes them both within each other and from western type of nationalism. For Peter Sugar, Eastern Europe nationalism differs from the Western type,⁹⁴ and could be evaluated in four leagues: bourgeois, aristocratic, bureaucratic and popular. Bourgeois nationalism is seen among the Czechs. The prosperity of Bohemia and Silesia regions gave birth to a strong bourgeoisie, which could lead the nationalism. Although Czech bourgeois nationalism resembles to Western liberalism in terms of its defense for constitutional monarchy, parliamentarianism, federalism, paternalistic democracy and economic emphasis, it provides more historical and traditionalist appearance,⁹⁵ which placed it within the group of Eastern nationalism.

Then, Poland and Hungary present the case of aristocratic nationalism. Unlike the Czechs, they did not have a strong middle class; and the rulers accepted the need of cooperation with the nobles to rule. Those nobles saw the nationalism as a new argument in their struggle against the rulers. The superior role of the nobles and their political view and activities regarding nation (rather than

⁹⁴ The availability of similarities also should be kept in mind. Anticlerical, constitutional and egalitarian characters are from those similarities. Sugar, “External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism”, p. 46.

⁹⁵ Sugar, “External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism”, p. 47.

concentrating on economic reforms) defined the character of nationalism in Poland and Hungary for decades.⁹⁶

Sugar delineates the nationalism in Romania, Greece and Turkey in bureaucratic trait. The sole type of nationalism that would be supported by all Romanians was irredentist one for national unity; and it was made motto by the bureaucracy. Similarly, though merchants and middle class started the Greek national movement, they could not lead it as they were scattered over Europe, and the government and bureaucracy managed to be heard⁹⁷ all over the country.⁹⁸ Turkey, having neither dominant aristocracy nor bourgeoisie, relied on the schools educating staff for bureaucracy; hence it is classified under bureaucratic nationalism.

The last league of Eastern Europe nationalisms is the popular one. It was born in Serbia and Bulgaria. They did not have nobles; and Slav merchants were not too strong to lead the movement. On the other hand, the views of larger peasant groups were against the landowners and this contributed to popular nationalism. To illustrate, the leader of the Serbian Revolt against the Ottomans, George Petrovic, or Black George, was also a popular figure. Local clergymen and Serbian/Bulgarian merchants living outside the Ottoman Empire developed it.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism", p. 48-49.

⁹⁷ Sugar, "External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism", p. 50-51.

⁹⁸ However, the role of lexicographs and philologists in the emergence of the Greek nationalism should not be underrated. Having seen Europe, young Greek intellectuals felt desire to get closer to their ancestors, like Pericles and Socrates, and decided to link modern Greeks to them. Adamantios Koraes, in 1803, called for to deserve their "glorious" ancestors and past; and wished to arouse the Greeks. For the narrative, see Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

⁹⁹ It is crucial to state that at first phase, the Serbian uprisings were against the oppression of the Janissaries, rather than nationalistic concerns. According to Charles and Barbara Jelavich, if certain administrative arrangements had been implemented by the Ottoman state, the national insurrection of the Serbs could have been put off, *The Establishment of the Balkan National States* (Washington: Washington University Press, 1999), p. 28-31. This argument could be verified with the letter of Black George to the Ottomans. In this letter, he stated that they respected the Ottoman Sultan. For George, they were ready to resist against the Ottoman army;

Vojvodina and the Military Border Serbians; and Istanbul, Russia, Wallachia, and later Serbia Bulgarians shaped the native factors within popular nationalism.¹⁰⁰ These all framed the popular nationalism of Serbia and Bulgaria.¹⁰¹ But it should be noted that the type of the nationalism in one country/community could not sharply be distinguished from the case of another one.¹⁰² Traces of different types of nationalism may be seen in one place, though one of them is dominant. Moreover, many more typologies for nationalism could

but they were rather willing to calm down if some regulations they desired would have been implemented. BOA., HAT., 982/41642, H. 30.07.1228/29 July 1813.

¹⁰⁰ Sugar, “External and Domestic Roots of Eastern European Nationalism”, p. 52-53.; Though the Serbian Revolt is considered as one of –or the first- national movements within the Ottoman Empire, their aim was to continue their lives in the Ottoman system but with the desired regulations. Moreover, usually referred “Pan-Slavism” or “Orthodox unity” did not play as much role as the international conjuncture did. To illustrate, Russia often acted according to the international situation on the matter of the Serbian uprising. See Jelavich’s *The Establishment of the Balkan National States*. Only after the 1860’s, the nationalist aims of the Serbian governments existed. This period was marked with irredentist intentions to join Bosnia, Hercegovina, Montenegro, Banat and Northern Albania to Serbia. For Serbians, the feelings regarding the past also played role in their nationalistic ideas. Being Slav or Orthodox could not make them completely different or “special” among the others. Thus, the memories from their ancient kingdom were maintained in songs, romances and certain daily routines. These facilitated Serbian nationalism. Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 100-103.

¹⁰¹ The Bulgarian nationalism has various dimensions, too. Its anti-Greek character should be stressed first. Especially, being subject to the Greek Patriarchate should have been ignored. For the Bulgarians, they had to choose their own religious representatives. Therefore, they established the national church before the national state. Most of the Bulgarian nationalists were of the same opinion on the church question. However, after it was solved, they diverged on the character of the national movement. Continuing within the Ottoman Empire, getting independence, joining to a Balkan federation, receiving support from foreign powers were among the subjects discussed. The leading figures eventually decided that breaking off from the Ottomans with a large scaled peasant revolt would be the best way. For the journey of the revolt see Jelavich’s, “The Bulgarian National Movement to 1876”, in *The Establishment of the Balkan National States*, p. 128-140.

¹⁰² Çağlar Keyder treats the Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian nationalisms in a way that those provinces got richer in time, an educated middle class emerged and they were close to Europe to inherit the nationalist ideals. Thus, they were politically and intellectually contributed to their nationalism. “The Ottoman Empire”, in *After Empire Multiethnic Societies and Nation Building-The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires*, ed. Karen Barkey & Mark von Hagen (USA and UK: Westview, 1997), p. 33. Stephen G. Xydis seems to share this idea as he attributes a role to the Western powers in the construction of the Greek nationalism. “Modern Greek Nationalism” in *Nationalism in Eastern Europe*, p. 218. However, the factors are manifold and the nationalisms in the Balkans are highly messy looking.

be offered.¹⁰³ Yet, the important point is to emphasize the inadequacy of one and general theory of nationalism covering all dimensions and cases.¹⁰⁴

To conclude, it is needed to re-emphasize that it is hardly possible to find just one model of nationalism anywhere. For instance, within the bureaucratic nationalism type, popular nationalism elements can also be found. More importantly, there may even be crossovers between types of ethnic or civic nationalism that are thought as clearly demarcated. For Brubaker, it is impossible or futile to try to explain any state or any nationalist movement with a single model of nationalism, since these models are intertwined in many examples with varying gravities attributed. From this point forth, Brubaker offers a “modest”

¹⁰³ To illustrate, John Breuilly divides the nationalism in terms of separatist, reformist and unifying character; and also pairs them as “against non-state political organizations” and “against states”. *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 9. He also revises the definitions and types of the nationalism previously claimed by various researchers.

¹⁰⁴ The process of Balkan nationalisms and building of the national states exemplify this situation well. Before the nineteenth century, and because of the policies of the Ottoman Sultans and Orthodox Church, the Orthodox-Christian population of the Balkans described themselves as “Christian”, without any reference to ethnic roots. Moreover, the term “Greek” (*Rum*) was used for the Orthodox population of Rumelia; and even the people with Bulgarian origin introduced themselves as “Greek” when asked. See Raymond Detrez, “Pre-National Identities in the Balkans”, in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans Vol I-National Ideologies and Language Policies*, ed. Roumen Daskalov&Tchavdar Marinov (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2013), p. 35-37. If they were Orthodox, they were called as “Greeks” regardless their Greek, Albanian, Bulgarian, Gagauz or Vlach origins. Early Greek nationalism was affected from this understanding. As the 1822 Constitution of Epidavros stressed, the nationhood was not based on ethnic origins but on the belief in Christ. Religion and citizenship were the keys of being Greek. What Detrez claims here is that he did not ignore the availability of the awareness of ethnic identities, but adherence to the religious community was supreme. On the other hand, Greek nationalism revealed the traces of irredentism. However, its demographic source was limited when compared to its territorial arguments. Hence, promoting the Greek language and a cultural campaign for Hellenization was initiated by the nationalists. Neophytos Dokas, Adamantios Korais, Panayiotis Kodrikas and Rigas Velestinlis were the pioneers of this movement. Roumen Daskalov, “Bulgarian-Greek Dis/Entanglements”, in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans*, p. 205-207. On the other side, Bulgarian nationalism unfolded based on the linguistic concerns and partly as a reaction to the danger of Greek nationalism. When the language is accepted as the key of nationhood, the Macedonian Question would be solved for the benefit of the Bulgarians. Then, the Greeks, discarding the importance of the language, installed the criteria such as consciousness, ethnic roots and historical rights. Actually, the Macedonian Question forced the related groups to apply to history. The Greeks, Bulgarians and Serbians began to announce their historical claims for Macedonia with reference to ancient or medieval past. Daskalov argued that the Greeks had various tools to select to define the nation in time and they changed according to the needs. But indeed, other Balkan nationalisms adopted different instruments, too, which was determined according to the needs and characteristics of the question.

concept to define the characteristics of nationalism: that is the *state-framed* understanding of nationhood and nationalism. According to the author, regarding state-framed nationalism, “nation is conceived as congruent with the state, and as institutionally and territorially framed by it.”¹⁰⁵

State-framed nationalism can foster linguistic, cultural and ethnic aspect of nationhood and there would not be any contradiction between civic or ethnic interpretations. Actually, development of French and German nationalisms included both ethnic and civic elements. It is the state that frames the nation and nationalism according to the needs of the time and state itself.¹⁰⁶ Accordingly, most of the authoritarian states of the twentieth century shaped their nationalism in this model.

This approach expresses well that nationalism, which is essentially a political issue, has pragmatic aims. Because trying to define the type of nationalism in any country with a single model makes it difficult to see the different priorities of the representatives of that nationalism. However, thinking that a state can promote a nationalism based on its needs or that nationalist movements against a larger state can put forward various claims will contribute to a better understanding of the adventures that cannot be explained by a single model. Thus, Brubaker's approach will help to gain insight into many nationalist movements, including Turkey's.

Then, it is understood that the cases which show the strong intervention of the state in forming and shaping the nationalism should not be expected to adopt one way of the approaches to nationalism, which is in fact contrary to the pragmatic side of the politics. It can also be claimed that state-framed nationalism can use

¹⁰⁵ Brubaker, “ ‘Civic’ and ‘Ethnic’ Nationalism”, p. 144. He also mentions of counter-state nationalism that means “opposition to the territorial and institutional frame of an existing state”.

¹⁰⁶ It could show resemblances to “bureaucratic” type of nationalism suggested by Sugar, by pointing to the state as the main actor. However, Brubaker's definition implies that the state can voluntarily and deliberately introduce different types of nationalism.

different types of nationalism at the same time, but it also includes the transition from one to the other in case of need. The shift from ethnic to civic way of nationalism in Greece, albeit in relatively new era, could reveal that.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, it seems that the issue here depends on the importance attributed by the state to political and cultural needs.

2.2. Nation-Building and its Tools

After evaluating the debates on nation and nationalism, it seems appropriate to adopt the theory of modernity of the nations, also by attributing importance to their ethnic cores and past symbols. Therefore, as modernist researchers put forward, the nationalism has an important place in the formation and shaping of the nations. This would bring us to another subject - that is the nation-building process.

In the nineteenth century France, communication among the people was not uniform as the French language was not familiar to most of the population.¹⁰⁸ Then, travel among the regions was a rare action. Similarly, only a minor part of the people could speak Italian in nineteenth century Italia, where there was merely one railway line. Consequently, French and Italian rulers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries carried out policies to build commonality among the people who would become the French or Italians. In this process, the rulers (or the state) took the control of state education by making it compulsory, promoted national language in education, religion and all public spheres by dismissing the others, brought obligatory military service to turn the people into a nation, and concentrated on infrastructure and public works to integrate and link separate individuals to each other. Despite it could shortly be

¹⁰⁷ Gizem Alioğlu Çakmak, "Greek Nationalism Versus Europeanization: From Ethnic to Civic Nationalism?", *Balkan Araştırma Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 8/2 (2019): p. 201-234.

¹⁰⁸ According to Hobsbawm, only 12-13% of the Frenchmen could speak French regularly, and 50% of them even could not speak it, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, p. 60.

summarized for France and Italy, as Tilly and Hobsbawm states, most of the European governments made efforts to homogenize their population.¹⁰⁹

Then, nation building means a project and a set of efforts to construct a collective identity for the legitimation of the public power in a certain place. This process looks at both past and future. While preparing the community for the future, it braces up from the traditions, customs and institutions; and re-interprets them with national motivations. The right for sovereignty and the awareness of the people of their “uniqueness” are the mainstay of the nation building.¹¹⁰ According to a report of the United Nations, the followings are the crucial compounds of the nation building: political will and adequate fiscal sources; providing the security of the people; carrying out political reforms for the formation of the civil society; economic steps for business, industry and agriculture; and reinforcing the legal system.¹¹¹ The efforts of the state “to define a nation and impose that definition on ordinary people” can also be attributed to the nation building.¹¹² The ultimate goal of the nation building could be argued as “the formation of countries in which citizens feel a sufficient amount of commonality of interests, goals and preferences so that they do not wish to separate from each other.”¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Alberto Alesina & Brvony Reich, Nation-building, https://scholar.harvard.edu/files/alesina/files/nation_building_feb_2015_0.pdf, accessed on 03.10.2020.

¹¹⁰ Armin von Bogdandany et al., “State-Building, Nation-Building, and Constitutional Politics in Post Conflict Situations: Conceptual Clarifications and an Appraisal of Different Approaches”, *Max Planck Yearbook of United Nations Law*, vol. 9, 2005, p. 586.

¹¹¹ Esther Pan, “United Nations: Nation Building”, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/united-nations-nation-building>, accessed on 05.01.2020.

¹¹² Charles Tilly, “How Empires End”, *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation Building*, p. 8.

¹¹³ For the nations that have a state; building of nation and state was usually synchronized. What formed the nation and state show resemblances, such as the emergence of common political, cultural and commercial fields and creation of a legal system applying to all members of the

As mentioned above, different types of nationalisms could be seen in different countries, or even in the same place, as it was seen in the French and German case. This is valid for the nation building, too. The dichotomy of “ethnic” and “civic” approaches is available in the field. For many examples in the East, as long as the members of the nation speak the same language, diversities would vanish and the nation would be homogenized. This could be called as the “civic form” of nation building, which embraces all citizens and gives them equal rights. On the other hand, the “ethnic form” of nation building existed in Germany, Eastern Europe and other certain places. It is an exclusive way of being a nation and attaches priority to ethnic and cultural factors.¹¹⁴

When it is about the tools of nation building, the methods are assorted. There is little doubt that history and language play the key roles though they are not the sole agents.¹¹⁵ Still, it is not too easy to distinguish this process as independent from each other. Actually, many of them are intermingled. Language marked a great significance at this point. As touched above, there was not a linguistic unity in early modern societies and the language was not thought as related to the nation. The end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries witnessed the unity in languages of the communities. Intellectuals and historians became aware of its importance to study the national histories and disseminate it to their audience.¹¹⁶ Consequently, leading men of many countries played role in

nation. But whereas the former is about the development of national identity, the latter is the construction of a functioning state. Alesina & Reich, *Nation-building*, p. 3. Therefore, an assumption like “nationalism, nation states and nation building are always integral” would be fallacious

¹¹⁴ Karen Barkey, “Thinking About Consequences of Empire”, *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation Building*, p. 100.

¹¹⁵ Role of history in nation building will be mentioned in the next sub-title.

¹¹⁶ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 51.

the studies and developments of the national languages,¹¹⁷ whose role in nation building began to be understood.¹¹⁸ The language was one of the fertile methods to prove the ancientness of the nation, show its continuity and provide the unity.¹¹⁹

Museums, archives, compulsory military service, literacy and school education and public monuments also are among the bases of the nation building. For example, in addition to universities and research associations, the museums were the places where national narratives are generated and announced to the public. Almost all states in Europe founded their museums on history, archaeology, military and art during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.¹²⁰ To illustrate, the museums in Vilnius and Bucharest were the central elements of building a national identity in Lithuania and Romania.¹²¹ All of the materials exhibited in the museums would somehow reflect the uniqueness of the nation and would give a pride to the members of that nation. Then, the period after the French Revolution led up to the foundation of the national archives. The collection and organization of the documents belonging to a nation required a central authority,

¹¹⁷ Czech historian, the Father of the Czechs, Frantisek Pallacky wrote on the language issue as such: “*The national language is undeniably the most fundamental and dearest aspect of our Bohemian ancestors’ legacy to future generations. It was through this medium that the Czechs were able to form an independent nation and acquire a history which shall forever occupy an illustrious place in the annals of the world. It is therefore crucial for our generation to preserve this language. In an era when nearly all lesser European nations are, as it were, competing to return to their previously neglected national languages, the most sacred symbol of their existence... (Think of the Poles, Hungarians, the Dutch, Danes and Finns), it would be inappropriate for the Czechs to fall behind.*” Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 138.

¹¹⁸ For an example, see R. J. W. Evans, “Language and State Building: The Case of the Habsburg Monarchy”, in *Austrian History Yearbook*, 35, (2004): p. 1-24.

¹¹⁹ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 65. Many parts of the world could present examples of the relation between language and national identity. For some in post-Soviet era, see Jale Garibova, *Sovyet Sonrası Dönemde Türk Dilli Halklar, Dil Sorunu – Yeniden Biçimlenen Kimlikler*, ed. Sema Aslan & Rena Salehova (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2012).

¹²⁰ *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. xiii.

¹²¹ Ilaria Porciani, “Master Narratives in Museum”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 7.

which purposed to declare the rich past of its nation. By 1800, numerous states had collected their documents under an “archive”. Centralization and classification of the archival documents was highly related to nationalistic concerns.¹²²

Next, for centuries, the armies belonged to the kings or dynasties. But after the nineteenth century, they gradually became the symbol of the nation. Compulsory military service in Europe began to be accepted as making the young men a part of the nation. In addition to instructing military technique, the armies had to teach the soldiers to be proud of the national traditions, initiate the national language and establish a commitment of the soldiers to the nation. Therefore, the armies were reshaped as an institution on the service of the nation, rather than an oppressing group.¹²³

As the project of nation building targets all the members of a nation; the places where almost all of the members attend gain more importance for that aim: that is the school and education system. Though historical-scientific narratives mean much for the fostering of national ideas, it should be admitted that their audience is relatively limited. Therefore, penetrating into the minds of each one in a community requires the organizing school education system accordingly. For Augustin Thierry, French patriotism would be spread in a fast way through the dissemination of knowledge. Lithuanian historian Simanas Daukantas argued that his writings should not have been limited to a group of elite but should have reached to the Lithuanian mothers who would tell her children about the valor of their ancestors.¹²⁴ Hence, schools and education could be thought as ideal

¹²² Before the sources were completely open to all of the historians, only “accredited” historians got access to the archive to compile the national histories. Harry Elmer Barnes, *A History of Historical Writing*, (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1962), p. 228.

¹²³ Neilberg, *Dünya Tarihinde Savaş*, p. 83.

¹²⁴ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 50.

environment to circulate information regarding the history, culture, and tradition of a people to a larger group in order to turn them into a nation.

Daily life routines and practices are another dimension of the nation building. Setting feasts and holidays, promoting national signs like the flags and anthems and transmitting stamps and paper money would address to the ordinary people at any time and place of their lives.¹²⁵ From the Turkish case, Erik jan Zürcher mentions the technology (cinemas and radio) as another tool to reach the members of the society.¹²⁶ Literature and poetry could be added here, too. To illustrate, for the Serbians, their success and valor in the remote past had been forgotten because of the foreign domination. Remembering and reminding the people that history became possible through folklore and poetry and the poets helped it spread among the people.¹²⁷ Similarly, the Czech philologist Vaclav Hanka worked for the construction of the national awareness among the Czechs. In addition to his poems, he also compiled the traditional songs and dealt with the publishing of ancient Czech remnants.¹²⁸ Oral or written cultural elements and their travelling in the daily routine and among the ordinary members of a group would be thought eventually to give a national belonging and pride and to provide the (assumed or real) continuation and unity.

¹²⁵ John Breuilly, “Nationalism and the Making of National Pasts” in *Nations and Their Histories-Constructions and Representations*, ed. Susana Carvalho&François Gemene, (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 17.

¹²⁶ Erik jan Zürcher, “İki Genç Türkoloğun Kemalist Türkiye’yi Keşfi: Robert Anhegger ve Andreas Tietze’nin Seyahat Günceleri”, in *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), p. 296.

¹²⁷ Mark Suica, “The Image of the Battle of Kosovo (1389) Today: A Historic Event, a Moral Pattern, or the Tool of Political Manipulation”, *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States-History, Nationhood and the Search for Origins*, ed. by R. J. W. Evans and Guy P. Marchal (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 164.

¹²⁸ Frantisek Smahel, “ ‘Old Czechs Were Hefty Heroes: the Construction and Reconstruction of Czech National History in its Relationship to the ‘Great’ Medieval Past”, in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 245.

Next, art and monuments deserve an interest as they are among the shareholders of the nation building though there were inadequate studies on this matter. Building monuments in cities with nationalistic concerns could reveal many examples.¹²⁹ Especially late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were the time of intensified efforts of erecting public monuments, which mixed the art, education and legitimization.¹³⁰ Thus, it is possible to argue that the nation builders aimed at appealing to the people both in intangible and concrete ways as much as possible.

Eric Hobsbawm gives credit also to tradition (or the invention of tradition) in nation building processes. For him, most of the traditions that seem old are relatively new and sometimes invented. By this way, namely through the invention of the tradition, certain values and behaviors are motivated and a continuity with an appropriate history is provided.¹³¹ “For all invented traditions, so far as possible, use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesion” says Hobsbawm, and continues “Even revolutionary movements backed their innovations by reference to a “people’s past” [...]”¹³²

It is obvious in Hobsbawm’s ideas that history is a source of the formation of the nation; but more than “what actually has happened?”; “what has been selected from the past?” gains importance in this process. Historians contribute to the shaping of the images of the past; and “invented traditions” with the help of history embody the nation, and its derivatives: nationalism, the nation-state,

¹²⁹ See Sergiusz Michaliski, *Public Monuments: Art in Political Bondage 1879-1997* (London: Reaktion Books, 1998); Toby Clark, *Art and Propaganda in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997).

¹³⁰ The role of building monuments in constructing the nation in Turkey was analyzed in details in the work of Faik Gür, “Sculpting the Nation in Early Republican Turkey”, *Historical Research*, 86/232, (May 2013): p. 342-372.

¹³¹ Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions” in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 1-2.

¹³² Hobsbawm, *Inventing Traditions*, p. 12-13.

national symbols etc.¹³³ When there was not a “suitable” history, it could be re-invented. Actually, for most of the time, a totally appropriate past never existed; so, the historians –willingly or without noticing- became political figures to shape the past,¹³⁴ as well as the future.

Similarly, according to Barkey, regardless their historical backgrounds, the nation states were willing to nationalize and build the nation. Defining the members of the nation, either in a declared territory or outside of it; and furnishing the people with the consciousness of their nation-ness were the ultimate goals of this process. In this project, history was important but “real history” was not crucially needed. Inventing the traditions and myths or applying to remote history to select useful tools to build the nation was not unusual.¹³⁵ For Renan, forgetting or historical error is a significant agent in the construction of a nation. Having numerous common things and forgetting many historical events are also from the essence of being a nation. In France, nobody knows whether s/he is Burgondian, Alain, Taifale or Visigoth. But all the French must have forgotten the thirteenth century massacres in the south. Moreover, it would be impossible to find ten families in France with proof of Frankish origin. Therefore, in Renan’s words, “a modern nation is the historical result of a number of facts that have converged in the same direction.”¹³⁶

¹³³ Hobsbawm, *Inventing Traditions*, p. 13.

¹³⁴ Eric Hobsbawm, *Tarih Üzerine*, trans. Osman Akınhay (Ankara: Bilim ve Sanat Yayınları, 1999), p. 9-10.

¹³⁵ Barkey, “Thinking About Consequences of Empire”, p. 103. For Leon Poliakov, the myths of origins were influential in nationalism and Europe saw the formation and justification of the myths in the nineteenth century. *The Aryan Myth-A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe*, trans. Howard Edmund (New York: Basic Books, 1974).

¹³⁶ Renan, “What is a Nation?”.

2.3. Use of History in Nation Building

The famous quotations of Massimo d’Azeglio (Italian statesman) “We have made Italy: now we must make Italians”¹³⁷ and of Jozef Pilsudski (Polish president) “What generates the state is not the nation; the state makes the nation”¹³⁸ make sense for the nation building processes. Although that process could show differences, the role of the history is incontrovertible. History has been one of the most useful tools to set the national identity. It enables the people to mention a set of “sameness” like “being from same nation, coming from same place, having same values” etc. History, giving this sameness, served for turning the people into the members of a nation. Even when there were not common values, history was used to form the commonality.¹³⁹

It could be argued that references to history in nation-building differed from country to country. If we think in terms of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, applying to history for the USA, which did not have a very long past, or for the UK, which did not have to resort to history in order to gain a strong position in current international relations, were not very intense. Nevertheless, although the proportion varied, almost every country resorted to history. Starting from the nineteenth century, the search for origins in remote or Medieval past¹⁴⁰ for the revival of national identity in many countries became trend. Although

¹³⁷ Nick Carter, “Nation, Nationality, Nationalism and Internationalism in Italy, from Cavour to Mussolini”, *The Historical Journal*, 39/2, (1996): p. 545.

¹³⁸ Hobsbawm, *Milletler ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 66.

¹³⁹ History is used not only in the formation of the national identity but also of the political, cultural, religious and sexual ones. Akif Pamuk, *Kimlik ve Tarih-Kimliğin İnşasında Tarihin Kullanımı* (İstanbul: Yeni İnsan Yayınları, 2014), p. 18.

¹⁴⁰ The reasons for emphasizing ancient or Medieval past are manifold. Some nations did not exist in the ancient time, so they either had to invent themselves in ancient era or highlight the Medieval past. For some nations, the Medieval times were the dark ages for their nation (because of religious oppression or foreign domination), thus, they felt obliged to look at the remote past. Though the motivations change in this way, what does not change is the need to look at the past to shape “today” and future; and the examples will be shown below.

different eras of history were selected as focus point, the desire to rely on the past was not abandoned. The seeking of “a usable origin”, for instance, was needed in Ireland in the nineteenth century and the glorious past of the island with brave kings, saints and wise men were combined with history and legend to promote the Irish nationality against the Catholic identity.¹⁴¹ Similarly, the Norwegian Kingdom of the Middle Ages was counted as a unique sample for the modern Norwegian state during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, since the Norwegian Kingdom was envisaged as marvelous.¹⁴² The situation in another Nordic country was not much different. The remote past of the Finnish was continuously built from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. The aim of the *Kansanvalistus* (national enlightenment) was to inform the people on their rooted history and the need to awaken to provide their lost unity. As appropriate to Smith’s approach, “a heroic age and a subsequent decline” was applied to the history of Finland and what emerged was the need to discover the remote past with the help of archaeology, ethnography and folklore, surviving language and original historical sources.¹⁴³ The results of this awakening program gave the idea that “the Finns had now been living in Finland since the Ice Age”.¹⁴⁴

The Dutch government intended to construct a national museum in Amsterdam in 1872 and the architectural plan was prepared to show “the glorious past of the

¹⁴¹ Bernadette Cunningham, “Transmission and Translation of Medieval Irish Sources in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries”, in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 15.

¹⁴² Jan Eivind Myhre, “The Decline of Norway: Grief and Fascination in Norwegian Historiography on the Middle Ages”, in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 28.

¹⁴³ Derek Fewster, “‘Braves Step out of the Night of the Barrows’: Regenerating the Heritage of Early Medieval Finland”, in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 31-32.

¹⁴⁴ Fewster, “Regenerating the Heritage of Early Medieval Finland”, p. 50.

fatherland”.¹⁴⁵ On the other hand, a Dutch state or king of the Netherlands did not exist in Medieval. Rather, the Dutch state of the future was then a geographical area filled with principalities. The sixteenth century saw the birth of the Dutch state after its strife with the King of Spain. Therefore, the glorious past of the Dutch nation was attributed to the period after the sixteenth century. According to the state archivist, Reinier Bakhuizen van den Brink, the seventeenth century marked the heyday of the Dutch nation and building the nation had to start from that point. As mentioned above, the Middle Ages could have meant the supremacy of the Church for many Western countries, which is contrary to the national identity for some cases.¹⁴⁶ Therefore, highlighting the remote past or Medieval would not be suitable for the Dutch national historiography and this caused the Dutch historians to tend to late history to derive the advantages.

Greece is among the countries that ignored and refused its Medieval past –due to her Byzantine and Ottoman hostility- and emphasized the ancient times in the era of national historiographies in the nineteenth century. The influential scholar of Greece, Adamantios Korais, wrote his well-known *Memoire sur l’etat actuel de la civilization de la Grece* (*Report on the Present State of Civilization in Greece*) in 1803 claiming that the history of the Greek nation dated back to Ancient Greece; and the following periods of foreign domination could not be reference point for the new nation state.¹⁴⁷ Such an approach played role even in the transformation of the Byzantian-Christian names into the Ancient Greek forms like Delphi and Sparta.

¹⁴⁵ Peter Raedts, “A Serious Case of Amnesia: the Dutch and their Middle Ages”, in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁶ Building or strengthening the national identity with the religious concerns is another subject, which could be seen in certain cases of nationalization.

¹⁴⁷ Johannes Niehoff-Panagiotidis, “To Whom Does Byzantium Belong? Greeks, Turks and the Present of the Medieval Balkans”, in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 145.

For a clear view of the journey, a zoom on the activities of the individual historians could be needed. It is known that the nineteenth century historians seemed much more inclined to the study of history. However, the subject to be investigated started to show differences from the previous periods. Historians should have acted different from the official state chroniclers. They became curious about the study of their own nation; and nation-states oriented them to write the history of their own nations.¹⁴⁸ Thus, they made efforts to renew the components of the history. The French historian Augustin Thierry complained about the French historiography as it covered only the princely families and he suggested that an accurate history of France should have included the entire French nation; and that nation should have been the hero of the narrative. The wish in that era was to write a true history of the nation from its ancient origins to the modern times. This movement occurred by not only academic concerns but also political ambitions. Then, the endeavors in establishing relations and continuities with ancient Gaul in France, with the Anglo-Saxon period in England, with the Hussite movement in Czechia and with the Roman Empire in Italy reflect the aforementioned ambitions.¹⁴⁹ In compatible with the call of Thierry for a national history including the adventures of the French nation as expressed above,¹⁵⁰ France, Great Britain, Italy, Germany and many others had historians (like Jules Michelet,¹⁵¹ Johann Gustav Bernhard Droysen,¹⁵² Heinrich

¹⁴⁸ İlhan Tekeli, “Uluslaşma Süreçleri ve Ulusçu Tarih Yazımı Üzerine”, Academia, https://www.academia.edu/29816537/ULUSLA%C5%9EMA_S%C3%9CRE%C3%87LER%C4%B0_VE_ULUS%C3%87U_TAR%C4%B0H_YAZIMI_%C3%9CZER%C4%B0NE, accessed on 10.05.2020.

¹⁴⁹ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 66.

¹⁵⁰ Lionel Gossman, *Between History and Literature*, (USA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. 93.

¹⁵¹ His 16-volumed great work *Histoire de France* takes the French history to the ninth century.

¹⁵² He wrote *Geschichte der preussischen Politik* and served for the German unification with his book and activities.

von Sybel,¹⁵³ and J. G. Fichte¹⁵⁴ etc.) who brought their nations to ancient or medieval past to build and fortify the national identity.¹⁵⁵

The situation was not different in many other parts of Europe in the nineteenth century. The stimulating work of Monika Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, explicitly reveals the works and efforts of historians in the progress of the nationalism and formation of the nation states. She selects five historians from the Central and Eastern Europe (Joachim Lelewel from Poland; Simonas Daukantas from Lithuania; Frantisek Palacky from Czechia; Mihaly Horvath from Hungaria; Mihail Kogalniceanu from Romania). All these historians produced their works in the nineteenth century and made a great impact regarding national histories (and languages to some extent), nationalism and nation-state in their countries. They were influential in shaping the vision for the past of their nation.¹⁵⁶

For Baar, the activities of those selected historians could not be explained only with historical writings. Moreover, they were at the center of nation building. Therefore, they produced not only historical narratives, but engaged in language and literature studies, editing sources and publishing scientific periodicals.¹⁵⁷ As

¹⁵³ Bismarck appointed him as the director of the Prussian archives, and Sybel compiled *Die Begründung des deutschen Reiches durch Wilhelm I*, which had effect on the German unification.

¹⁵⁴ His *The Addresses to the German Nation* was touched above as one of the milestones of nationalism.

¹⁵⁵ George Iggers, "Nationalism and Historiography, 1789-1996", in *Writing National Histories-Western Europe since 1800*, ed. Stefan Berger, Mark Donovan & Kevin Passmore (USA and Canada: Routledge, 1999), p. 15.

¹⁵⁶ Another book on this subject belongs to George Peabody Gooch, *History and Historians in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Longmans, 1967). He focuses on historians individually, the ideological backgrounds, approaches and ecoles and the countries.

¹⁵⁷ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 11.

Kogalniceanu stated, they were not only writing, but also making history.¹⁵⁸ From those selected historians, Lelewel focused on the peasantry and the democracy of ancient Polish communities, as the foreign effects would later cause its decline. His famous *Polska wieków średnich* (*Poland in the Middle Ages*) shows the traces of his focus.¹⁵⁹ Next, Daukantas wrote *Darbai senųjų lietuvių ir žemaičių* (*The Deeds of the Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians*) in 1822 and *Senovės-Lėtuvių Kalnienų ir Žemajtių* (*The Character of Ancient Lithuanians*) in 1845.¹⁶⁰ As it is seen, their interest to emphasize the ancientness of their nations would serve the creation of a national identity among their compatriots.

Palacky played the similar role for the Czechs. He started his journey as a historian when he was awarded in a competition organized by the Royal Bohemian Academy. He also took part in learned societies while he prepared the publication of six-volume *Archiv Cesky* (*Czech Archive*). His book, *Dějiny národu českého v Čechách a v Moravě* (*The History of the Czech Nation in Bohemia and Moravia*) settled the Czechs on the center; and he was called as the “father of the nation.” His highly important work, *Dejiny* (*History*), was thought as the most qualified national history of Czechs, which mentioned the ancient Czechs and their appreciation of democracy and the conflicts between German and Slavic culture and the significance of the Hussites.¹⁶¹ Actually, this national revival and related activities were the desire of the Czechs. But this desire required a richer and more famous history that the Czechs lacked. Hence,

¹⁵⁸ Alexandru Zub, *Mihail Kogalniceanu istoric* (Iași, 1974), p. 262, as cited in Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 5.

¹⁵⁹ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 24-25.

¹⁶⁰ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 27-28.

¹⁶¹ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 31-34.

creating it was another need.¹⁶² History writing was one of the effective ways to meet this demand.¹⁶³

Like Palacky, Horvath was also awarded in a competition organized by Marczibanyi Society in 1834 on the civilization of the Ancient Hungarians. In his praised work, Horvath mentioned the moral and social conditions of the ancient Hungarians. He also participated in another contest of the Hungarian Academy in 1836 and wrote on the history of commerce and industry of the Hungarians. In following years, he joined the Hungarian Academy as a member in 1841 and took part in the preparations of the history textbooks for schools. Later on, he became the Minister of Education. In 1860's, he acted in the Hungarian Historical Society firstly as vice president, and then as the president. During this post, he made efforts on the foundation of the National Archives. His 8-volume work (*Magyarország történelme*, 1871-3) presented a national history for the first time from the ancient ages to modern era.¹⁶⁴

The Romanian historian Mihail Kogalniceanu had the intention of unifying the Romanian principalities. Thus, the process of German unification was monitored by him. To achieve that goal and creation of the public opinion on the history of the Romanian principalities needed the studies on history. In 1830s, he served for the state and then took part in the publicizing activities of the Romanian culture in several ways, one of which was the journals. Accordingly, he was the founder of the journal *Dacia Literara* to increase the national awareness. In

¹⁶² Smahel, "The Construction and Reconstruction of Czech National History in its Relationship to the 'Great' Medieval Past", p. 245.

¹⁶³ Hobsbawm reports that he had seen a book named *Five Thousand Years of Pakistan*. But he adds, the name "Pakistan" was entitled by a group of students in 1930s. It was not completely adopted until 1940s and it emerged as a state in 1947. So, a relation between Indus Valley Civilization and contemporary Pakistan would be a bit of a stretch. Still, with the help of historiography, Pakistan (or any other) would seem majestic. *Tarih Üzerine*, p. 10.

¹⁶⁴ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, pp. 35-39.

1843, he started a course on national history in Academia Mihailena and his opening lecture was about the importance of the national history.¹⁶⁵

The building of the nation and nation states could be thought to take two centuries journey, which was accompanied by the national histories that functioned to legitimize the present with references to the past. Historians and intellectuals were the key figures at the center of this process. Therefore, most of the new nation states applied to an official and academic national historiography.¹⁶⁶ However, after a time, studying the national history individually became impossible or remained inadequate, and an institutional structure for advanced studies required.¹⁶⁷

2.3.1. Institutionalization and Nationalization of History

History of the history and historiography dates back to ancient times. That means it is possible to see the traces on the existence of history (and history writing) in all ages of the humanity. However, as almost all phenomena, history writing underwent various changes as time went on. With the basic acknowledgement that the adventure started with the Ancient Greek historiography, it took different shapes and fashions in following eras such as Roman, Christian, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment epochs and so on.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, nineteenth century historiography was also reshaped due to the changing factors. One can easily see the signaling of the tendency toward institutionalism and

¹⁶⁵ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, pp. 40-43.

¹⁶⁶ Breuilly, “Nationalism and the Making of National Pasts”, p. 13-14.

¹⁶⁷ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 74.

¹⁶⁸ Throughout the time, several traditions have come into prominence in terms of dealing with history and historical thinking. Mythical, Greek, Roman, Jewish, Christian, Islamic and the Enlightened versions of evaluating history could be an overarching classification. Necmettin Alkan, “Efsaneden Aydınlanmacı Geleneğe Tarih Düşüncesi”, in *Tarih Nasıl Yazılır? Tarihyazımı İçin Çağdaş Bir Metodoloji*, ed. Ahmet Şimşek, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018), p. 1-14.

professionalism –and then to nationalism- within history in the nineteenth century.

As it is known, history writing had always been open to almost everyone and it was not possible to talk about certain set of rules determining the writings of member of any community that could be called as historians. Moreover, history was under the influence of other neighboring disciplines; thus, emancipation and an independent identity was required and aimed. For example, there were enthusiasts of history in German universities in the eighteenth century, but what they performed did not have a separate name and specific identity. It would not be wrong to claim that the adventure of professionalization of history launched in the first decade of the nineteenth century when the first Chair of History was established in Germany (Prussia).¹⁶⁹ The reform of the universities in Prussia by Humboldt made academic liberty possible and this situation prepared the ground for the emergence of new disciplines. Young researchers were also willing to take place in this formation. Moreover, the states were looking for the ways of legitimation after the fall of Napoleon; hence, sophistication of history within the universities was highly encouraged.¹⁷⁰ It is safe to claim that the process in Germany somehow influenced the path of professionalization and institutionalization of history in many Western countries including France, Britain, the USA, Belgium, the Netherlands and so on.

In Germany, there were 28 professors of history in the middle of the nineteenth century. In following decades, the number gradually increased. The beginning of the twentieth century marked the rise to 185 professors and the number reached

¹⁶⁹ Robert Harrison et al., “The Institutionalisation and Organisation of History”, in *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline*, ed. Lambert & Schofield, (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 10.

¹⁷⁰ Peter Lambert, “The Professionalization and Institutionalization of History”, in *Writing History Theory and Practice*, ed. Berger, Feldner & Passmore, (London: Hodder Arnold, 2003), p. 44.

238 in 1930s.¹⁷¹ The activities and studies of Leopold von Ranke, known as founding figure of history, had a great impact on the development of history in Germany. The seminars on history and archive-based research enhanced history writing as it also fascinated the historiography in other certain countries.

The situation in the United States of America was quite similar. In the middle of the nineteenth century, there were not professional historians; but clergymen, lawyers and merchants were interested in history as amateurs. In 1880s, the number of professors of history was 11 in the US; and it rose in following decades passing 100 at the beginning of the twentieth century. The universities were reformed and newly established history departments launched history courses firstly for undergraduate degree and then for the postgraduate education. The professors of history in the US also had been educated and trained in Germany. Among them, George Bancroft was a famous figure and perhaps the most influential historian in the country. He studied in Göttingen and Berlin; and his masterwork *History of the United States* made him popular.¹⁷² The founding of the American Historical Association in the late nineteenth century and the growing of the Ph.D. programs in universities such as Columbia and Harvard in early twentieth century were significant steps in the professionalization and institutionalization of the history in the United States of America.¹⁷³

The institutionalization and professionalization of the history in most of the Western countries almost had been completed in the nineteenth century. However, as it is known, the period when historians wrote their writings had a great and molding effect on the works. Expectably, romantic nationalist feelings made an impact in the nineteenth century historiography. This nationalism pointed the particularity of the cultures coming from history, which were

¹⁷¹ Harrison et al., “The Institutionalisation and Organisation of History”, p. 10.

¹⁷² Ernst Breisach, *Tarihyazımı*, trans. Hülya Kocatürk, (İstanbul: YKY Yayınları, 2009), p. 327.

¹⁷³ Harrison et al., “The Institutionalisation and Organisation of History”, p. 20-21.

supposed to contribute to build the nation in the circumstances of the nineteenth century.¹⁷⁴ Therefore, in the period after the French Revolution and when the states were competing with each other as they were trying to highlight their national structures and struggling for the formation of national states, history writing inevitably was affected from the spirit and events of the time. In other words, “the process of professionalization and the creation of the discipline of history in modern terms developed during the age of nation building.”¹⁷⁵ National historiography constituted “a specific form of historical representation which aims at the formation of the nation states, accompanies the formation of the nation states or seeks to influence the existing self-definitions of national consciousness.”¹⁷⁶

For instance, for German historians, the period that the historian produces his/her work would mark the place and position of the historian. Hence, during the epoch that Germany was in the process of being a nation state, their works should have served for a strong and unified Germany; and they thought such a patriotic purpose would not conflict with the goal of getting historical objectivity.¹⁷⁷ To exemplify, the re-interpretations of the German historians on the Varus Battle from the seventeenth century on was the result of their efforts to search the origins of heroic Germans in remote past.¹⁷⁸ Later on, Tacitus' ancient

¹⁷⁴ Fatih Durgun, “Nesnellikten Postmodernizme Profesyonel Tarihyazımı”, in *Tarih Nasıl Yazılır?*, p. 17-18.

¹⁷⁵ *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. xi.

¹⁷⁶ Stefan Berger, “Representations of the Past: The Writing of National Histories in Europe”, *Debatte*, 1271, (2004): p. 75.

¹⁷⁷ Robert Harrison et al., “Scientific History and the Problem of Objectivity”, in *Making History: An Introduction to the History and Practices of a Discipline*, ed. Lambert & Schofield (New York: Routledge, 2004), 26-27.

¹⁷⁸ See Heidrun Derks, “The Varus Battle in the Year 9 CE – or How to Escape the ‘Memory’ Trap”, in *Between Memory Sites and Memory Networks. New Archaeological and Historical Perspectives*, ed. Reinhard Bernbeck, Kerstin P. Hofmann & Ulrike Sommer, (Berlin: Edition Topoi, 2017), p. 151-197.

work describing this war was frequently used in German nation-building from the nineteenth century to the period of National Socialism, with new inferences constantly being drawn about what Germanness should be like.¹⁷⁹

As Bismarck admitted, certain German historians had an indispensable role in the formation of German Empire in 1871.¹⁸⁰ As a matter of fact, inviting Ranke to the History department of the Berlin University in 1825 had arisen from the striving of the state to shape the community according to its ideology, in which history played a major role.¹⁸¹ As it is obvious, the ideology of nationalism was in the need of its own historians and as the Chinese historian Liang Qichao claimed that advancing ideology of nationalism in Europe and swelling of modern European countries were, to some extent, the results of historical studies. In this epoch, many countries imported the practices of Germany for their program of national regeneration.¹⁸² Consequently, it could be argued that the professional historiography was shaped with the reconciliation of the didactical history writing of nation-states and objective historiography that was based on documents and politics.¹⁸³

As it is seen, nation building process in Europe largely resided in the developments in the historiography, which mostly came from the nationalist concerns. During this period, the formation of the states was, to a certain degree, connected to the professionalization of history and nationalization of knowledge. On the other hand, the states gradually got control of the history studies.

¹⁷⁹ Christopher B. Krebs, *Dünyanın En Tehlikeli Kitabı-Roma İmparatorluğu'ndan Nazi Almanyası'na Alman Ulusal Kimliğinin İnşasında Tacitus'un Germania'sı*, trans. Bağış Alper Kovan (İstanbul: Runik Kitap, 2021).

¹⁸⁰ Breisach, *Tarihyazımı*, 335.

¹⁸¹ Durgun, "Nesnellikten Postmodernizme Profesyonel Tarihyazımı", p. 18.

¹⁸² Lambert, "The Professionalization and Institutionalization of History", p. 47-48.

¹⁸³ Durgun, "Nesnellikten Postmodernizme Profesyonel Tarihyazımı", p. 26.

Moreover, they made history courses compulsory for the school system. However, one should keep in mind that the empires including many ethnic groups, as of the Habsburg, Romanov and Ottomans also considered the creation and/or development of the history discipline until 1918. Still, it could be argued that after 1918, the nation states emerged as the dominant concept in governmental and political issues in Europe and the historiography could not be totally independent from the nation states. The nineteenth century had seen the seeking for the ancient roots, and the post-World War I period contributed to it with the formation of national myths and legends.¹⁸⁴ The institutions, associations or societies carried out various projects in this adventure. Mostly focusing on antiquity of their region at first, they were gradually concerned with the national history and published sources, practiced archaeological excavations, took care of historical monuments and helped the formation of the methods of historiography.¹⁸⁵

As Stefan Berger claimed, the professionalization and nationalization were indissociable parts of the historiography in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What the historians suggested then were actually the arguments of his/her nation; and all Europe witnessed the connection between the historiography and nation building and nation states. The academies, research institutions, associations, academic or semi academic journals and national museums initiated and propelled the projects of national history writing.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ *Atlas of European Historiography*, pp. xi-xii.

¹⁸⁵ Gabriele Clemens, "The Sociabilities of History Associations", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁶ Stefan Berger, "The Comparative History of National Historiographies in Europe: Some Methodological Reflections and Preliminary Results", in *Nations and Their Histories-Constructs and Representations*, p. 34.

2.3.2. History Institutions in Nation-Building in Europe

In order to contribute to the formation of a national history, a good few European states set off institutions to collect historical sources and formed or encouraged history institutions (as well as history departments, official and semi-official associations and learned societies, and museums etc), all of which would eventually enlighten a part of the history of the nation.¹⁸⁷ Actually, as of the eighteenth century, such institutions were developing in different branches in Europe. During the French Revolution, there were 24 scientific/learned societies in various disciplines in Paris alone.¹⁸⁸ This tradition is also reflected in institutions in the field of history.

At this point, a look at the history associations and history related establishments, and research institutions in Europe¹⁸⁹ would give a chance to see the creation of a profession and its blending with nationalism especially after the nineteenth century, which paved the way for national historiographies and nation building processes.

2.3.2.1. Western and Northern Europe

As mentioned earlier, Spain constitutes one of the oldest nation states throughout Europe. The process of its nationalization had started in the eighteenth century and history could not be separated from that process. Hence, historiography was closely linked to the nation-building attempts. As early as 1738, the *Real*

¹⁸⁷ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 12.

¹⁸⁸ James E. McClellan, "Science and the City", *Uluslararası Medeniyet, Şehir ve Mimari Sempozyumu Bildirileri*, Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2022, p. 18.

¹⁸⁹ Relatively availability of the materials and limits of the study made it possible to focus on European examples. Still, there is no doubt that all parts of the world would provide diverse examples.

*Academia de la Historia*¹⁹⁰ (Royal Academy of History) was created by King Philip V as an official tie between the state and culture. The state officials, like Minister Pedro Rodríguez Campomanes, participated in the academy as efficient members. Publishing of the two volumes of the *Diccionario Geografico-Historia de Espana* in 1802, as a result of intense studies on gathering documents and numismatic-epigraphic sources, served the aim of finding the true origins of the Spanish nation.¹⁹¹ It should be noted that there were also regional historical associations, like the *Real Academia de Buenas Letras de Barcelona* (Royal Academy of Letters of Barcelona, 1729), which functioned to write the local history. Yet, the Royal Academy of History did not cease to carry out its missions as it published substantial collections for the enlightenment of the Spanish history. Moreover, it ensured the professionalization of the auxiliary sciences of history and undertook archaeological excavations, like in Numantia in 1860's.

The nationalistic attitude toward history also played role in the establishment of the *Archivo Historico Nacional* (National Historical Archive) in 1866, as well as other national archives in Madrid, Valencia, Mallorca etc. Through the end of the nineteenth century, the Royal Academy of History was still prominent and published *Boletin de la Real Academia de la Historia*¹⁹² (*Bulletin of the Royal Academy of History*) as essential part of its activities. When the increasing Catalan and Basque nationalisms challenged Spain after the nineteenth century, more emphasis on nationalism and reference to history was seen as the solution

¹⁹⁰ <https://www.rah.es/>

¹⁹¹ Mariano Esteban de Vega & Javier Castro Ibaseta, "Spain", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 124-125.

¹⁹² As another example will be seen in the following chapters about the national historiography of Turkey in 1930s, for instance, *Boletin de la Real Academia de la Historia* attached importance to archaeological excavations and released articles on them. For example, the first issue of the journal includes "Excavaciones hechas en el cerro de "Garray", donde se cree que estuvo situada "Numancia" (Excavations Made on the "Garray" Hill, where it is Believed that "Numancia" was Located). For other articles, see <https://www.cervantesvirtual.com/partes/325790/tomo-1-ao-1877/0> , accessed on 25.11.2021.

again. This approach was supported with education and national museums such as the *Museo Arqueologico Nacional* (National Archaeological Museum, 1867), the *Museo Antropologico* (Anthropological Museum, 1875), the *Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales* (National Museum of Natural Sciences, 1895) with the sections on anthropology, ethnology and pre-history. Reorganization of those museums or opening of the new ones in early twentieth century put emphasis on the historical existence of the Spanish culture.¹⁹³

As history was an inseparable part of national and republican spirit, the state actively participated in history studies and institutions in France, which was also among the old nation states like Spain. Accordingly, the central government actively involved in the organization of archives. Immediately after the Revolution, in 1790, the *Archives Nationales* was created, which implies the disengagement from the monarchic past and highlights the nation. In 1837, the *Musee d'histoire de France* (Museum of History of France) was decorated with paintings showing the history of the nation for ages. The *Musee de Cluny* in Paris also helped the visibility of the ancientness of France and Jules Michelet was one of its historians.¹⁹⁴

A historian and politician, Minister of Public Instruction, François Guizot took the lead of creation of the *Societe de l'histoire de France* (History of France Society) in 1833.¹⁹⁵ In the following year, he initiated establishing *Comite des travaux historiques* (Historical Proceedings Committee) to provide the state control over the history studies and associations. In 1820s and 1830s, a number of societies, like the *Societe des antiquaries de Normandie* (Society of

¹⁹³ De Vega & Ibaseta, "Spain", p. 126-127.

¹⁹⁴ Emanuelle Picard, "France", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 131.

¹⁹⁵ Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte approved the Society in 1851 as being of public interest. For two centuries, the Society has been publishing sources and documents on French history. Its periodical *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de France*, with its hundreds of volumes, includes sources such as chronicles, memoirs, journals, letters, financial and judicial records and can be accessed online. http://www.shfrance.org/index_en.htm, accessed on 26.11.2021.

Antiquaries of Normandy), the *Societe française pour la conservation des monuments* (French Society for the Preservation of Monuments), the *Societe française d'archeologie* (French Society of Archaeology) revealed the nationalization and centralization of the history studies in France, controlled by the main body.¹⁹⁶

One of the most significant examples of the professionalization and nationalization of history could be seen in Germany. During the reign of Wilhelm and later, the historians of Germany got a high prestige as the builders of the nation. On the other hand, through the seminars, the history profession came to the fore as a distinct discipline. Even, it was in the league of the mostly taught subjects at universities in Germany during the nineteenth century. The wish for enlightening the national history of the Germans against the expansion of France and any other threats paved this way.¹⁹⁷ Actually, it was a long process which began in 1819 with the *Gesellschaft für altere deutsche Geschichtskunde* (Society for the Knowledge of Elder German History) and its editing the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; seminars after 1830s in Königsberg, München and Würzburg and other universities respectively; establishment of the *Deutsches Historisches Institut* (German Historical Institution), the congresses for the historians, organization of the archives, museums and state-sponsored associations and institutions.¹⁹⁸ Monumental works and scientific journals in history studies also constituted the crucial steps in the journey of history in Germany. As it is known, political unification of Germany occurred in 1871. Therefore, it is understood that a German national historiography that had emerged much earlier should have played a key role in that unification.

¹⁹⁶ Picard, "France", p. 132.

¹⁹⁷ Matthias Middell, "Germany", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 160.

¹⁹⁸ Middell, "Germany", p. 165.

Similar to Germany, creation of nation-state in Italy could be realized at the last quarter of the nineteenth century. However, a national historiography had started to rise from the beginning of the century. In the first decade of the century, history course was added to the university curriculum. From 1830s to 1850s, *Deputazione di Storia Patria*¹⁹⁹ (Deputation for History of the Fatherland) was created, a journal -*Archivio Storico Italiano*- to publish the Italian national historical sources started to be published, and state archive was established. Immediately after the unification of Italy, historical congresses were organized to discuss the past of the fatherland. Following decades saw the establishment or re-organization of archives, museums and libraries for a national historiography.²⁰⁰ Both the processes before unification and seeking of legitimation after unification in Italy were directly assisted with national historiography.

Actually, Germany had culturally influenced Europe. In this situation, science, ideology and language were the dominant elements. Scandinavian countries and Russia directly followed Germany as an intellectual example. The German romantic way of thinking also played a role in the construction of national culture and national history. Theorists like Herder became a mainstay for northern and central European intellectuals.²⁰¹

The importance of history had been known in Nordic countries for several centuries. During the course of time, influences of Western examples -mostly of Germany- resulted in shaping of nationalist historiography in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Organization of university curriculum, publication of sources of

¹⁹⁹ Despite being organized as a local institution, it was supported by the state and aimed at promoting historical research on Italian territories through book and journal publications. After the unification of Italy, it was replaced by *Istituto Storico Italiano* (Italian Historical Institute) in 1883.

²⁰⁰ <https://daeh.uni-trier.de/countries/italy/>, accessed on 10.07.2022.

²⁰¹ François Chaubet, *Avrupa'nın Entelektüel Tarihi*, trans. Z. Hazal Louze, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2021), p. 53-55.

national history, and flourishing of associations researching history with auxiliary sciences were transferred from the leading countries of the field. Then, it is possible to date the beginning of the institutionalized researches in Finland on history to the seventeenth century. The establishment of the office of the *Rikshistoriker* (State Historian) and *Riksarkivet* (Royal Archives) were the steps of this process. In the eighteenth century, Professor Henrik Gabriel Porthan, considered as the father of Finnish historiography, constructed the national-romantic approach to history. Accordingly, the *Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura*²⁰² (Finnish Literary Society), founded in 1831, and the publication of the national epic *Kalavela*²⁰³ in 1835 were the complementary acts toward the formation of the national culture and nation building. These were signs of the deliberate policies in order to turn the Finnish people into conscious members of the Finnish nation. The *Suomen Historiallinen Seura* (Finnish Historical Society), established in 1875, had the intention of shedding light on the ancient history of the Finnish nation. Through special studies, archaeology and auxiliary sciences, the society aimed at finding sources to provide data and material for the history of their nation. *Kansallismuseo* (National Museum of Finland, 1893) and the *Suomalainen Tiedekatemia*²⁰⁴ (Finnish Academy of Sciences and Letters, 1908) strengthened the image of the Finnish nation by their emphasis on the national history and language.²⁰⁵

Another Nordic country, Norway, constitutes a good example of history as an indispensable part of the nation state. Even at the beginning of the nineteenth

²⁰² Today it serves with archive, library, research and publishing departments to contribute to the knowledge on the roots of the Finnish culture, see <https://www.finlit.fi/en>, accessed on 22.11.2021.

²⁰³ The publication of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* in Germany became a prevailing model for publishing main historical sources in many countries.

²⁰⁴ The Academy still survives and supports the studies on humanities, too. <https://acadsci.fi/en/>, accessed on 22.11.2021.

²⁰⁵ Pertti Haapala & Mervi Kaarninen, "Finland", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p.74-75.

century, when the history was not professionalized, the power of the history was known for a national sense. In Royal Frederik's University, founded in 1831, all students, regardless of their faculties, were decorated with historical knowledge and they all had to pass the history exams. The *Arkivverket* (National Archives) had been established in 1819. The *Foreningen til norske Fortidsminnesmerkes Bevaring* (Society for the Preservation of Norwegian Ancient Monuments, 1844) also emphasized the national past. The formation of the *Norske Historiske Forening*²⁰⁶ (Norwegian Historical Association) in 1869 and the beginning of the publication its *Historisk Tidsskrift*²⁰⁷ (*Historical Journal*), which survived until the twenty-first century, could be counted as the professional attempts to unearth the antiquity of the Norwegian history to give its members a national pride.²⁰⁸

The role of the state in historiography was highly effective in Sweden. Not surprisingly and like many other European countries in the nineteenth century, Swedish historiography was under the influence of romantic –patriotic, nationalistic- thought. Erik Gustaf Geijer was one of the historians who impressed on the history of the Swedish nation. The Germans, after Ranke, constituted a model for history institutions. The year 1862 saw the foundation of the first historical association in Sweden, *Historiska föreningen i Uppsala* (Historical Society in Uppsala). Then the *Svenska historiska föreningen*²⁰⁹ (National Historical Society) was established in 1880 and it began to publish *Historisk Tidskrift* (*Swedish Historical Review*), which keeps functioning today. Until 1950s, when former historiography was criticized by new trends, the

²⁰⁶ <https://hifo.no/>

²⁰⁷ From 2017 on, it is an open-access journal which is covered by many leading indexes such as Scopus, Ebsco etc. Historians, humanists and sociologists give close attention to the journal.

²⁰⁸ Jan Eivind Myhre & Synne Corell, "Norway", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 77.

²⁰⁹ Promoting historical research and spreading interest in history was aimed in its establishment. From its foundation, the Society has been publishing and acting on the Swedish history. Its journal *Historisk Tidskrift* is also published quarterly and appears in indexes. <https://svenskahistoriskaforeningen.se/index.php/english>, 25.11.2021.

Swedish historians approached history with nationalist mindset.²¹⁰ These Nordic countries seem to have been influenced both from each other and especially German case in their publications and associations.

Small or new states also applied to history. Belgium is one of the examples. Though it was a young state in the first half of the nineteenth century, it tried to show that it was an old nation. This kind of legitimization had to come from history. Despite being in French or Dutch languages, the histories of Belgium were written, national heroes from the past were found and historical paintings and novels were promoted. The idea was that the nation had been alive for centuries but the foreigners had dominated them. In 1830, the *Archives generales du Royaume* (General Archives of the Kingdom) was organized as a national archive and followed by the emergence of the *Commission royale d'histoire*²¹¹ (Royal Commission of History) that was appointed to publish the sources of national history. The establishment of the *Commission pour la conservation des monuments du pays* (Commission for the Preservation of Monuments) by the government intended to highlight “the material evidence of the fatherland’s rich past”.²¹² In 1830s and 1840s, establishment of the *Commission Royale pour la publication des anciennes lois et ordonnances de Belgique* (Royal Commission for the Publication of Ancient Belgian Laws and Ordinances), the *Academie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique*²¹³ (Royal Academy of Sciences, Letters and Fine Arts), organization of the prizes for national histories by that Academy, the efforts to collect ancient materials belonging to

²¹⁰ Hakan Gunneriusson, “Sweden”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 79.

²¹¹ In its regulation, task of the Commission is defined as “to research, identify, edit and analyse written sources which are of interest to the history of Belgium, and to publish critical studies relating to these sources, as well as to provide working tools for historians.” *Bulletin* of the Commission has also been published annually since 1845. http://commissionroyalehistoire.be/en/accueil_en.html, accessed on 27.11.2021.

²¹² Jo Tollebeek, “Belgium”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 137.

²¹³ <https://www.academieroyale.be/>

the history of the Belgian nation, introducing a detailed history into the curriculum starting from the ancient times shaped the national history and sense in Belgium. In 1900's, the national pride of the Belgians was high that it can be seen, in addition to works of previous and contemporary certain historians,²¹⁴ in the book of Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*,²¹⁵ which depicted Belgium as a crossroad of the cultures throughout the centuries.²¹⁶

Partly contrarian case came up in Britain. Nationalism had, more than a political character, a cultural one there. Accordingly, the cultural structure of Britain was shaped with the help of history, which began to be taught at Oxford and Cambridge Universities in the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century, history served –or was used by some authors- to reflect the progressive, liberal and constitutional identity of Britain of the earlier centuries. In the following decades, with the effect of German style, political history was also promoted and history discipline was seen as a tool for the politicians. Later on, by broadening the British history to Teutonic origins and pre-medieval centuries, nation building process was contributed by history.²¹⁷ The creation of Public Record Office in 1838, which produced serial works similar to *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*; the first national society, the Camden Society, which instructed on source analysis from 1840's on; The Royal Historical Society²¹⁸ (1868) and The

²¹⁴ Jan van Heelu, Louis-Prosper Gachard, Philippe Mouskes and Edmont van Dynter contributed to the publication of the archival sources and monumental editions belonging to the history of nation. Jo Tollebeek, "An Era of Grandeur. The Middle Ages in Belgian National Historiography, 1830-1914", in *The Uses of the Middle Ages in Modern European States*, p. 123.

²¹⁵ First part of this voluminous book covers the period "From the Origins to the Beginning of the 14th Century". Then, the narrative comes to early twentieth century history of Belgium. Henri Pirenne, *Histoire de Belgique*, published in seven volumes between 1900-1932.

²¹⁶ Tollebeek, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 137-138.

²¹⁷ Robert D. Anderson, "United Kingdom", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 166-168.

²¹⁸ <https://royalhistsoc.org/>

Historical Association²¹⁹ (1902), which dealt with publications and arranging the teaching of history fulfilled the mission for the professionalization of history. Still, the cultural aspect of history in Britain was more than its political side.²²⁰

2.3.2.2. Eastern and Central Europe

Just like Germany influenced other Western countries regarding the development of national historiography and activities of historical associations, Russia played the similar role in the East.²²¹ The creation, organization, controlling and distribution of history/historical studies in Russia were acutely under the dominance of the state from the eighteenth century onwards. Tsar Peter I had a hand in the establishment of *Akademiia Nauk* (Academy of Sciences) in the early eighteenth century and called the German historians to elucidate early Russian history. The view that the Normans established the Russian state was challenged in the mid-eighteenth century by Mikhail Vasilevich Lomonosov, who was the advocate of the thesis indicating the autochthonous origin of the Russians;²²² and accordingly, he tried to show the ancientness and level of development of Slavic culture before the Nomads.²²³ From the early eighteenth century, the central archives began to be established such as *Arkhiv vysshikh gosudarstvennykh uchrezhdenii* (Archive of the Superior State Bodies), the *Moskovskii arkhiv Kollegii inostrannykh del* (Moscow Archive of the Kollegia of Foreign Affairs), *Peterburgskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv starykh del* (Petersburg State Archive of

²¹⁹ <https://www.history.org.uk/>

²²⁰ Robert Anderson, "United Kingdom", p. 169-171.

²²¹ As it will be shown below, especially dynamic academies of sciences with high density of scholarly activities in Eastern-Central Europe show the influence of Russia in organization of historical research.

²²² The issue of "autochthonous origin" was fervently discussed in the Turkish History Thesis as will be shown in related chapters.

²²³ Alexandr V. Antoshchenko, "Russia, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 87.

Old Affairs) and *Moskovskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv starykh del* (Moscow State Archive of Old Affairs). The following century witnessed the creation of the historical institutions. *Russkoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo*²²⁴ (Russian Historical Society) and *Moskovskoe arkheologicheskoe obshchestvo* (Moscow Archaeological Society) carried out historical researches and congresses. They also took roles in the formation of the national museums like the *Rossiiskii istoricheskii muzei* (Russian Historical Museum). The chronological sequence of the Russian history was exhibited at this museum with a focus on its ancientness. Similarly, establishment of *Russkii arkhiv* (The Russian Archives) helped scholars. Hence, Sergei Mikhailovich Solovev prepared his *Istoriia Rossi's drevneishikh vremen* (*History of Russia from the Oldest Time*) based on archival sources, through which the state envisaged the formation of the nation.²²⁵ It is important to note that after the Revolution, new regime created its own institution with its own tendencies. They had mostly Marxist-Leninist approaches. Still, there was need to references to history since its instrumental function is not easily challenged.²²⁶

The first publishing of the Bulgarian history in Bulgarian language in 1762²²⁷ could be accepted as the beginning of Bulgarian historiography. It should not be forgotten that a national Bulgarian state did not exist until 1878, when a *de facto* independent state was formed. Therefore, most of the events that are important for Bulgarian consciousness took place in the Ottoman capital or adjacent regions. The *Balgarsko Knizhovno Druzhestvo* (Bulgarian Learned Society),

²²⁴ <https://historyrussia.org/>

²²⁵ Antoshchenko, "Russia", p. 87-88.

²²⁶ As Hobsbawm claimed, "Even Revolutionary movements backed their innovations by reference to a 'people's past', as cited above.

²²⁷ *Istoriya Slavyanobolgarskaya* of Saint Paisius of Hilendar who wrote to awaken the Bulgarian national consciousness.

which was the predecessor of the *Balgarska Akademia na Naukite*²²⁸ (Bulgarian Academy of Sciences), emerged in Braila, Romania in 1869. After 1878, the establishment of the *Narodna Biblioteka* (National Library), the *Balgarski Istoricheski Arhiv* (Bulgarian Historical Archive) and the *Naroden Muzei* (National Museum) contributed to the institutionalization of the national historiography. 1901 was the year of the establishment of the *Balgarsko istorichesko druzhestvo* (Bulgarian Historical Society). The Bulgarian historiography, until the end of the First World War, in other words, during the process of the nation building, emphasized the medieval history stressing their glorious past before the Ottomans.²²⁹

Serbia had got its autonomy from the Ottoman Empire in 1830. After 1878, they reached their independence. Therefore, the modern historiography of Serbia, which could have been dated to the eighteenth century, got better in the nineteenth century. After some attempts for institutionalization of the scientific centers from 1830's, the *Srpska akademija nauka imetnosti*²³⁰ (Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts) was founded in the mid-nineteenth century. In addition to that, several decades later, the emergence of the University of Belgrad helped the embodiment of historiography within Serbia. A special organization for history researches came a bit later than other European countries when the *Istorijski*

²²⁸ For an up to date courtesy shown to Saint Paisius of Hilendar on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of his birth by the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, see <https://www.bas.bg/?p=39468&lang=en>, accessed on 28.05.2022. The Academy commemorates him as the national revival leader who used his historical information to shape the “present” and “future”.

²²⁹ Dobrinka Parusheva, “Bulgaria”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 95-96; “Bulgaria”, in Digital Atlas of European Historiography, <https://daeh.uni-trier.de/countries/bulgaria/>, accessed on 28.05.2022.

²³⁰ Research on fields of history, art history and archaeology is carried out within the Department of Historical Sciences under the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts. <https://www.sanu.ac.rs/en/organization/departments/departments-of-historical-sciences/>, accessed on 30.11.2021.

*institute*²³¹ (Historical institute, 1947) and the *Vizantoloski institut* (Byzantinist Institute, 1948) were established.²³² However, an academic-national society in Serbia, *Matice Srbska* (Serbian Matica) had been established in 1826 in Pest (then moved to Novi Sad in 1864), which effected the neighboring nations and resulting in the formation of new “matices”. Serbian Matica is accepted as the oldest cultural-scientific institution in Serbia and it inspired the organization of language studies, national museums and other societies for the preservation of the national heritage and maintenance of the cultural identity.²³³ It is also significant as it brought about the creation of Slovak, Moravian, Croatian, Slovenian, Dalmatian, Polish and Czech “matices”. The Czech version even became the prominent actor regarding the Czech national movement.²³⁴ In Serbia, state and the cultural-scientific institutions were interwoven, to which selecting and highlighting the historic happenings were subject.²³⁵ But it was more or less similar in other examples, too.

Romania also suggests instances in terms of national associations that aimed at highlighting the Romanian culture. ASTRA, the Transylvanian Society for Romanian Literature and Culture (established in 1861) and the *Societate Academica Romana* (Romanian Academic Society, 1867; predecessor of the Romanian Academy) took part in linguistic, historical and archaeological researches. The role of the leading Romanian historian –Kogalniceanu- in these societies, initiated the publication of the historical sources.²³⁶ He also saw the

²³¹ <https://www.iib.ac.rs/istorijat.html>

²³² Ulf Brunnbauer, “Serbia”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 105.

²³³ <http://www.maticasrpska.org.rs/en/matica-srpska/>, “Matica Srpska”, accessed on 10.01.2020.

²³⁴ Baar, *Nationalism and Historians*, p. 81.

²³⁵ Suica, “The Image of the Battle of Kosovo (1389) Today”, p. 164.

²³⁶ Baar, *Nationalism and Historians*, p. 84.

need especially for archaeological studies to reveal the national history and insisted on the archaeological excavations in Dobrogea to “prove” its links to Romania.²³⁷

One of the best examples of the relationship between the foundation of the national state and national historiography is visible in Greece. In order to fortify the identity of the state and its members, researchers were highly interested in history. Not surprisingly, this interest focused on ancient history of Greece to find the links between “then” and “now”. From 1830’s on, the University of Athens made an impact on the studies of history by giving a national sentiment in favor of the state. Language, religion and history played role to connect the Greek speaking Orthodox people to the Hellenic Kingdom.²³⁸

In 1850’s, a new approach emerged by Professor Konstantinos Paparrigopoulos as he added the studies on the Byzantine Empire to historiography by giving it a place in the periodization of the national history, as antiquity, Byzantine and modern times. Simultaneously, a focus and emphasis on the medieval past were common in all of the Balkan states. Then, collecting sources and publishing them became trend. *Ellinomnimon or Simmikta Ellinika*²³⁹ (1843-53) was the first historical journal in Greece and followed by *Philistor* (1861-62). While there was a search in the antiquity, the successes of the modern times were also emphasized. The 1821 Revolutions was seen as one of the most significant

²³⁷ Baar, *Nationalism and Historians*, p. 95.

²³⁸ Vangelis Karamanolakis, “Greece”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 108; According to a report of the Ottoman Ambassador Gabadan Efendi in Athens, the Greeks tended to regard all Greek speaking people as part of the Greek nation. Accordingly, they increased their activities in Plovdiv, Varna, Crete, Cyprus and even in the Aegean coastal line of Anatolia to teach Greek language with schools or societies they established. For the Greek government, those Greek-speaking territories would have been parts of the ideal Great Greek State. BOA., *Y.PRK.EŞA.*, 16/47, H. 28.03.1310/20. 10. 1892.

²³⁹ “Greece” in *Digital Atlas of European Historiography*, <https://daeh.uni-trier.de/countries/greece/>, accessed on 28.05.2022.

accomplishment of the Greek history and the archives were organized partly to cover this event in 1840's.²⁴⁰

After the reign of Otto, a new constitution brought about opportunities to create societies and institutions. Many of them were culture-oriented entities that sought to help the formation of the national identity and knew the importance of history for this. The *Istoriki kai Ethnologiki Etaireia tis Ellados* (Historical and Ethnological Society of Greece) included professional and amateur history researchers after it was founded in 1882. It had the intentions of collecting historical sources and folk material and *Deltion* was its official historical journal.²⁴¹ Spyridin Lambros, under the influence of the tradition of historiography in Germany, was among the founders of the society. He also gave lectures in the University of Athens and added seminars to the curriculum. In spite of his insistence on methodology, archive and specialized knowledge-based studies; he could not keep himself aloof from the national ideas of the time and shaped his studies according to the national needs or interests. His students, Socratis Kougeas and Konstantinos Amantos followed him with their journal *Ellinika* (*Hellenics*). Apart from the universities and the aforementioned institutions, the following archives functioned to find useful materials for a national identity: the *Genika Archeia tou Kratous* (State General Archives of Greece, 1914), *Akadimia Athinwn* (Academy of Athens, 1926), the *Istorikon Lexicon tis Ellinikis Glossis* (Historical Archive of the Greek Language), the *Laografikon Archeion* (Folklore Archive) and the *Mesaionikon Archeion* (Medieval Archive).²⁴²

²⁴⁰ Karamanolakis, "Greece", p. 108-109.

²⁴¹ In order to collect, preserve and promote materials on the Greek history and culture, the Society also established the National Historical Museum which still functions today. <https://nhmuseum.gr/en/about-us/historical-and-ethnological-society-of-greece>, accessed on 01.12.2021.

²⁴² Karamanolakis, "Greece", p. 108-109.

The French Revolution and its spreading nationalistic reflections provoked the Hungarians, who were part of the Habsburg Empire and lacked a national story in their native language. As early as 1802, the *Magyar Nemzeti Múzeum* (Hungarian National Museum) emerged and the *Magyar Tudományos Akadémia*²⁴³ (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) began its actions in 1830. These developments induced history studies, filled with a national and patriotic sense, aiming to explore the national past.²⁴⁴ The Hungarian governments promoted the Academy and provided it fiscal aid. It was also harmonized with the *Magyar Országos Levéltár* (Hungarian National Archives). The foundation of the *Magyar Történelmi Társulat*²⁴⁵ (Hungarian Historical Society) in 1867 gave a fully professional outlook to history studies. Its publications and historical journal *Századok* (Centuries), conferences and field trips made it a center for professional historians and history teachers. The amateur researchers were also welcome. That brought about reaching approximately 2.000 members at the end of the eighteenth century.²⁴⁶ The leading historian, Mihály Horváth was among the founders of this association and he, in his opening speech, stood up for the publication of the historical sources and their accessibility for the public, which designated the missions of the association to raise a national awareness. For him, it was critical to amend the inaccurate views for the national history.²⁴⁷

Similar to an academy of science, *Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Nauk* (Association of Friends of Sciences) was established in Poland in 1800. In addition to

²⁴³ <https://mta.hu/>

²⁴⁴ For the influence of the Hungarian research institutions on the development of Turkish nationalism, see Alev Duran, *Macar Türkolojisinin Türklük Fikrine Katkısı* (Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 2020).

²⁴⁵ The Society keeps publishing books on various fields of the Hungarian history and holding conferences and events. <https://tortenelmittarsulat.hu/> Its journal *Századok* also survives.

²⁴⁶ Balint Varga-Kuna & Stefano Bottoni, "Hungary", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 153.

²⁴⁷ Baar, *Historians and Nationalism*, p. 83-84 and 90.

departments of philosophy, linguistics, natural sciences, and fine arts; section of history also existed and contributed to preserving of national traditions, and published journals. In the following years, department of history at the universities of Wilno, Lemberg and Krakow was opened. As a publication of national historical sources, *Monumenta Poloniae Historica* was published in Krakow in 1864. During the 1870's national museum and *Akademia Umiejętności w Krakowie* (Academy of Arts and Sciences in Kraków) were founded. *Kwartalnik Historyczny*²⁴⁸ (*Historical Quarterly*) and *Przegląd Historyczny*²⁴⁹ (*Historical Review*) were started to be released (they survive up to date) as channels of publication on Polish history.²⁵⁰ The latter became the official journal of *Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii* (Friends of History Society) that was established in 1906 in order to promote historical research through conferences, publications, exhibitions and competitions.²⁵¹ In a country like Poland that exposed to partition and occupations, emphasizing national history was crucial to announce claims and hold the citizens together.

Although there are differences between Eastern-Western nationalisms, the aforementioned groups as Western-Northern and Eastern-Central Europe to examine the history institutions arose rather from a geographical division. That is to say that history institutions in Europe in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries acted more or less in similar ways and with similar goals. With a nationalist approach and mostly political concerns, they focused on (remote or Medieval) history to prove the uniqueness and ancientness of their nation; and to teach people those "facts". In order to reach the aim, they used historical sources from the archives, published books and journals, applied to archaeological

²⁴⁸ http://kh-ihpan.edu.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2&Itemid=108&lang=en

²⁴⁹ <http://www.przegladhistoryczny.pl/en>

²⁵⁰ <https://daeh.uni-trier.de/countries/poland/>, accessed on 11.07.2022.

²⁵¹ <http://tmh.org.pl/page/o-nas>, accessed on 11.07.2022.

excavations and exhibited the findings in museums, tried to create awareness on discovering and preserving national historical monuments that could support their thesis. Also, they were directly or partly related to governments; or approved as authorized by the rulers, which gave a room to carry out influential activities. It is almost certain that twentieth century nation building processes in other places, including Turkey, were affected from the European adventure of the nineteenth century.

Despite being accused of dangerous outcomes and devastating effects, writing national histories have not come to an end. Even late twentieth century witnessed the national histories as in the cases of legitimation processes of Slovakia and Croatia²⁵² or post-Soviet countries.²⁵³ For sure, it is related to the existence of the nationalism and the nation states. Although there are strong arguments that they (nationalism and nation states) are threatened by globalization²⁵⁴ and will be replaced by supra-national organizations, the nation states seem to remain firm and nationalism keeps being its component.²⁵⁵

2.4. Prelude to Journey of Turkish Nationalism

²⁵² Stefan Berger, “National Histories in Transnational Perspective: Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries”, *Storia Della Storiografia*, 50, (2006): p. 3-4.

²⁵³ See *Bağımsızlıklarının Yirminci Yılında Orta Asya Cumhuriyetleri, Türk Dilli Halklar-Türkiye ile İlişkiler*, ed. Ayşegül Aydingün & Çiğdem Balım (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2012). To illustrate, after the Soviets, Uzbekistan carried out a national historiography project under the leadership of Islam Karimov. According to this project, national values would be re-discovered to shape the nation-state. Moreover, a national history of the Uzbeks, “full of glories”, would contribute to increase the self-consciousness of the people, while turning them into moral, loyal and patriot citizens of the new state. Yunus Emre Gürbüz, “Özbekistan’da Tarih Yazıcılığı ve Milli Kimlik: Özbeklerin Göçü ve Timur Örneğinde”, *Türk Dünyası İncelemeleri Dergisi*, 19, (2019 Kış): p. 279-284.

²⁵⁴ In Atilla Lök, “Tarihçinin Mutfağı-Çağlar Keyder: Globalleşme ve Ulus Devlet”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, 84, (2000): p. 29.

²⁵⁵ Breuilly, “Nationalism and the Making of National Pasts”, p. 21.

As it was seen, in most parts of Europe, nationalism had developed and got a political character by the middle of the nineteenth century. On the other hand, Ottoman Turkey followed the path of nationalism at a relatively late period. Actually, beginning of the nationalism in Turkey was not firstly seen among the Turks, since the various ethnic groups of the empire started to move with nationalist claims and desires. Accordingly, certain Turkish intellectuals and then the rulers gravitated towards nationalism after the state was exposed to separatist national movements of its subjects and counter-political remedies did not work out in late nineteenth century.²⁵⁶ Then, it could be argued that Turkish nationalism developed as defense mechanism to maintain the existence of the state against the secessionist nationalism of the subjects of the empire.

As it was revealed above, Miroslav Hroch portrayed the stages of the national movements and nation building for most of the Central and Eastern European countries. According to his model, three phases are experienced in these travels. The first phase is marked with the interest of the intellectuals on the language, culture and history of a nation. The excitement for patriotism and combining it

²⁵⁶ Those remedies are the policies of Ottomanism and Islamism developed and fostered by Ottoman intellectuals and rulers in nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. National movements and separation of both the Christian and Arab subjects of the Empire in Balkans and Arabian Peninsula in this period forced the Ottomans to produce formulations. On national movements of those groups, see Bernard Lewis, “The Impact of the French Revolution in Turkey-Some Notes on the Transmission of Ideas”, *Cahiers D’Histoire Mondiale/Journal of World History*, I/1, (1953): p. 105-125; İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (İstanbul: Hil Yayın, 1983); Mehmet Akif Kireççi, *Başlangıcından Günümüze Arap Milliyetçiliği* (Ankara: Grafiker, 2012); Derviş Kılınçkaya, *Arap Milliyetçiliği ve Milli Mücadele’de Türkiye-Suriye İlişkileri*, Ph.D. Dissertation (Hacettepe University, 1992); Tarık Zafer Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler I-İkinci Meşrutiyet Dönemi* (İstanbul: Hürriyet Vakfı Yayınları, 1988). On Ottomanism and Islamism, see Azmi Özcan, “Osmanlıcılık”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 33 (2007): p. 485-487; “İslamcılık”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 23, (2001): p. 62-65; Niyazi Berkes, *Türkiye’de Çağdaşlaşma*, ed. Ahmet Kuyaş, (İstanbul: YKY, 2012); Sina Akşin, *Kısa Türkiye Tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2011); Yusuf Sarıınay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları*, (İstanbul: Ötüken, 2004); Yusuf Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018); Hilmi Ziya Ülken, *Türkiye’de Çağdaş Düşünce Tarihi* (Konya: Selçuk, 1966); François Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri-Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935)*, trans. Alev Er (Ankara: Yurt Yayınları, 1986); Şerif Demir, “Tanzimat Döneminde Bir Devlet Politikası Olarak Osmanlıcılık”, *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 29, (2011): p. 331-348.

with political-economic relations represents the second stage.²⁵⁷ The theory could be adapted to the growing of Turkish nationalism, too. The period of cultural-academic Turkism in Turkey during the second half of the nineteenth century could be asserted as the first step of this model. A group of foreign researchers produced works on Turcology; and they were followed by the Turkish counterparts, which finally fostered a national awakening among the Turks in a cultural manner. Next, as the politics within the country and neighboring world got sharpened at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries, discourse of nationalism and nationalists turned to a political character on behalf of the nation and state. This process seems to form the second phase offered by Hroch.

Regarding the academic-cultural Turkish nationalism, it can be said that there has been anti-Turkish literature in West (Europe) from the fifth century on. However, with the nineteenth century, the attitude of the Europeans for Turks partly shifted.²⁵⁸ Firstly, Turkish art and craft impressed the Europeans, who began to collect and exhibit the works of Turkish artists, poets and thinkers. Authors like Alphonso de Lamartine and Pierre Loti contributed to Turkish image in West with their pro-Turkish writings.²⁵⁹ This resulted in increasing favor for the Turks in Europe public opinion in certain bases. Next, teaching of Orientalism required researching and understanding the East on behalf of the

²⁵⁷ Third stage is about the massification of the nationalistic movement, whose properties and examples could be seen in early Republican period. Therefore, activities of Turkish Historical Society, which will be shown in below, could be referred as being about the third stage of the model that intends to decorate all citizens with national feelings and mindset.

²⁵⁸ This theory was supported by Ziya Gökalp. *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (İstanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1968), p. 5.

²⁵⁹ However, according to a document signed by the Ottoman Minister of Education (*Maarif-i Umumiye Nezareti*), Pierre Loti published a book in Paris against Islam and Ottoman sultans; and that book was pulled of the shelves of the bookstores in Istanbul by the government. BOA., Y.PRK.MF, 2/38, H. 29.12.1309/25.07.1892. Moreover, Ottoman government found out that some other orientalist or foreigners, who were thought as supporter of the Ottomans like Arminius Vambery or Jamaladdin Afghani, have written against the Ottomans. Therefore, it could be argued that their cultural role on the intellectuals and their political identity from the eyes of the rulers could show differences.

West. Famous orientalist as Silvestre de Sacy, Ernest Renan and Joseph Arthur de Gobineau had been analyzing the Eastern (Chinese, Islamic and Turkish) sources since the eighteenth century. These research crucially shed light on the histories of previously humiliated and underrated people.²⁶⁰

Within this framework, influential works on Turkish language and history have been published, which shortly after affected the Ottoman intellectuals and inspired them for such studies. Of these, *A Grammar of the Turkish Language*, published by Arthur Lumley Davids²⁶¹ in 1832, in London, made a big impact on Turkish intellectuals. It was the first Turkish grammar book with a certain system. But it also had a character of history book. A Turkish history is provided in the introduction of the work. Davids' using the term "Turk" for different Turkish communities instead of "Tatar", showing examples from various Turkish dialects and emphasizing that they belong to the same language group also drew attention of the Ottoman Turks.²⁶² Next, an earlier book of a French author, Joseph de Guignes on history, *Histoire Generale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongoles, et Autres Tartares Occidentaux (General History of the Huns, Turks, Mongols and Other Western Tatars)* had been published in 1756-1758 in four volumes.²⁶³ De Guignes revealed the role of the Turks in Asia before their adoption of Islam.²⁶⁴ In addition to them, German linguist Friedrich Max Müller, Mustafa Celaledin Pasha (originally Polish and converted to Islam), French

²⁶⁰ David Kushner, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu (1876-1908)*, trans. Şevket Serdar Türet, Rekin Ertem & Fahri Erdem, (İstanbul: Kervan Yayınları, 1979), p. 12; Sarıay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları*, p. 51-52.

²⁶¹ His work is also known as *Kitabü'l-İlmü'n-Nafi fi Tahsil-i Sarf u Nahv-i Türki* in Turkey, which was translated to French by the mother of the author and submitted to Sultan Mahmud II. Kushner, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu*, p. 172.

²⁶² Şükrü Hanioglu, "Türkçülük", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 41, (2012): p. 552.

²⁶³ Later on, this book deeply influenced Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's view of history. Hanioglu, "Türkçülük", p. 552.

²⁶⁴ Kushner, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Doğuşu*, p. 12.

Orientalist Leon Cahun, and other researchers and orientalists such as Arminus Vambery, Vasily V. Barthold, Wilhelm Radloff, Abel Remusat and Wilhelm Thomsen published works and emphasized the significance of Turkish nation, history and linguistics. Thus, they made a gigantic service for the formation of Turkish national consciousness and constituted the sources of cultural Turkism in the second part of the nineteenth century. Indeed, even Turkish History Thesis of 1930s was under the influence of those claims to some extent.

Besides those Western and Russian orientalists, the Turks from the Tsarist Russia (conceptualized as Outside Turks) also added to the idea of cultural Turkism from the nineteenth century till its end. For instance, İsmail (Gasprinski) Gaspıralı, a Crimean Tatar and his famous newspaper, *Tercüman*, had a role in this adventure. As the Russian control over the political activities of the non-Russian groups within the country was tight, call of Gaspıralı to Turkish world was in a cultural tone, rather than a politic one, as expressed in his famous catchword “Unity in language, thought and action” (*Dilde, fikirde, işte birlik*). With its explicit and didactic content and gradually rising followers, *Tercüman* became a mean of communication and seed of cultural nationalism among the Ottoman, Russian, Caucasian and certain Central Asian Turks. Then, the intense years of Pan-Slavism in the nineteenth century pushed the Turks in Russia to develop a counter consciousness. Therefore, why Crimea, Kazan and the Caucasia Muslims (Turks)²⁶⁵ played the prominent role in the progress of Turkism could be grasped in a better way. Shihab al-Din Merjani (1818-1889, from Kazan), Mirza Fethali (Ahundov) Ahundzade (1812-1878, from Azerbaijan), Hüseyinzade Ali (1864-1941, from Azerbaijan) and Ahmed (Agayef) Ağaoğlu (1869-1939, from Azerbaijan) were among the distinctive

²⁶⁵ During the last decades of the nineteenth century, an official census showed the number of the Turks in Russia as at least 13,6 million out of the overall population (125 million). Eugen Oberhummer, *Die Türken und das Osmanische Reich* (Leipzig und Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1917), p. 17. With little exceptions, almost all of them were Muslims. Therefore, their resistance against the Pan-Slavism and Russification/Christianization was grounded on their Muslim identity. This stance later facilitated the Turkism among them and other Turkic groups. Thus, it could be argued that while the academic writings of the Westerners formed a compartment of the Turkism; Muslim identity of the Outside Turks generated another part of it.

agents in the formation of Turkish national awareness both for the Turks of Russia and many other regions.

Having been influenced by those aforementioned factors -in addition to the Balkan and European nationalism experiences- Turkish intellectuals produced their works on Turkish culture, language and history in the nineteenth century. Süleyman Pasha, Necib Asım (Yazıksız), Sheikh Süleyman Efendi from Bukhara, Ahmed Vefik Pasha and Şemseddin Sami were among those intellectuals who promoted cultural Turkish nationalism with their works on history and language. Particularly, Mehmed Emin Bey hit the top with his call on adopting and declaring Turkish-ness through literature. During the last years of the nineteenth century, the Turkish-Greek War pushed him to write his highly nationalistic poems, published in *Türkçe Şiirler* (Turkish Poems) in 1899. For Akçura, “Among all Ottoman poets, firstly the poet of *Türkçe Şiirler* understood that his language is Turkish, his nation is Turkish and that nation is public; and he shouted it in a strong voice.”²⁶⁶ His poem *Anadolu’dan Bir Ses Yahud Cenge Giderken* (A Voice from Anatolia or while Going to Battle), starting with yelling “Ben bir Türk’üm, dinim, cinsim uludur” (I am a Turk, my religion and race is supreme)²⁶⁷ was a revolutionary act that an Ottoman openly identified himself as Turk, and prepared the ground for the political understanding of Turkish nationalism from the peak of cultural nationalism.

After approximately half century of cultural Turkish nationalism, beginning of the twentieth century corresponds with the birth of nationalism with more political discourse in Turkey. The Young Turks had started their struggle against the oppressive government inside and outside of the empire. Especially their publications confidentially imported into the country played a significant role on

²⁶⁶ Yusuf Akçura, *Türk Yılı 1928*, ed. Arslan Tekin & Ahmet Zeki İzgöer, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2009), p. 392-397.

²⁶⁷ This poem is included in *Türkçe Şiirler*, which consists of nine poems and the praising letters written by certain pen of men to Mehmed Emin. In *Mehmed Emin Yurdakul’un Eserleri-I Şiirler*, ed. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1969), p. 22.

this.²⁶⁸ Then, 1908 Revolution solemnly established the ground for political Turkish nationalism. The Young Turks in Europe moved toward the political nationalism. On the other hand, Egypt was a significant center of the Young Turks, which also fostered Turkish nationalism. The periodical, named *Türk*, was firstly published in 1903, in Cairo and stated its aim as to protect the rights of the Turks, clean their minds and cheer their ideas.²⁶⁹ Thus, publishing of *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Styles of Politics)* of Yusuf Akçura in *Türk* in 1904 was not a coincidence. Within the empire, the newspaper *İkdam* had updated its subtitle as “Politically, scholarly and economically Turkish newspaper” after several years of its emergence.²⁷⁰ So, increasing political activities of the Young Turks in Turkey and abroad; their close interaction among each other; and swelling force of the press resulted²⁷¹ in hectic circulation of political-nationalist ideas.

Among remarkable members, Ömer Seyfettin (1884-1920) is considered as a substantial political Turkish nationalist moving from linguistic one. His ideas on the question “What is nation?” show resemblances to Renan’s account since both rejected the race and political borders as determiners of a nation. On the other hand, for Ömer Seyfettin, same language and religion and common culture set the nation-ness.²⁷² He became one of the pioneers of the movement of “returning to national identity” through his own literate writings and journal *Genç*

²⁶⁸ Hanoğlu, “Türkçülük”, p. 552.

²⁶⁹ Hanoğlu, “Türkçülük”, p. 552.

²⁷⁰ Nesimi Yazıcı, “İkdam”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 22, (2000): p. 24-25.

²⁷¹ As it is known, Benedict Anderson deems the publishing significant for national movements. Accordingly, he points the increasing publishing activities and newspapers in the second half of the nineteenth century as important milestones of the embodiment of the Turkish nationalism. *Hayali Cemaatler*, p. 91.

²⁷² Uzer, *An Intellectual History of Turkish Nationalism*, p. 25. Here he differentiates from Renan.

Kalemler.²⁷³ He also employed the terms *Turan* and *mefkûre* (ideal) as it could be seen in the works of Hüseyinzade Ali and Ziya Gökalp. Ömer Seyfettin's article *Yarınki Turan Devleti* identified the ideal of (Turkish) nation as unifying language, religion, soul and emotion fellows and gathering them within the same political borders. At this point, he portrayed the *Turan* by claiming "All Turkish speaking Muslims in Turkey, Persia, Turkestan, Bukhara, Kashgar, China, Manchuria, and Russia are the same nation; and the total of the places they reside is *Turan*, that is Turkish fatherland."²⁷⁴ It is also interesting he gave priority to Islam in definition of *Turan* as opposed to Hüseyinzade Ali.

The "Outside Turks", Ahmed Ağaoğlu and Hüseyinzade Ali, in addition to their role in cultural nationalism, contributed to political Turkish nationalism, too. Ağaoğlu got education in Paris where he met the European intellectuals like James Darmesteter, Ernest Renan and Gaston Paris. According to him, the Turks had been the most powerful advocates of Islam for centuries. However, their religion cost them forgetting their language, economy and even their nationality.²⁷⁵ Thus, he supported the idea of fortifying the Turkish-ness in various spheres of life.²⁷⁶ Hüseyinzade Ali was another Azerbaijani Turk who made a big impact on the development of Turkism. He influenced many of his contemporary nationalists and following generations. His poem "*Turan*" is

²⁷³ *Genç Kalemler Dergisi-Tıpkıbasım*, ed. İsmail Parlatır & Nurullah Çetin, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2014), preface, p xx.

²⁷⁴ Ömer Seyfettin, *Yarınki Turan Devleti*, (İstanbul: Türk Yurdu Kitabhanesi-Kader Matbaası, 1330/1914), p. 10.

²⁷⁵ Ahmed Agayef (Ağaoğlu), "İslamda Dava-yı Milliyet", *Türk Yurdu*, 10/6, (1330/1914): p. 2388.

²⁷⁶ It is needed to stress that Ahmed Ağaoğlu reached to Turkish nationalism after several phases of Persianism, Islamism, Ottomanist Turkism. Different environments he was raised should have been a factor for these changes in his mentality. Fahri Sakal, *Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1999), p. 89.

considered as the first call to the unity of Turks in political meaning.²⁷⁷ It is obvious that Ziya Gökalp borrowed and developed this term. Hüseyinzade Ali also seems to have affected Gökalp with his previous motto of “Turkification, Islamization and Europeanization” as the latter reorganized it as “Turkification, Islamization and Modernization”.²⁷⁸

Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp were the masterminds of the Turkish nationalism during the first quarter of the twentieth century in Turkey with the Pan-Turkist or Turanist sentiments at intervals.²⁷⁹ Akçura²⁸⁰ produced *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Styles of Politics)*, which meant a lot for Turkish nationalists as similar to the worth of *The Communist Manifesto* for the Marxists.²⁸¹ In this work, Akçura dealt with the three potential remedies before the shipwreck of the Ottoman Empire. Two of the policies he covered, Ottomanism and Islamism, had been applied for several decades. But he actually systematized his Turkism in this

²⁷⁷ Uriel Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, trans. Kadir Günay, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1979), p. 127.; The poem includes those lines in meaning: *Oh Hungarian nation, you are brothers to us / Turan is the common history of our ancestors / In a religion, all of us believe in God / Is it possible that Bible and Quran divide us? [...]* It means that regardless of the religion, coming from the Turkish (Turan) descent would be sufficient to be of the same nation. (Sizlersiniz ey kavm-i Macar bizlere ihvan/Ecdadımız müştereken menşei Turan/Bir dindeyiz biz hepimiz hakperestan / Mümkün mü ayırsın bizi İncil ile Kur'an?)

²⁷⁸ Sevil Garaşova, “XX. Yüzyıl Azerbaycan Fikir Tarihinde Ali Bey Hüseyinzade’nin Yeri”, *Selçuk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 16, (2004): p. 310.

²⁷⁹ In many works, Turkism, Turkish nationalism, Pan-Turkism and Turanism have been juxtaposed. However, in spite of certain similarities on views on culture, history, language, and interests of the Turkish nation, their focal territories, inclusivity toward various groups and future projects could differ. It should be noted that “Pan” movements try to reach beyond the existing national borders; and Turanist approach tends to include the Hungarians, Finns and Estonians who were believed to have come from the Turanian origin, but as Ziya Gökalp confessed at a point, it was a dream “for now”.

²⁸⁰ François Georgeon provided one of the best biographies on Yusuf Akçura. *Aux Origines du nationalisme turc: Yusuf Akçura (1876-1935)*, (Paris: Editions A.P.D.F., 1980). It was translated to Turkish as *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, as cited above.

²⁸¹ Hanioglu, “Türkçülük”, p. 553.

work by propounding a policy of Turkish nation based on the race.²⁸² For Akçura, nation meant a community of the people whose social consciences are shaped with the feeling of unity emerging from the sameness of the race and language.²⁸³ Through this viewpoint, he seems to have adopted the German type of nation and concept of race as he himself also accepted the influence of Arthur de Gobineau on him.²⁸⁴

According to Akçura, “union of the element” of the Ottoman Empire was in no way feasible. History, customs, tradition, religion and way of life of the people in different parts of the empire were not similar. For him, a Christian Serbian shepherd in Kosovo and a nomad Muslim Arab in the desert could find nothing common for their lives and identities.²⁸⁵ However, he also criticized the Ottoman intellectuals for not showing sufficient interest to the situation in Turkestan.²⁸⁶ Identically, for Akçura, the same case was seen in the history understanding as the history of Turks was considered to begin with Murad, Fatih, Selim and include Nefi, Baki etc.; and could not reach to Oghuz, Genghis Khan, Timur and Ulugh Begh.²⁸⁷ Still, he thought that the awakening of the Turks was a fact and it was accompanied by economic relations, too. For Akçura, emergence of the national bourgeoisie accelerated the Turkish nationalism, so he wrote articles on

²⁸² Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 36.

²⁸³ Ali Rıza Saklı, “Osmanlı Döneminde Türk Milliyetçiliği”, *Akademik Bakış*, 33, (2012): p. 8.

²⁸⁴ Reşat Kasaba, “Dreams of Empire, Dreams of Nation”, in *Empire to Nation*, p. 212.

²⁸⁵ Yusuf Akçura, “İttihad-ı Anasır Meselesi”, *Sırat-ı Müstakim*, 1910, as cited in *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 132.

²⁸⁶ Yusuf Akçura, “Asya-yı rüsta felaketzedegâhı menfaatına verilen konferans”, as cited in *Sırat-ı Müstakim*, 1911, cited in *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 133.

²⁸⁷ Akçura, *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, p. 39.

this matter. Birth and nationalization of the Turkish middle class after the Balkan Wars was a promising development to Akçura.²⁸⁸

On the other hand, despite Akçura is presented as one of the most influential Pan-Turkists in plenty of works,²⁸⁹ he insistently argued that his nationalism had never had an irredentist character, rather was a democratic one.²⁹⁰ Indeed, it is known that Akçura attached great importance to the acquaintance, interaction and communication of the Turkish communities at different places, but this desire seems to contain the unity in language and consciousness.²⁹¹ Correspondingly, Akçura admitted in 1928 that the establishment of the Republic of Turkey had fulfilled his ideals of Turkism.²⁹² Yusuf Akçura was a key figure in Turkey till his death and he kept dealing with history and politics then. The peaceful foreign policy of Turkey Republic and its nationalism – mostly focused within its borders- also could give idea on the absence of irredentist intentions in Akçura's Turkism.²⁹³

The most influential ideologist of Turkish nationalism for future generations was probably Ziya Gökalp. He developed his relations with the Young Turks and

²⁸⁸ Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 112. It can be understood that political and economic dimensions of the nationalism at this stage were on rise. See Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye'de Milli İktisat*, (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap Yayınları, 2017).

²⁸⁹ Jacob M. Landau, *Pan-Turkism in Turkey-A Study in Irredentism* (London: C. Hurst & Company, 1981), p. 13.

²⁹⁰ Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 145.

²⁹¹ According to Fahri Sakal, Ahmed Ağaoğlu, Yusuf Akçura and many other nationalists shifted from Turkist/Turanist approach to moderate nationalism within the boundaries of modern Turkey during Atatürk era. *Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey*, p. 97.

²⁹² Saklı, "Osmanlı Döneminde Türk Milliyetçiliği", 10.

²⁹³ According to confession of Akçura in 1928, a point was missing or misjudged in *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*. For the author, pursuing a Turkist/nationalist policy within the state would not necessarily result in a Pan-Turkist policy. *Türk Yılı 1928*, p. 426.

opened the Diyarbakır branch of CUP (Committee of Union and Progress / *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*) after the 1908 Revolution. Afterwards, he attended in the congress of the CUP in Thessaloniki in 1909 and was elected as the member of the board.²⁹⁴ From that time on, Ziya Gökalp produced his impressive works on Turkish nationalism.

Gökalp²⁹⁵ was intensely influenced by the teachings of Emile Durkheim on sociological and philosophical matters, but sometimes re-interpreted them. To illustrate, whereas the teaching of Durkheim prioritized the “society”, Gökalp replaced it with “nation” as he asserted in 1911 that the nations have been the last stage of the societies.²⁹⁶ For him, nation means “a group of people with common language, religion, ethics, aesthetics and same education”²⁹⁷ after evaluating and criticizing the definitions of nation on racial, ethnic, geographical, Ottomanist, Islamist and individualist bases.²⁹⁸ Moreover, according to Gökalp, concept of race belongs to the natural sciences, while nation is the subject of the social sciences.²⁹⁹ Accordingly, he sets forth the responsibility of the members of the nation to be loyal to and work for the

²⁹⁴ M. Orhan Okay, “Ziya Gökalp”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 14, (1996): p. 131-134.

²⁹⁵ Ziya used *Tevfik Sedad* and *Demirtaş* as his pennames. Ali Cânib stated that he offered *Gökalp* to him and Ziya adopted it. Parlatır & Çetin, *Genç Kalemler Dergisi-Tıpkıbasım*, preface, p. xxvi-xxvii.

²⁹⁶ Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, p. 68-71.

²⁹⁷ Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, p. 20.

²⁹⁸ Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, p. 15-19.

²⁹⁹ Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, p. 73.

nation. The challenges that the Turks had faced were the result of not knowing their self-identity and national responsibilities.³⁰⁰

As opposed to Yusuf Akçura, who seems to get three policies compete each other, Ziya Gökalp demarcated the Turkish nationalism with three pillars based on being of Turkish nation, of Islam “ummah” and western civilization.³⁰¹ For Gökalp, these three approaches do not conflict with one another; on the contrary, they foster the Turkish nationalism. To illustrate, he asserted that in addition to language and history, religious education could serve for being a nation. Refreshment of nationalism and resurgence of the ummah would fortify each other.³⁰² Being a Turk bounds up with the Turkish culture, which is shaped by distinctiveness in language, aesthetics, ethics and religion. Turks, provided that they preserve their Turkish and Muslim identities, shall proceed to Western civilization. But finding and maintaining the national culture was crucial, since culture is a national, civilization is an international concept.³⁰³ In concordance with his loyalty to Islam and its values,³⁰⁴ *Turan* ideal of Ziya Gökalp was inclusive of Turkish speaking Muslim communities.

Still, as the Balkan Wars and World War I showed the failure –or incapacity- of Turanist ideals, Ziya Gökalp modified and moderated his ideas on Turan.

³⁰⁰ Ziya Gökalp, *Türkleşmek İslamlaşmak Muasırlaşmak*, ed. Kemal Bek, (İstanbul: Bordo Siyah, 2010), p. 57.

³⁰¹ Gökalp, *Türkleşmek İslamlaşmak Muasırlaşmak*, p. 30.

³⁰² Gökalp, *Türkleşmek İslamlaşmak Muasırlaşmak*, p. 101-103.

³⁰³ Saklı, “Osmanlı Döneminde Türk Milliyetçiliği”, p. 9.

³⁰⁴ Still, it should be kept in mind that Ziya Gökalp proposed radical reforms in Islam, putting an end to hegemony of religion in Turkish political and social life, and distinguishing the religious and Eastern culture in order to compound the basic values of Islam, national Turkish culture and Western civilization. Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, p. 104. Gökalp’s suggestions for separating the state from religion, abolishing the institution of Sheikhulislam, ending the law-making of the Caliph-Sultans and his pointer for Turkish azan (call to prayer) and Quran would reveal his ideals for religion and his influence on the policies of the new Turkish Republic.

Türkçülüğün Esasları (Principles of Turkism, published in 1923) was one of the last and the most overarching works of Gökalp. In this book, he contributed greatly to the systematization of Turkish nationalism. Hereunder, he presented the ideals of Turkism as three stages, from the nearest to the uttermost. The union in Turkey marks the first stage, which is named *Turkey-ism*. Then comes the second and relatively near ideal, *Oghuz-ism*. At this phase, Oghuz Turks – namely Turkey, Azerbaijan, Persia and Khwarazm Turks, all of which are Oghuz Turks- could unite. However, this union would be cultural, rather than a political one. *Turan-ism* is the ultimate target of the Turks. At this part, all Oghuz Turks and Tatar, Kyrgyz, Uzbek and Yakut peoples would be unified in language, literature and culture. Although Gökalp admits the almost impossible feasibility of this aim, he puts forth that this ideal would lead to an eternal enthusiasm and passion for the souls; and was instrumental in building Turkism.³⁰⁵ With his eight books, tens of articles in various journals, university lecture notes and unpublished writings, Ziya Gökalp made a major contribution to the understanding and shaping of Turkish nationalism.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, with his effective role on the state rulers and officials, he made a dent in the policies of the late Ottoman Empire and newly established Turkish Republic. This could provide an insight on the influences of the national ideals in administering Turkey during the twentieth century.

Consequently, those writers and ideologues settled the Turkish nationalism from mid-nineteenth century to the end of World War I in cultural and political manners respectively. When compared to models of nationhood and nationalism in previous part, it is possible to argue that Turkish nationalism of the period in question could show some idiosyncrasies. First, the Ottoman Empire included non-Muslim and non-Turkish subjects almost until the end of the empire.

³⁰⁵ Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, p. 22-26.

³⁰⁶ Thousands of participants in the funeral ceremony of Gökalp could give idea on his influences on his contemporary and future generations. “Ziya Gökalp’in Cenaze Töreni, İstanbul Ekim 1924”, YouTube Video, 2019, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FYTKertd0L4>. accessed on 15.01.2021.

Therefore, ethnicity or religion-based nationalism could not be totally adopted by the governing elite. Second, although some rulers embraced Turkish nationalism, it was not a concrete state program and it mostly came to the fore in the discourses of intellectuals. Thus, it could not be described as state-framed nationalism. Nor it was counter-state nationalism, for sure.³⁰⁷ Hence, Turkish nationalism developed in the specified period was a program that aimed to emphasize the existence of the Turks culturally and to prevent the collapse of the empire or to ensure its improvement politically. As Sugar points out, it mostly remained in the hands of a bureaucratic and intellectual group and did not penetrate the public very well. On the other hand, after the World War I and the Turks' country and existence were threatened, they gathered again for a “National Struggle” in 1919-1922. During the struggle and in the process following the establishment of the new republic, the state itself framed a nationalism (of course, taking advantage of various points in the discourse and definitions of nationalism in the previous decades) and that nationalism was handled in different ways in different periods as it will be seen in next chapters.

2.5. Emergence and Growing of Turkish Nationalist Historiography in Late Ottoman Era

Considering the Ottoman Empire, it is not possible to claim the existence of a concrete style of history writing until the Gülhane Edict. Though the state was established at the end of the thirteenth century, known historiography started in the middle of the 1400s. Yet, those available works only signaled the chronology of the events without analyzing them and even by mixing the reality and the myths. Until the late eighteenth century, when European civilization began to influence the Ottomans, history could not go further than being simply stories based on Islamic belief. Next, Turkish history was limited to Ottoman history,

³⁰⁷ However, separatist national movements of the non-Muslim and non-Turkish groups can be classified as counter-state nationalism.

and divine will was given credit in explaining the events, and patronage of the sultan should have been regarded.³⁰⁸

Actually, it was not so easy for Ottoman historians until the nineteenth century to act and write independent from the Sultan or state affairs. The economic matters prevailed *per se*. Those historians needed the support of the Sultan or state officials to make a living, which shaped their writing.³⁰⁹ Until the sixteenth century, Ottoman historians mostly wrote under the patronage of the rulers. The sixteenth century historians were official *Şehnameci* (writer of the Sultan's book) of the palace;³¹⁰ and from the beginning of the eighteenth century till the end of the empire, imperial annals-writers (*vaqaniivis*) wrote the history of the Ottoman Empire.³¹¹ Therefore, they were personally within the state bureaucracy and could not conflict with the contemporary policies and worldview of the state. Moreover, they were in Istanbul (the center), so they wrote the events in proportion as their relations with the capital, which resulted in an Istanbul-centered history.³¹²

After the Gülhane Edict, reforms were applied in history writing as well as many other areas. This epoch marked the beginning of the institutionalization of

³⁰⁸ For characteristics of Ottoman historiography until modern era, see *Söğüt'ten İstanbul'a*, ed. Oktay Özel & Mehmet Öz, (İstanbul: İmge Yayınları, 2019); Halil İnalcık, "The Rise of Ottoman Historiography", in *Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis & Peter M. Holt, (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 152-167; V. L. Menage, "The Beginnings of Ottoman Historiography", in *Historians of the Middle East*, p. 168-179.

³⁰⁹ Cemal Kafadar & Hakan T. Karateke, "Late Ottoman and Early Republican Turkish Historical Writing", in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing – Volume 4: 1800-1945*, ed. Daniel Woolf, Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maignaschca & Attila Pok, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 559.

³¹⁰ Christine Woodhead, "Şehnameci", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 38, (2010), p. 456.

³¹¹ Bekir Kütükoğlu, "Vak'anüvis", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 42, (2012), p. 457-461.

³¹² Kafadar & Karateke, "Late Ottoman and Early Republican Turkish Historical Writing", p. 560.

history in the Ottomans. Through certain revisions in understanding and education of history -with the influence of west- form and substance of the field began to change. Then, in comply with the zeitgeist, Turkish national histories became common after the Constitution of 1908. Communities, which were affected from the nationalism, had drawn apart from the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century and it prepared the ground for Turkish intellectuals' adoption of nationalist politics and understanding of history by ignoring Ottomanism and Islamism. Between 1908 and 1923, political figures and historians spent too much effort for the settling of nationalism and marking the Turkism as the supreme culture, political ideal and national character. Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, Necib Asım, Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Yusuf Akçura, Ziya Gökalp, Hamdullah Subhi, Fuad Köprülü and some others could be included to that group of individuals.³¹³ Indeed most of them were active members of either the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) or People's Party in later periods and they had already started to take role in the nationalization processes in certain associations.³¹⁴

Just as the German nationalist historians did not think of any conflicts between the idea of nationalist history and the goal of objectivity in history;³¹⁵ similarly, scientific history in Turkey could be thought to start with the Constitutional era when nationalist ideas were expanding simultaneously. Yet, this ideology would be accomplished in Republican era to greater extent. Until that time, certain individuals and various institutions paved the way for the settling of a Turkish national historiography.

³¹³ For instance, Fuad Köprülü increased his works emphasizing the need for nationalization after the Balkan Wars; so that his works on Seljukids civilization of Turkish history before the Ottomans would be applied in preparing Turkish Historical Thesis years later. Halil İnalcık, "Türk İlmî ve M. Fuad Köprülü", *Türk Kültürü*, 65, (1968): p. 290.

³¹⁴ Seyfullah Kara, "Millî Tarih Anlayışının Romantik Devri: Cumhuriyetin İlk Yılları", *Atatürk Üniversitesi Türkiyat Araştırmaları Enstitüsü Dergisi*, no.23, (2004): p. 325; Ersanlı, *İktidar ve Tarih*, p. 109.

³¹⁵ The processes of nationalization usually gather scientific history narratives and histories with political and pedagogical intentions. They co-exist, and even intertwine. Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 12.

2.5.1. Early Attempts

As it was touched above, from the second part of the nineteenth century on, certain individuals gradually have served for the changing of established tradition of historiography and settling of the increasingly national historical narratives. First, although it is not possible to claim that Ahmed Vefik, Ahmed Cevdet and Süleyman Hüsnü were absolute Turkish nationalists, they were pioneers for questioning the available system of history writing and their personal efforts to re-organize the historiography expedited the nationalistic style. A brief look over their approach to history would surely shed light on the path to national historiography in Turkey.

Ahmed Vefik Pasha (1823-1891), having political, diplomatic and state apparatus,³¹⁶ focused on Turkish studies, including the dictionaries and theatre plays. As mentioned earlier, in *Lehçe-i Osmani*, he had heralded the availability of a great Turkish language family from Asia to Europe. As significant as his works on language, Ahmed Vefik wrote on Turkish history, too. He dated the emergence of the Turks into world history to five millennia before the Hegira, although it had been restricted to Ottoman era for a long time.³¹⁷ His work *Hikmet-i Tarih* rejected the history writing based on the individuals and events; and proposed the analyzing of reason-results of the activities in the past relying on documents. He also dwelled on the issue of races, their emergence, expanding of the Turks to various parts of the world from the Altai region; and gave credit to archaeology, geology and ethnography in historical researches, which marked a relatively new trend in history writing.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ To illustrate, sources show his services as ambassador, BOA., A.AMD. 34/13, H. 14.02.1268/9 December 1951; and the rewards he received for his appreciated services, BOA., A.DVN.MHM., 35/87, H. 20.08.1278/20 .02.1862.

³¹⁷ Ömer Faruk Akün, “Ahmed Vefik Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, (1989): p. 150.

³¹⁸ Akün, “Ahmed Vefik Paşa”, p. 151.

Next, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha was a revolutionist figure in history writing, in addition to his uncountable assignments, posts and services. From the late 1840's, he started his missions within the state.³¹⁹ Ahmet Cevdet compiled more than fifty works including histories, literate and linguistic works, law books and various reports, translations etc. His appointment as the official chronicler in 1855³²⁰ prepared the ground for his activities in the field of history. Among his eleven books on history, *Târih-i Cevdet (History of Cevdet)*, *Tezâkir-i Cevdet (Documents of Cevdet)* and *Mâruzât (Submissions)* came to the fore. He is considered as an inspiring figure for the historians of next generations with his meticulous style of analyzing the events based on the sources. He also adopted a critical approach to previous narratives and even criticized some historians such as Edib, Enverî, Asım Efendi, Şânizade and Vasıf Efendi for writing subjectively, giving contradictory information, improper accusations, false reporting etc.³²¹ It appears that he closely probed the historical events as well as historiography trends in Europe. Therefore, while composing the Ottoman history, he benefited from those skills.

According to reports, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha admitted the influence of certain British, French and German historians on him, as well as Ibn Khaldun and certain previous Ottoman historians. Accordingly, he shaped his history philosophy and developed his methodology. Cevdet brought a new approach in Ottoman historiography that was scientific and the synthesis of the Eastern and

³¹⁹ An extensive work on the life and activities of Ahmet Cevdet Pasha indicates his at least 47 major assignment, membership or appointments including being state chronicler, governor, minister, head of the committee for the constitution etc. For details see Şevki Nezihi Aykut, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa (1238-1312/1823-1895)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018).

³²⁰ BOA., *DH.SAİD.MEM.*, 8/12, H. 29.12.1238/6.09.1823. The date of the document seems incorrect as H. 1238 year corresponds with G. 1823, which is the birth year of Ahmet Cevdet.

³²¹ Aykut, *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa*, p. 239-240.

Western schools.³²² It is clear that attributing a Turkish nationalist sentiment to Cevdet Pasha would not be possible. However, as Yusuf Akçura pointed, Ahmet Cevdet could not be antagonist to Turkish-ness, as he Turkified the Islamic law, served to literate Turkism with *Kıyas-ı Enbiyâ* (*Stories of the Prophets*), and attached importance to Turkish-ness and Turkish race with *Târih-i Cevdet*.³²³ Consequently, in addition to his major role in re-organizing the history understanding and writing, it is also possible to mention his service for a more national history.

Originally a military official, Süleyman Hüsnü (1838-1892) contributed to Turkish historiography, too. After joining the Young Turks, he engaged in politics.³²⁴ His history book *Târih-i Âlem* (*World History*) was prepared for the lectures in Military Academy (*Mekteb-i Harbiye*). In this work, he allocated a significant place to Turkish history. According to author, the Turks had an indispensable role in world history as they encountered with the Indians, Persians and Arabs in Asia; and with the Greeks, Romans, French, Poles, Hungarians and Russians in Europe, before the Ottomans.³²⁵ He also classified the Tatars, Mongols, Oghuz and the Huns under the title of “*Tavâif-i Türk*” (Turkish Communities). *Târih-i Âlem* of Süleyman Hüsnü brought him fame among the Turkists, since the book targeted enlightening pre-Islamic Turkish history based on the research of the Western intellectuals. His other book *Umdetü'l-Hakâyık* (*Principle of Truth*) is also a remarkable source for Turkish-Russian War of 1877-78 as it included related documents, maps and sketches;³²⁶

³²² Yusuf Halaçoğlu & Mehmet Akif Aydın, “Cevdet Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 7, (1993): p. 446.

³²³ Akçura, *Türk Yılı 1928*, p. 343.

³²⁴ Kemal Beydilli, “Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 38, (2010): p. 89-92.

³²⁵ Süleyman Hüsnü, *Târih-i Âlem*, (İstanbul: Mekteb-i Harbiyye Matbaası, 1327/1911), p. 383.

³²⁶ Süleyman Hüsnü Paşa, *Umdetü'l-Hakâyık*, (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Askeri, 1928).

which proved his history understanding based on sources.³²⁷ Hence, Süleyman Hüsnü should be considered as one of those who made inroads into national historiography as he undertook to write the history of the Turks in a broad sense. In addition to aforementioned historians, who were not completely Turkish nationalists but served putting Turkish historiography in a nationalistic track; there were also supporters of Turkism or Turkish nationalism, who wrote on Turkish history and shaped its writing. Bursalı Mehmed Tahir Bey (1861-1925) was one of those, as he pointed the lack of a national history and argued that firstly a true and rich bibliography should have been prepared.³²⁸ Most probably, as a result of this need, a demolition job of him emerged as *Türklerin Ulûm ve Fünûna Hizmetleri* (Service of the Turks to Science and Techniques) at the end of the nineteenth century. In the foreword of the book, Mehmed Tahir claimed that the West had seen the Turks merely as raiders and barbarians. However, the role of the Turks in world civilization must have been revealed. Furthermore, many of the famous Turks had written in Arabic or Persian after Islam; therefore, their activities had been considered as within the Islamic civilization, yet, they were Turks; and this should have been stressed.³²⁹ With his work, on the one hand, Mehmed Tahir tried to prove the decisive role of the Turks in world civilization. On the other hand, he also uttered the contribution of the Turks to Islam. In any case, he strengthened the Turkism while opening the floodgates for nationalist history writing.

Necib Asım (1861-1935) was another influential Turkist of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. He is considered as the founder of the Turcology

³²⁷ A biography of the author at the beginning of the work also adds it a value.

³²⁸ Ömer Faruk Akün, “Bursalı Mehmed Tahir”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, (1992): p. 455.

³²⁹ Mehmed Tahir, *Türklerin Ulûm ve Fünûna Hizmetleri*, (Dersaadet: İkdâm Matbaası, 1314/1898), p. 3-4. As continuation of this work, he later gave his largest product, *Osmanlı Müellifleri*, (İstanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1333/1917) and following volumes respectively. These all came to mean that the Turks -before and after the Ottomans- raised influential personalities on various aspects of civilization and the accusations for being non-civilized could not be accepted.

in *Darülfünun*.³³⁰ Additionally, he was rewarded by the state for his services in the university.³³¹ Besides his works on the Turkish language,³³² his *Türk Tarihi* (*Turkish History*) aimed at filling a gap in the related area. For Necib Asım, the Turks had existed in Asia for many centuries; and they had established their civilization with noblesse. As a side note, Chinese, Arab and Persian thoughts would have been limited to their own geography if the Turks had not come across them and played a role in transmitting them to other parts of the world.³³³ So, he attributes a role to Turks both as the founder and transporter of the civilization throughout the history. On the other hand, he also aimed at enlightening the Turks on their roots and glorious history; which probably made this book the first Turkish nationalistic history study.³³⁴ Though he produced multiple works on history, these seem certain to place Necib Asım among those who signalized the nationalistic historiography of the Turks.

In addition to their roles for political Turkish nationalism, its two highly influential members –Yusuf Akçura and Ziya Gökalp- should also be probed regarding their ideas on nationalist history writing. Akçura had a deep interest and knowledge in philosophy, law, sociology but willingly specialized in the field of history,³³⁵ so, he produced a multiple of works especially after *Üç Tarz-ı*

³³⁰ “Yazıksız, Necib Asım” *Türk Dünyası Edebiyatçıları Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 8, (Ankara: Atatürk Kültür Merkezi Yayınları, 2007), p. 602-603.

³³¹ BOA., *MF.MKT.*, 1242/88, H. 19.10.1339/06.1921.

³³² Some of them could be counted as *Ural ve Altay Lisanları* (*Languages of Ural and Altai*), *En Eski Türk Yazısı* (*The Oldest Turkish Script*), *Orhun Abideleri* (*The Orkhon Inscriptions*), all of which served to cultural Turkism effectively.

³³³ Necib Asım, *Türk Tarihi*, (Dersaadet: Feridiye Matbaası, 1318/1902), p. 32.

³³⁴ Ercimet Sarıay, “Necib Asım (Yazıksız)’ın Tarihçiliği Üzerine Bazı Tespitler”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Atatürk Yolu Dergisi*, 65, (Güz 2019): p. 389-394.

³³⁵ Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 62-63.

Siyaset in 1904. Apart from various assignments,³³⁶ he fondly wrote on history and developed a style for historiography. For him, historical research was not carried out for abstract thinking, rather, it should have been studied to extract useful information, thought and feeling for a certain community.³³⁷ He also emphasized the need of finding formulations (or laws) for historical events by carefully analyzing first and second-hand sources with the help of auxiliary sciences.³³⁸ Hence, it seems that he aspired for a nationalist history that would focus on the nation and its experiences with a scientific method. This attitude also signals the effects of the German approach on him regarding the relation between the nation and history as a science.

Another great mind of Turkish nationalism, Ziya Gökalp, contributed to nationalist history writing, too. In his private letters, he claimed that he had explored the Turkish history so well,³³⁹ and dated the emergence of the Turks to at least three millennia ago.³⁴⁰ For him, the Turkish nation had to identify its ideal (*ülkü*); and the task of the intellectuals was to find it out. That could be possible by closely examining the pre-Islamic past of the ancient Turks and the

³³⁶ Seçil Karal Akgün & Murat Uluğtekin, *Akçuraaoğlu Yusuf*, (Ankara: Türkiye Kızılay Derneği Yayınları, 2009), p. 11. This work includes a number of assignments of Akçura, one of which is his interesting travel from the Scandinavian to Siberia in 1917-1919 as an envoy of *Hilal-i Ahmer* (Turkish Red Crescent) to investigate the matter of the Ottoman prisoners of World War I.

³³⁷ Enver Ziya Karal, “Ön Söz”, in *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset*, p. xiv.

³³⁸ Georgeon, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Kökenleri*, p. 65. According to Georgeon, Akçura had been influenced by the work of Seignobos and Langlois. That book provides a relatively good teaching of scientific methods for history despite being written in late nineteenth century. Classification of the documents, analyzing the sources critically, construction of the text, auxiliary sciences to history etc. are dealt there. Charles Victor Langlois & Charles Seignobos, *Tarih Tetkiklerine Giriş*, trans. Galip Ataç, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2010).

³³⁹ *Ziya Gökalp Külliyyatı II – Limni ve Malta Mektupları*, ed. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel, (Ankara, Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1965), p. 496.

³⁴⁰ *Limni ve Malta Mektupları*, p. 388.

folk culture.³⁴¹ He argues that whereas other nations need to move away from the history, the Turks just needed to look at their past to integrate into modern civilization.³⁴² The Turks “had been tricked” by the *Tanzimat* and could not talk about their national history.³⁴³ Accordingly, what he stood up for was a national history, which would help constructing the future and foster the patriotism in a pedagogical way as in the case of the German historiography.³⁴⁴

Following that path, Fuad Köprülü, Mükrimin Halil, Ahmed Refik and certain others continued to produce on Turkish national history in varying degrees. However, as it could be agreed, aforementioned historians and intellectuals could not be limited to what was written above and they did not act completely individually. In other words, they usually took part in various scholar/learned/historical societies. Consequently, this kind of institutions and associations contributed to Turkish national historiography with the activities of their members, most of whom held a Turkist/nationalist approach toward history especially in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

2.5.2. Institutions, Learned Societies and Associations

Before moving to nationalist learned societies and associations that operated in the fields of national culture, history and literature, it seems appropriate to give a general look at the birth and progress of the bureaucratic, educational and cultural institutions within the Ottoman Empire after the nineteenth century, which directly or indirectly affected the way of writing history. Academy of sciences, universities, museums and national archives should be considered here.

³⁴¹ Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, p. 131-132.

³⁴² Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları*, p. 151.

³⁴³ Gökalp, *Türkleşmek, İslamlaşmak, Muasırlaşmak*, p. 58.

³⁴⁴ Heyd, *Türk Ulusçuluğunun Temelleri*, p. 183-184.

As it is known, nineteenth century's institutions, in addition to their roles in shaping historiography and nationalizing it, also rendered service to the establishment of national states and building of nations in Europe to an extent.³⁴⁵

As the very first example of a Turkish scientific institution, similar to the European counterparts, *Encümen-i Dâniş* (Committee of Scholars) was created in the middle of the nineteenth century.³⁴⁶ As a document shows the planning of the opening ceremony of the *Encümen*,³⁴⁷ it was inaugurated in Istanbul with the speech of Mustafa Reşid Pasha in 1851 when Sultan Abdulmedjid and all cabinet members were present. Actually, the support of the state and the official rulers to the committee was a known fact. The main goals of the committee were to prepare the textbooks for the purposed university (*Darülfünun*) and to compose, translate and publish various books to develop the culture of the public.³⁴⁸ It is noteworthy that the committee appointed scholars from the USA, France, Egypt, and Russia as members for their qualified works.³⁴⁹ Although the *Encümen* acted in various fields of science, history was not excluded. Indeed, a source shows that the *Encümen* was assigned to write a general history.³⁵⁰ In connection with it, history work of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha and other numerous works on Turkish history, culture and language were the concrete products of the committee on social sciences. Beside this, Hayrullah Efendi and Joseph von Hammer –namely

³⁴⁵ *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. xvi.

³⁴⁶ Abdullah Uçman, “Encümen-i Daniş”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 11, (1995): p. 176-178

³⁴⁷ BOA., A.MKT.NZD., 38/62, H.08.09.1267/29. 06.1851.

³⁴⁸ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 37.

³⁴⁹ For instance, election of Dr. Charle Jackson from the USA to the *Encümen* for his valuable services to humanity was a signal of this. BOA., A.DVN.DVE., 21/28, H. 08.06.1271/18.02.1855. The Ottoman Archive presents various documents on the appointments of the foreigners to the *Encümen* for their research.

³⁵⁰ BOA., *İ.DH.*, 264/16459, H. 05.03.1269/17.12.1852.

certain domestic and foreign historians- were also active within the *Encümen*.³⁵¹ Despite the intense efforts to establish and sustain the committee, its activities drew to a close after the passing of Sultan Abdulmedjid.³⁵² Still, it prepared the ground for the establishment of the academic institutions and associations in the Ottoman Empire. Correspondingly, Richard Chambers argues that certain intellectuals, the Young Turks and new Turkish Republic maintained the interest in an academy of sciences, which gave birth to the founding of Turkish Historical Society and Turkish Language Society in 1930's as an output of that project.³⁵³

The French Revolution took effect in the field of record keeping activities, too. From the end of the eighteenth century on, nation or centralized states undertook the task of collecting all types of historical documents under one authority, which called forth the emergence of national archives.³⁵⁴ Despite the Ottoman sultans regulated the rules of keeping the documents till the nineteenth century, modern way of archival works dates back to 1845 when the documents kept in Topkapı Palace were sorted and stored. The next year saw the decision to construct the building of *Hazine-i Evrak* (Repertory of Documents, namely State Archives) on the parcels of *Babıâli* (Sublime Porte) and it was completed in 1848.³⁵⁵ In 1892, filing system was adopted in keeping and classifying the

³⁵¹ Uçman, "Encümen-i Daniş", p. 177.

³⁵² Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 37.

³⁵³ Richard Chambers, "The Encümen-i Daniş and Ottoman Modernization", in *VIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi-Kongreye Sunulan Bildiriler*, vol. II, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1981), p. 1289. For more details on the *Encümen*, see Kenan Akyüz, *Encümen-i Daniş* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Yayınları, 1975).

³⁵⁴ Tom Verschaffel, "Archives: Their Organization and Use", in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 6.

³⁵⁵ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 37.

documents. However, many records were concealed for being confidential.³⁵⁶ A striking development in the mentality was the opening documents for historical studies, instead of concealing and applying them only for certain needs. Hence, after 1908, archival sources became the tool of writing history. Establishment of *Târih-i Osmani Encümeni* (Ottoman History Committee) and its journal *Târih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası* emphasized the value of the archive and archival sources in history studies.³⁵⁷ The positivist understanding of history had already stressed the significance of concrete “evidence” for a scientific history, which gradually popularized the archives that included millions of “evidence” for a historical narrative. Needless to say, applying to the archives for nationalist claims did not delay. From this viewpoint, it seems obvious that the Ottoman-Turkish central archives served to enhance the historiography while setting the stage for nationalist history writing.

When a research institution is mentioned, what come to minds firstly could be universities. *Darülfünun* started to function as the university of the Ottoman Empire from the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition to its scholarly activities and dissemination of the knowledge of various fields, *Darülfünun* contributed to the writing and teaching of history from its foundation. Between 1900-1908, when the social sciences were taught under the branch of literature, history of the Ottomans and other states, courses on ancient monuments, Ottoman literature and general geography were included in the curriculum.³⁵⁸ In 1910s, the branch of literature was transformed into the Faculty of Letters, and the curriculum was diversified with the courses on histories of Turkish literature, religions and Islam, philosophy, Turkish-Ural and Altaic

³⁵⁶ Yusuf İhsan Genç, Mustafa Küçük, Raşit Gündoğdu, Sinan Satar, İbrahim Karaca, Hacı Osman Yıldırım & Nazım Yılmaz, *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*, (İstanbul: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Genel Müdürlüğü-Osmanlı Arşivi Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, 2010), p. xxxix.

³⁵⁷ Genç, et al., *Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi Rehberi*, p. 39.

³⁵⁸ Mustafa Selçuk, *İstanbul Darülfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi (1900-1923)*, Ph.D Dissertation (Istanbul University, 2010), p. 26.

languages, antiquity, eastern and western civilizations, the Turks and the Ottomans, the Middle Ages, fine arts and the methodology of history. Simultaneously, respectable people for Turkish nationalist historiography such as Ziya Gökalp, Fuad Köprülü, Necib Asım, Hamdullah Subhi and Ağaoğlu Ahmed lectured at this institution,³⁵⁹ which required mentioning *Darülfünun* as a field of activity of increasingly nationalist history writing.

History writing drew on the museums, too. Remnants from the past with a representative value seal the existence of a certain group from the earliest times to contemporary era. As early as the beginning of the nineteenth century, some European countries began to establish their national museums. Actually, the project of museums is more profound than thought, since it engaged geography, some natural sciences and chronology to design a connection between the lands and people.³⁶⁰ Archaeology is a strong component of this project as demonstrated in the examples of, say, Romania or France in constructing the identity with the help of knowledge of the past. Hence, it served to the formation of a historical narrative with the excavations, collecting the remainings and protecting the monuments.³⁶¹ It was not possible to see the traces of professional museology in the Ottoman Empire until the second half of the nineteenth century. In 1869, after some attempts and administrative arrangements, *Müze-i Hümayûn* (The Imperial Museum) was established.³⁶² On the other hand, in connection with the national aspirations, the Europeans had started archaeological studies to foster their national identities since the late eighteenth century. Accordingly, the archaeological research began to be carried out mostly

³⁵⁹ Selçuk, *İstanbul Darülfünun Edebiyat Fakültesi*, p. 136-137.

³⁶⁰ Porciani, “Master Narratives in Museum”, p. 7.

³⁶¹ Ilaria Porciani, “History and Archaeology”, in *Atlas of European Historiography*, p. 12-13.

³⁶² Selin Adile Atlıman, *Museological and Archaeological Studies in the Ottoman Empire during the Westernization Process in the 19th Century*, (Unpublished Master Thesis, Middle East Technical University, 2008), p. 25.

by the Westerners in the Ottoman lands in the nineteenth century.³⁶³ Appointment of Osman Hamdi Bey as the director of the Imperial Museum in 1881 broke a fresh ground in Turkish museology and archaeology. He made an effort to enrich the museum while preparing numerous changes in its structure. Moreover, he personally participated in certain excavations, which made him the first Turkish archaeologist.³⁶⁴ Consequently, thousands of pieces have been collected in this museum in time, and it contributed to the formation of historical consciousness while gathering objects for building the historical narrative.

In addition to aforementioned state institutions; twentieth century, and especially the Constitutional era marked the establishment of a number of societies and research associations. Whereas some of them were partly interested in history among other subjects (such as literature, culture, politics etc.), a few of them were absolutely history-focused entities. Through these institutions, history writing in the Ottoman Empire has been on the track while gradually gaining a nationalist manner.

The first association based on Turkish nationalism in Turkey was *Türk Derneği* (The Turkish Association) that was established in 1908 with the initiative of Yusuf Akçura who had been exposed to the antagonistic attitudes of the Russians against the Turks. Shortly after his arrival in Istanbul, Akçura visited Necib Asım and Veled Çelebi to share his ideas on opening up a cultural and non-political Turkish organization. At the end of the same year, regulations of the *Türk Derneği* were published, which declared its goals as to “scientifically” study, learn and teach the ancient monuments, histories, language and literature, ethnography, social situation and cultures and geography of all of ancient and

³⁶³ For instance, see Tuğba Tanyeri-Erdemir, “Going Native through Archaeology: The Impact of British Explorers and Archaeologists in the Ottoman Empire in the 19th Century”, *Isimu*, 10, (2007): p. 69-78.

³⁶⁴ Filiz Gündüz, “Osman Hamdi Bey”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 33, (2007): p. 468-469.

contemporary Turkic communities.³⁶⁵ Yusuf Akçura, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Emrullah Efendi, Necib Asım Bey and Bursalı Mehmed Tahir Bey were among the reputed members. Inclusion of the orientalist and non-Turk Ottomans to the members list brought about a pluralist structure. Moreover, some other non-Turk researchers contributed to the *Türk Derneği* without being registered members.

In addition to the opening of offices in Ruse, Budapest, Izmir and Kastamonu, the association published the journal of *Türk Derneği*.³⁶⁶ It has been released as seven issues in 1911 but could not proceed regularly. Masami Arai classified the subjects covered in the journal as being related to the present situation and past events of the Ottoman territory; present situation and past events of Central Asia; and other subjects. However, diversity of the members and writers resulted in the lack of a single view on nationalism. Indeed, some writers defended the Ottomanism whereas some others (especially Yusuf Akçura) put a strong emphasis on Turkism.³⁶⁷ Yet, despite the failure of the association to survive into the new decades, it makes sense in historiography since it included historical texts based on auxiliary sciences such as archaeology and combining the nationalist sentiments with historical research. The criticisms to the Ottoman system as it did not attach importance to the nationalism and Turkism; and the suggestions to discover Turkish history and Turkish lands such as Bukhara, Kazan, Tabriz and Samarkand accelerated the nationalist feelings in the society.³⁶⁸

³⁶⁵ Akçura, *Türk Yılı 1928*, p. 458-459.

³⁶⁶ Masami Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, (Leiden, New York, Kobenhavn, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1992), p. 8.

³⁶⁷ Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, p. 11-21.

³⁶⁸ Mehmet Saray, *Atatürk'ün Türklük ve Milliyetçilik Anlayışı*, (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2012), p. 58.

According to Zafer Toprak, *Türk Bilgi Derneği* (Turkish Science Society) that was established during the second half of 1913 was actually a continuation of *Türk Derneği* to an extent. As a Turcology branch of *Türk Derneği*, *Türk Bilgi Derneği* aimed at researching rather than popular learning; and took the example of European academy of sciences. Around Celal Sahir, the head of the society, Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, Akçuraoglu Yusuf, Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Dr. Rıfat, Salim Bey, Ziya Gökalp, Dr. Nazım and Haşım Bey gathered to carry out activities on Turcology, Turkism, Islam, science of life, mathematics and philosophy-sociology.³⁶⁹ The journal of the society, *Bilgi Mecmuası*, was released in 1913-14 in seven issues. Similar to an academy of sciences, *Bilgi Mecmuası* covered subjects from different fields, yet the World War I blocked its survival. Still, history was one of the subjects dealt in the journal and reputed authors such as Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuad, Akçuraoglu Yusuf, Mehmed İzzet, Mustafa Şeref, İsmail Hakkı, Abdullah Cevdet, Necib Asım, M. Zekeriya, Tevfik Rüştü, Rıza Tevfik, Ahmed Zeki Velidi, Mehmed Emin and Moiz Kohen (Munis Tekinalp) contributed to journal with their writings on history,³⁷⁰ which made a sense in the development of historiography. In addition to academic studies, a competition for the composing of a national anthem was organized by the branch of Turcology within the society.³⁷¹

A completely history-focused organization of the related period was *Târih-i Osmani Encümeni* (Ottoman History Committee) dated to 1909. It was initiated by Sultan Mehmed V in order to create an “excellent” history of the Ottomans and officially recognized at the end of 1909.³⁷² The members of the committee

³⁶⁹ Zafer Toprak, “Türk Bilgi Derneği (1913-1914) ve Bilgi Mecmuası”, in *Osmanlı İlmî ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, (İstanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Basımevi, 1987), p. 247-248.

³⁷⁰ Toprak, “Türk Bilgi Derneği (1913-1914) ve Bilgi Mecmuası”, p. 251.

³⁷¹ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 165.

³⁷² BOA., ŞD., 2791/15, H. 21.11.1327/4.12.1909.

included the imperial-annalist Abdurrahman Şeref Bey, Zühdü Bey, İskender Hoçi Efendi, Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Efdaleddin Bey, Necib Asım Bey, Diran Kilikyan Efendi, Mehmed Arif Bey, Karolidi Efendi, Ali Seydi Bey, Ahmed Refik Bey and Ahmed Tevhid Bey; and Abdurrahman Şeref Bey was appointed as the head of the committee.³⁷³ Moreover, reputed people such as İsmail Pasha (army officer), Ali Emirî Efendi, Efrem Rahmani Efendi (Patriarch of the Catholic Assyrians), Halil Bey (director of the museum), Süleyman Nazif Bey, Şükrü Bey (historian at the military college), Tahir Bey, Mistakidis Efendi (from the museum) and some others were elected as assistant members.³⁷⁴

In addition to composing an Ottoman history, decorating the citizens with the knowledge of history and sense of patriotism was also targeted.³⁷⁵ In accordance with the *zeitgeist*, embracing all of the communities within the empire with the aid of history could be possible. The *Encümen*, funded by the Sultan personally, was the first official history institution of the empire with the task of providing a national history to encompass the elements of the Ottoman Empire.³⁷⁶ Therefore, the term “national” did not imply Turkish nationalism and nationalist history; rather, it would establish a historical base for the envisaged Ottoman nation.³⁷⁷ Nevertheless, the organizational structure, planning, aims and declared methods of the committee³⁷⁸ came to mean a professional attempt for historiography. In

³⁷³ BOA., *İMF.*, 15/30, H. 03.12.1327/16. 12. 1909.

³⁷⁴ Abdurrahman Şeref, “İfade-i Meram”, *Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası*, I/1, (1326/1910): p. 8.

³⁷⁵ Abdülkadir Özcan, “Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 40, (2011): p. 83-86.

³⁷⁶ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 49.

³⁷⁷ As it was revealed above, Yusuf Akçura had opposed to the attempt of writing an Ottoman history as it ruled out a distinct Turkish history.

³⁷⁸ Abdurrahman Şeref, “İfade-i Meram”, p. 1-19.

fact, Abdurrahman Şeref Bey also pointed the lack of methodologically qualified history works and connoted that they undertook such a mission with various procedures.

The committee published monographies as well as the illustrious *Târih-i Osmani Encümeni Mecmuası* (Journal of the Ottoman History Committee). This journal began its journey in 1910 and was issued regularly till the end of the World War I. Then, it was published irregularly until the committee underwent a transformation with the establishment of the new, national state. Actually, the new rule in Turkey under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal supported the committee and allocated it a budget in 1923. However, the name and field of activity of the committee arranged in 1924 with a closer focus on Turkey and Turkish-ness. Thus, *Türk Tarih Encümeni* (Turkish History Committee) and *Türk Tarih Encümeni Mecmuası* (Journal of the Turkish History Committee) became the new flags.³⁷⁹ The Committee (before and after 1924) is considered to contribute to Turkish historiography efficiently with its books and journals, source publishing, and document and book collections.³⁸⁰

Although not being an institution or association, *Genç Kalemler* (Young Pens) was a journal that brought certain Turkist authors together for a nationalized language within the Ottoman administration. As Arai put forward, though the historians neglected this journal for long times, it includes numerous contents related to history and nationalism. Especially, the first volume of the journal (with six issues) allocated the forth rank to history in density of the subjects after criticism, poem and politics.³⁸¹ Indeed, in addition to national language and literature history, the issues of historiography and Turkish national history were covered in the journal. 33 issues of the journal between 1910-1912 constituted a

³⁷⁹ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 253.

³⁸⁰ Özcan, “Tarih-i Osmani Encümeni”, p. 85.

³⁸¹ Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, p. 25.

program for a cultural Turkish nationalism though it emphasized the Turkish-ness with hardly interest in other Turkic regions and communities.³⁸² However, the Balkan Wars resulted in the shutdown of the journal, which brought about the transfers of the *Genç Kalemler* members to *Türk Yurdu Cemiyeti* (The Association of Turkish Homeland).

Türk Yurdu was established in August 1911, in Istanbul by the leading Turkish nationalists as Mehmed Emin, Müftüoğlu Ahmed Hikmet, Ağaoğlu Ahmed Bey, Hüseyinzade Ali, Akil Muhtar and Akçuraoğlu Yusuf.³⁸³ Its initial aim was to publish a journal to contribute to the enlightening of the Turks with knowledge and to help the Turks increase their incomes. On the other hand, providing accommodation for Turkish students was targeted, too. Accordingly, the journal (with the catchword “*Türklerin faidesine çalışır / Works on behalf of the Turks*”) was firstly issued on 30 November 1911. The main aim of the journal was declared as such: “We want to serve to Turkish-ness and contribute to the Turks. This is our goal. The content of the journal will reveal the ways to achieve that goal. [...]”³⁸⁴

The policy of publication was based on certain principles. First, a simple language to reach most of the Turkic communities was essential. Rather than politics, the subjects on economic and moral development of the Turks were to be emphasized. Then, the news and events from each part of the Turkic world should have been published for the acquaintance of each other among the Turkish groups. Next, the journal had to be impartial toward the political fragmentation within the country, it was only supposed to defend the political and economic interests of the Turkish-ness. Consequently, helping the

³⁸² For example, the association of *Türk Yurdu* (Turkish Land) laid much more stress on the outside Turks when compared to *Genç Kalemler*. Hüseyin Çelik, “Genç Kalemler”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 14, (1996): p. 23.

³⁸³ Tunaya, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Partiler I*, p. 415.

³⁸⁴ “Maksad ve Meslek”, *Türk Yurdu*, 1, (17 Teşrinisani 1327/1911), p. 1.

development of the national spirit among the Turks and struggling for the gainings of Turkish-ness were above all.³⁸⁵ This program arouses the impression of a pan-Turkist and non-Ottomanist policy,³⁸⁶ as opposed to *Târih-i Osmani Encümeni* and *Genç Kalemler*.

The cadre of the authors of the journal was substantial including influential names of the period such as Mehmed Emin, Bursalı Mehmed Tahir, Necib Asım, Ziya Gökalp, Seyfettin, Köprülüzade Mehmed Fuat, Akçuraoglu Yusuf, Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Zeki Velidi etc. Six volumes of the journal in 1910's mostly focused on literature, information on Turkic peoples and history besides a great deal of subjects. Furthermore, information on Turkic communities in Central Asia was equal to ones within the Ottoman territories.³⁸⁷ Actually, after the Balkan Wars, the journal inclined to Turkism more than Ottomanism, which also was a fact for the policies of the Committee of Union and Progress at that time.³⁸⁸ This situation signals that *Türk Yurdu* conducted to cultural and political Turkism by attaching importance to the Turks both within and out of the empire. Again, history was an essential component of this process. It is a known fact that the establishment of *Türk Ocağı* (Turkish Hearth) trivialized the association of *Türk Yurdu* and most of its members moved to *Türk Ocağı*.³⁸⁹ The journal of *Türk Yurdu*, on the other hand, survived as the media outlet of the new *Ocak*.³⁹⁰

³⁸⁵ Sarıay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları* p. 125-126.

³⁸⁶ Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, p. 50.

³⁸⁷ Arai, *Turkish Nationalism in the Young Turk Era*, p. 52-53.

³⁸⁸ Sarıay, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları*, p. 129-130.

³⁸⁹ Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler I*, p. 416.

³⁹⁰ The association of *Türk Yurdu* was not only present in Ottoman capital. Certain European cities such as Lausanne, Neuchatel, Geneva, Paris and Berlin hosted the committees of Turkish Homeland. For their activities and influences on young Turkish Republic on nationalism, see

According to the news in *Türk Yurdu*, the newspaper *Tanin* had announced the establishment of *Türk Ocağı* on 18 March 1328/1912 after having received the license from the government.³⁹¹ However, it seems that the efforts to establish a society on behalf of the Turkish nation on cultural bases dated back to several years ago. Mostly students from the *Askerî Tıbbiye Mektebi* (Military Medical School) began to work for the formation of a nationalist organization to spread the ideal of Turkish nationalism. Hundreds of students gathered and their envoys contacted influential Turkish nationalists such as Hüseyin Cahid, Ağaoğlu Ahmed and Yusuf Akçura. After some negotiations with those effective and noted people to get support regarding the application of foundation, the board of management of the organization was made up of Mehmed Emin, Ahmed Ferid, Yusuf Akçura, Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Emin Bülend, Fuad Sabit and Mehmed Ali Tevfik in 1911.³⁹² Thus, while *de facto* formation of *Türk Ocağı* could be considered as 1911,³⁹³ bureaucratic affairs and the school (Military Medical) management restrained the members to officialize the society for a time. With the unlimbering of the regulations, the society executed the formal opening in March 1912. First official board consisted of Ahmed Ferid as chair, Yusuf Akçura as deputy chair, Mehmed Ali Tevfik as secretary general and Dr. Fuad Sabit as cashier.³⁹⁴ The name and objects of *Türk Ocağı* were declared in its regulations.³⁹⁵

Hans Lukas Kieser, *Vorkämpfer der "neuen Türkei". Revolutionäre Bildungseliten am Genfersee (1868–1939)*, (Zurich: Chronos, 2005).

³⁹¹ "Türk Ocağı", *Türk Yurdu*, I/10, (1328/1912): p. 312. According to Akçura, official date of the establishment was 12 March 1328/1912. *Türk Yılı 1928*, p. 463.

³⁹² Füsün Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları (1912-1931)*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1997), p. 52-53.

³⁹³ Akçura, *Türk Yılı 1928*, p. 468.

³⁹⁴ Tunaya, *Türkiye'de Siyasal Partiler I*, p. 432.

³⁹⁵ The regulations included five chapters regarding the name and objects, membership, organizational structure and incomes of the association, and the conclusion. The first chapter on

It could be safe to argue that *Türk Ocağı* has been the most effective and leading nationalist organization in the late Ottoman and early Republican period. Although the journey of the *Ocak* provides material for numerous volumed books, it should be touched here through the main lines related to national history and historiography. As it is known, the Ottoman Empire was exposed to incessant wars in 1910's, which eventually brought the empire to calamity. The institutions, societies and associations within the empire could not be immune to these affairs. Outbreak of the World War I made an impact on the spread of Turkish nationalist discourse both in ruling class and civil society. *Türk Ocağı*, a strong representative of the civil society with a certain degree of support from the government or the rulers,³⁹⁶ found itself in a hectic era. As it was mentioned above, inclusion of the journal of *Türk Yurdu* to *Ocak* conducted toward the popularization of Turkist ideals. The open lectures and conferences for the students and public fortified the Turkish nationalism with solid references to various ages of Turkish and world history.³⁹⁷ Identically, under the name of *Türk*

the name and objects is important as it provides an insight on the spirit of the association as follows:

Chapter I

Article 1: An Association named *Türk Ocağı* was established in Istanbul on 12 March 1328/1912.

Article 2: The object of the association is to work for the development of national education and intellectual, social and economic conditions of the Turks that have been the most prominent of the Islamic nations; and to struggle for the progress of Turkish nation and language.

Article 3: To achieve its objective, the association shall establish clubs with the name *Türk Ocağı* and organize lectures, conferences, shows; publish books and pamphlets; and attempt at opening schools. In order to preserve and maximize the national wealth, the association shall contact the experts of all fields and provide economic and agricultural encouragement; and make efforts for the foundation and maintenance of these kinds of organizations.

Article 4: In pursuing its objects, the association shall remain in a national and social position; shall never engage in political activities and not serve to the political parties. *Türk Ocağı'nın Nizâm-nâme-i Esas ve Dahilîsi*, (İstanbul: Tanin Matbaası, 1328/1912), as cited in Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği*, p. 100-101.

³⁹⁶ Enver Pasha and Hüseyin Cahid, leading men of the Committee of Union and Progress, personally donated to *Türk Ocağı*. See Şevket Süreyya Aydemir, *Makedonya'da Orta Asya'ya Enver Paşa, Cilt II 1908-1914*, (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1986), p. 476-478.

³⁹⁷ An example of the curriculum of these free courses could be found in *İkdam* as such: History of the Civilization of Islam, History of Arab Civilization, Ottoman Navigation History, History of Islam, Ottoman History, Turkish History, Turkish Literature History, History of Islamic Fine Arts, Turkish Ethnography, Byzantine and Ottoman Architecture. *İkdam*, 1 April 1917, no: 7258, as cited in Akbayrak *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 161.

Yurdu Kütüphanesi (Library of *Türk Yurdu*), a number of books and brochures have been published for the secondary school and undergraduate students for them to learn the history of their nation and draw a lesson from it.³⁹⁸ For the development of the status of the women in society, *Türk Ocağı* again applied to ancient Turkish culture to instantiate the role of women in Turkish history.³⁹⁹

According to the regulations of *Türk Ocağı*, only the Turks could be the permanent members of the association.⁴⁰⁰ Next, with the effects of Pan-Turkist desires especially during the World War I, certain extremely nationalist approaches were seen within the *Ocak*. However, the mainstream philosophy of the association did not envisage exclusion or assimilation of ‘others’. As long as the Arab, Circassian, Kurdish, Laz, Bosnian etc. members of the empire did not pursue separatist/nationalist claims, they would be embraced.⁴⁰¹ Nevertheless, as a significant difference from the previous eras and attempts, *Türk Ocağı* emerged to save the Turks, rather than the empire.⁴⁰² As a result of that, harsh criticisms were directed to *Türk Ocağı* as it allegedly caused discrimination among the members of the empire. For the critics, the activities of *Ocak* could cause reaction of the non-Turk and non-Muslim subjects of the empire. However, as Hamdullah Subhi and Mehmed Emin pointed, *Türk Ocağı* itself was already a response of the Turkish nationalists against the secret or open nationalist organizations of those Albanians, Arabs, Jews, Greeks and Armenians.⁴⁰³

³⁹⁸ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 161.

³⁹⁹ Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği*, p. 65.

⁴⁰⁰ *Türk Ocağı'nın Nizâmnâme-i Esas ve Dahilîsi*, Article 5.

⁴⁰¹ Üstel, *İmparatorluktan Ulus-Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği*, p. 64.

⁴⁰² Sarınoy, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları*, p. 133.

⁴⁰³ Sarınoy, *Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları*, p. 142-143.

After the leaving of Ahmed Ferid, first chair of *Ocak*, to undertake another mission, Hamdullah Subhi became the new (and in time, legendary) *reis* (head) of *Türk Ocağı* in the general assembly of 1913. With the new head and the atmosphere of the era, the association intensified its activities and succeeded to have thousands of members and approximately 35 branches in various provinces at the end of the World War I. In 1918, second general assembly of the *Türk Ocağı* convened and certain arrangements were made in the regulations regarding the operation and activities of the *Ocak* and its limitations. *Türk Ocağı* gradually increased number of its members and the branches in many parts of the country (and accordingly, its influence) as a civic body until its annulment in 1931.⁴⁰⁴

Âsâr-ı İslamiye ve Milliye Tetkik Encümeni (The Committee of Research on Islamic and National Monuments) was an academic organization that walked through the path *Târih-i Osmani Encümeni* opened, but with more national sentiments and began to work in 1915. The desire of the CUP to initiate an academy of science to make research on Turkish-Islamic works (convenient to the policies of the CUP and the conditions of era) was the motivation behind the establishment of the committee.⁴⁰⁵ The most visible product of the *Encümen* was the publication of *Millî Tettebbular Mecmuası* (Journal of the National Research) that was bimonthly issued. It also meant a first example of the journal whose publication was decided by the Sultan and the cabinet.⁴⁰⁶ The influence of nationalist authors such as Ziya Gökalp and Fuad Köprülü was obvious in the

⁴⁰⁴ General assemblies of *Türk Ocağı* in following years, its activities especially on national culture and history, limitation of its field activity to contemporary Turkey territories, its relations with the People's Party through the time and eventually its rescission in 1931 are evaluated in details in referred works of Üstel (*İmparatoruktan Ulus Devlete Türk Milliyetçiliği: Türk Ocakları 1912-1931*) and Sarıay (*Türk Milliyetçiliğinin Tarihi Gelişimi ve Türk Ocakları*). It should also be noted that the foundation of *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Turkish Historical Society) was laid during the last period of *Türk Ocağı* and its assemblies before its abolition. It will be touched below.

⁴⁰⁵ Akbayrak, *Milletin Tarihinden Ulusun Tarihine*, p. 166-167.

⁴⁰⁶ Özcan, *Türkiye'de Popüler Tarihçilik*, p. 123.

journal with their Turkist writings. Although the journal was released only as five issues, it left a mark with its valuable content as well as its printing quality.⁴⁰⁷

Actually, *Âsâr-ı İslamiye ve Milliye Tetkik Encümeni* was intended and envisaged as an Institute of Turcology but could not live for a long time. Therefore, after the establishment of the new Turkish Republic, the uncompleted plan was fulfilled with the formation of *Türkiyat Enstitüsü* in 1924. With the initiatives of the Ministry of Education, Director of the Museum of the period; and with the attempts of scholars from the university, the Institute was opened within the body of Istanbul *Darülfünun*.⁴⁰⁸ According to a view, this Institute was the heir of *Türk Derneği*, *Türk Bilgi Derneği* and *Âsâr-ı İslamiye ve Milliye Tetkik Encümeni* with similar institutions but in the new era of the country.⁴⁰⁹ The Institute started to publish *Türkiyat Mecmuası* in 1925, which survived into the twenty-first century. On that sense, *Türkiyat Mecmuası* has been one of the oldest and most influential periodicals of Turkey in the field of national history. The Institute kept on carrying out its task till today with various administrative regulations in time.

All in all, moving from the definitions on nation and nationalism, this chapter firstly tries to examine the place of history in nation building processes with a glance on certain examples. As often stated above, nationalism could show different features at any time and any place, being highly dependent to a context. For example, while early nationalism just after the French Revolution stood for liberal requests, it was attached to anti-democratic and oppressive rules in the twentieth century. In other words, it can be a tool of liberal, authoritarian or

⁴⁰⁷ Nesimi Yazıcı, “Milli Tettebbular Mecmuası”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 30, (2005): p. 83-84.

⁴⁰⁸ Mustafa Oral, *İmparatorluktan Ulusal Devlete Türkiye’de Tarih Anlayışı (1908-1937)*, I Ph.D. Dissertation, (Ankara University, 2002), p. 158-160.

⁴⁰⁹ Özcan, *Türkiye’de Popüler Tarihçilik*, p. 126.

socialist governments.⁴¹⁰ Then, focus point and requirements of nationalism can also vary. Whereas culture plays a central role in a nationalism, other examples could give priority to physical and biological existence. Therefore, the nation-building process is not free from these variances, as it is mostly constructed on a nationalist discourse. For Ernest Gellner, the building of the nations could be possible through certain ways and there is no doubt that history is among the most effective ways. The studies on nationalism and nation states focus on “old” and “new” nations; and some of them present real histories, while some reveal constructed and imagined pasts.⁴¹¹ Thus, the use of history for the birth/legitimation or strengthening of the nation is irreplaceable to reflect them. Although mostly European cases are analyzed in this chapter due to the scope and limitations of the study, it is possible to see the traces of this kind of function of history discipline and historiography in other continents, countries and regions.⁴¹²

Then, that situation was understood when Turkish case is analyzed in the second part of the chapter. Early cultural interest in Turkish history during the nineteenth century brought about the bloom and genesis of Turkish nationalism in late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This tendency took effect in the field of historiography, too. Accordingly, certain individuals and institutions/societies at that period paved the way for the settling of nationalist history writing in Turkey, while enhancing the rules and system of historiography in academic-scientific terms. Consequently, the young Turkish

⁴¹⁰ Mehmet Karakaş, “Türkçülük ve Türk Milliyetçiliği”, *Doğu Batı*, 38, (2006), p. 58-59.

⁴¹¹ Susana Carvalho & François Gemene, *Nations and Their Histories-Constructions and Representations*, p. 13-14.

⁴¹² The emergence of modern Israel, nature of the Persian nationalism, the approaches on the national history in South Africa and the nationhood affairs in China are analyzed in *Nations and Their Histories-Constructions and Representations*; then, *Empire to Nation-Historical Perspectives on the Making of the Modern World*, ed. Joseph W. Esherick, Hasan Kayalı & Eric Van Young, (Oxford: Rowman&Littlefield, 2006) sets the frame of nation building in Latin America, Middle East and the Soviet successor states; furthermore, *Nationalism and the State* of Breuilly are among the best examples to cover Indian, Arab, African and Far Eastern nationalisms and their comparisons.

Republic of 1920s and 1930s did not completely stand aloof from inheriting the tradition in historiography developed during the last century of the Ottoman Empire, as well as the previous European experiences. In other words, whereas the new Turkish regime set out on its own with new priorities, it also took advantage of the existing practice and knowledge.



CHAPTER 3

ESTABLISHMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF TURKISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3.1. Creation of Turkish Historical Society (THS) with Divine Aims

It is known that young Turkey, as of the 1920s, embarked on a nation-building process in order to make individuals members of the Turkish nation. It is obvious that following the establishment of the nation-state in Turkey, the process of nation-building was rapidly initiated by the state and permeated many areas of life. As in Europe and many other parts of the world, this process aimed to create a supra-identity of Turkish-ness above local, regional and class differences and to develop a sense of belonging within the borders of the nation-state. As one might expect, nation-building in Turkey was planned through different methods and occasions.⁴¹³ For instance, in terms of institutions, the military, educational institutions, Turkish Hearths, Village Institutes, and People's Houses supported this process. The national mobilization in the field of trade was a breakthrough towards the construction of Turkishness in economic terms. In the field of culture and arts, a discourse on the construction of the Turkish nation is clearly visible in music, theater, literature, cinema and promotional films, and folklore studies. Regarding the daily life, it is possible to see the traces of this process in a wide range of areas from postage stamps to bank names. In addition, the nation was also being constructed in the national architecture and tangible cultural elements (statues, monuments, etc.) that were aimed to be created. In this framework, it is evident that the Turkish nation-building undertaken in the 1920s involved every aspect of life, leaving almost no gaps.

⁴¹³ For evaluation of those various occasions, see *Türkiye'de Ulus İnşası*, ed. Musa Yavuz Alptekin, (İstanbul: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2021).

Dealing with history as a tool of building the nation in Turkey especially in the first two decades of the Republican era is a crucial occasion that needs examination. As it was stated in the previous chapter, history and the language studies had started in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. On an ongoing basis, new Turkish Republic laid emphasis on various branches of social sciences, and especially history, mostly under the guidance of Mustafa Kemal. Though they were separate and unorganized surveys for a time, it turned towards to a systematic way after 1928. Accordingly, as Hanioglu put forward, the new ideology of new Turkey would be nationalism supported with science and Turkism of previous decades.⁴¹⁴ Moreover, building national identities was one of the basic concerns of the nation-states⁴¹⁵ and as it was seen in many previous examples in different countries, history was among the most useful tool of that process. Similarly, according to Öztürk, the formation of identity would be possible through the unity of past, present and future, and history emerged as a means of constituting the identity.⁴¹⁶ Then, planning of historical approach and studies was arranged in accordance with this mindset in early Republican era. Adopted daughter of Mustafa Kemal, Afet (İnan) would be authorized to carry out the project.

As the beginning of the journey, Afet narrates, she showed Mustafa Kemal Pasha a French geography book in 1928 that portrayed the Turks as part of the “secondary” and “yellow” race. Thereupon, he objected to that view and ordered Afet to make a research on it.⁴¹⁷ For him, the question of “What is the real role of the Turks in history of humanity and in which ways they contributed to the

⁴¹⁴ Şükrü Hanioglu, *Atatürk-An Intellectual Biography*, (Princeton&Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2011), p. 161.

⁴¹⁵ See Aydın, *Kültür-Kimlik Modelleri Açısından Türk Tarih Yazımı*, p. 92.

⁴¹⁶ Yücel Öztürk, “Tarih ve Kimlik”, *Akademik İncelemeler*, 2/1, (2007): p. 16.

⁴¹⁷ Afet İnan, “Atatürk ve Tarih Tezi”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 244.

civilization?” should have been answered with meticulous research.⁴¹⁸ Early interest of Mustafa Kemal Pasha in history from his childhood⁴¹⁹ was combined with the use of history in national awareness and sovereignty.⁴²⁰ Indeed, for him, the way to have a fatherland was closely related with learning the history of that land and knowing the previous civilizations there.⁴²¹ A new history was also necessary to introduce the reforms and improve the image of the government.⁴²² Therefore, Mustafa Kemal intensified his interest in history by providing books and bringing the historians together to discuss on Turkish history.⁴²³ Initially, it was a matter of discussion within a relatively small group of individuals. Yet, as

⁴¹⁸ Fahri Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu-Kuruluş Amacı ve Çalışmaları*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1983), p. 1-2.

⁴¹⁹ For example, he read the works of Leon Cahun, Mustafa Celaleddin, De Guignes, Leone Caetani, Gobineau and H. G. Wells, see Şerafettin Turan, *Atatürk'ün Düşünce Yapısını Etkileyen Olaylar, Düşünürler, Kitaplar* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2010). Mustafa Kemal Pasha also gave reference to the history of H. G. Wells in his *Nutuk*, see Zeliha Buket Kalaycı, “Atatürk'ün Nutuk'ta Bahsettiği Sıradışı Tarihi: Herbert George Wells (1866-1946)”, in *Tarihçi*, I/1 (2021), p. 196-204. For some previous rulers' and Atatürk's relation with history, see Hasan Cemil Çambel, “Atatürk ve Tarih”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 269-272; Ekrem Akurgal, “Tarih İlmi ve Atatürk”, *Belleten*, XX/80, (1956): p. 571-584.

⁴²⁰ In Erzurum Congress, Mustafa Kemal Pasha declared the importance of history as it would show the existence and legal rights of a nation. Ali Fuat Cebesoy, *Milli Mücadele Hatıraları*, (İstanbul: Temel Yayınları, 2010), p. 180.

⁴²¹ Serdar Hakan Öztaner, “Arkeolojinin Tarih Araştırmalarındaki Yeri ve Önemi,” in *Disiplinlerarasılık ve Tematik İslam Tarihi Yazıları-I*, Ankara 2017, p. 45.

⁴²² Clive Foss, “Kemal Atatürk: Giving a new Nation a New History”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, 50/5, (2014), p. 826.

⁴²³ Atatürk even dictated Afet some questions and answers on history. The questions were as following: a) What could be the important lessons that people could get from history? b) What are the factors of historical events and which of those is the most important? c) What could be the current prevailing principle on how and from where the humanity has come? d) What is the meaning of civilization? e) What race are the people who have achieved success? What is the homeland of that race? As a response to those questions, Mustafa Kemal dictated answers, too. This shows his close interest in history in both theoretical and practical ways. See Afet İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun Kuruluş Günlerinde Atatürk'ün El Yazısı ile Tashih Edilmiş Bazı Tarih Soruları ve Dikte Ettiği Cevaplardan Örnekler”, *Tarih Vesikaları*, I/2 (1958), p. 1-7.

time passed on, an institutional body to take the investigation further was needed.

Türk Ocağı, which was established in 1912 and whose regulation included the aim of strengthening national consciousness with scientific and cultural activities⁴²⁴ could mean a stage. Subsequently, April 1930 saw the sixth general assembly of *Türk Ocağı*. Afet attended the assembly to make a speech on women rights. However, Mustafa Kemal Pasha insisted that she had to talk on the aims and activities of *Türk Ocağı* and propose more systematic studies on history. She carried it through on 28 April while the President Mustafa Kemal was also following the assembly from his own lodge. Sadri Maksudi and Reşit Galip addressed their speeches supporting Afet and emphasizing the richness of Turkish history. Then, they presented a proposal for the establishment of a certain and permanent commission under *Türk Ocağı* to make scientific research on Turkish history and civilization.

It was resolved within the same day and added to the law of *Türk Ocağı*.⁴²⁵ The commission was named *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti* (Turkish History Research Committee) and its executive board was elected on 4 June 1930. The name of the committee was defined by Atatürk himself.

In the first meeting of the committee -which was gathered under the guidance of Hamdullah Suphi, head of *Türk Ocağı*-⁴²⁶ Tefik Bıyıklıoğlu, Secretary-General of the Presidency of the Republic, was elected as the chair, which could be counted as an early trace of direct involvement of the rulers of the state in the

⁴²⁴ *Türk Ocağı'nın Nizamname-i Esasisi ve Dahilisi*, İstanbul 1328, p. 3; *Türk Ocağı Esas Nizamı*, İstanbul 1334, p. 1.

⁴²⁵ Afet İnan, "Türk Tarih Kurumunun Kuruluşuna Dair", *Belleten*, XI/42, (1947): p. 174-178; The added article to the law was such: "*Merkez Heyeti, Türk tarih ve medeniyetini ilmi bir surette tetkik ve tetebbu eylemek vazifesiyle mükellef olmak üzere bir Türk Tarih heyeti teşkil eder.*" (Central Executive Board would establish a Turkish History Committee to study Turkish history and civilization in a scientific manner.) *Türk Yurdu*, no. 223-29, (Mayıs 1930), p. 88.

⁴²⁶ Uluğ İğdemir, "Türk Tarih Kurumunun Kısa Tarihi", *Ülkü*, II. Teşrin 1944, p. 21.

affairs of the committee for an objective. Yusuf Akçura and Samih Rifat were chosen as Deputy Chairs, and Reşit Galip became the Secretary-General. Other members of the committee were as follows: Afet (İnan), İsmail Hakkı (Uzunçarşılı), Hamit Zübeyr (Koşay), Halil Edhem (Eldem), Ragıp Hulusi (Özdem), Reşit Safvet (Atabinen), Zakir Kadiri, Sadri Maksudi (Arsal), Mr. Mesaros,⁴²⁷ Mükrimin Halil (Yinanç), Vasıf Çınar and Yusuf Ziya (Özer).⁴²⁸

After the election, Tevfik Bey addressed to the committee by stating that the most important issue of the committee was an effort to be put on Turkish national history. For him, Turkish history was older than any other nation's history; and as opposed to the prevailing view mostly in Europe, the Turks had contributed to world civilization much greater than the Greeks. Now, after the decisive victories of the Turks on the battlefields, it was the high time to emphasize the glorious national Turkish history as a significant part of the Turkish transformation. The Committee held eight meetings until the abolishment of *Türk Ocağı* in April 1931. Those gatherings took place with the participation of Mustafa Kemal Pasha and in the Private Secretary Building of the Presidency.⁴²⁹ Creation of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (Outlines of Turkish History) was the result of the works of the committee.

Repeal of the *Türk Ocağı* became a turning point in the history of the *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti*. The seventh general assembly of *Türk Ocağı* on 10 April

⁴²⁷ This attention-grabbing expert was a Hungarian Turcologist and student of famous A. Vambery. He was among the founders of Turan Cemiyeti in 1910. Then, he worked in Hungarian section of Darülfünun between 1916-1919. Having served 14 years in Hungarian Ethnography Museum, he was consulted by the Turkish officials for a report on museology. Then, he worked for and contributed to Ankara Ethnography Museum between 1924-1932. His various services and views on anthropological and ethnographic research for all of the Turks could have placed him in the committee. For his activities, see Hüseyin Karaduman, "Türk Ocakları ve Hars Müzeleri", *Vakıflar Dergisi*, XXX, (2007), p. 503-518.

⁴²⁸ Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 3.

⁴²⁹ Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 4. Today, the building is a museum of the Directorate of Turkish Railways.

1931 resulted in the superseding the association. Consequently, the History Committee could not continue its existence, either. In response, the members of the committee made an application to the Ministry of Interior to organize an independent association in comply with *Dernekler Kanunu* (Law of Associations). According to the personal notes of Tevfik Bıyıklıoğlu, the date of the application was 12 April 1931, immediately after the abolishment of *Türk Ocağı*. On 15 April, the application was approved and the establishment of the association with the name *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti* (Turkish History Research Society) was set in concrete. Due to the effect of the reforms in language for nationalization, name of *Cemiyet* was shifted to *Türk Tarihi Araştırma Kurumu* (Turkish “araştırma” was adopted instead of Arabic “tetkik”) and eventually to *Türk Tarih Kurumu* (Turkish Historical Society) in 1935.⁴³⁰

Though Turkish Historical Society was established in April 1931, the founding members were mostly defined according to the meeting of *Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti* on 4 June 1930 when the executive board was elected. Thus, sixteen people (Afet İnan,⁴³¹ Yusuf Akçura, Halil Edhem Eldem, Hasan Cemil Çambel,⁴³² Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, Ragıp Hulusi Özdem, Reşit Galip,⁴³³ Reşit Safvet Atabinen, Sadri Maksudi,⁴³⁴ Samih Rifat,⁴³⁵ Tevfik Bıyıklıoğlu,⁴³⁶ Şemsettin Günaltay,⁴³⁷ Vasıf

⁴³⁰ Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 6.

⁴³¹ For meeting and relations of Atatürk and Afet İnan, see F. Rezzan Ünalp, “Makedonya/Selanik Muhaciri Prof. Dr. Afet İnan ve Atatürk”, in *Tarih Boyunca Türk Makedon İlişkileri I*, Genelkurmay Personel Başkanlığı Askeri Tarih ve Stratejik Etüt Daire Başkanlığı Yayınları, Ankara 2016, p. 1-14; İsmail Uzun, *Düşünce ve Uygulamaları İle Atatürk'ün Manevi Kızı Afet İnan*, Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi, Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, 2019.

⁴³² As a soldier, he fought in Balkan and First World Wars and acted as member of parliament from 1928 to 1950.

⁴³³ Member of parliament and Minister of Health in 1932-1933.

⁴³⁴ After his education in Paris, Sadri Maksudi was directly invited by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in 1925 to teach in the Faculty of Law in Ankara.

Çınar⁴³⁸ and Yusuf Ziya Özer⁴³⁹) became the founding members of the Society.⁴⁴⁰

It is visible that in addition to their field of expertness, some of the members were close colleagues or henchperson of President Mustafa Kemal. Some were among the rulers, member of parliaments and bureaucrats of the state. A number of them was among the founders and ideologists of the new regime. Thus, it is probable to argue that Turkish Historical Society -although called and formally organized as a society- had strong connections with the state and rulers. This would enable the view that history and Turkish Historical Society stood at the center of the project of the new state for arousing national feelings for nation building in Turkey.

The regulation of the *Cemiyet* consisted of three main divisions. The first one was about the aim and members. It was stated that the Society was established in Ankara under the auspices of President Mustafa Kemal. Minister of Education would be the honorary head. The aim was to research Turkish history and to announce and publish the results of those studies. To fulfill the aim, the *Cemiyet* would gather for scholarly meetings; work on and publish the sources of the

⁴³⁵ Member of parliament between 1923-1931.

⁴³⁶ Secretary-General of President Mustafa Kemal, previously member of the Turkish delegation during the Lausanne Negotiations.

⁴³⁷ Member of parliament between 1923-1950 and Prime Minister in 1949-1950.

⁴³⁸ Member of parliament, ambassador and Minister of Education.

⁴³⁹ Member of parliament between 1931-1946.

⁴⁴⁰ In addition to them, between 1931 and 1938, Tefik Bilge, İhsan Sungu, Ahmet Refik Altınay, Fuat Köprülü, Behçet Gücer, A. Muzaffer Göker, Hamit Ongunsu, Hikmet Bayur, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, Şevket Aziz Kansu, Necip Asım Yazıksız, Hasan Fehmi Turgal, M. Cevdet İnanç Alp, Remzi Oğuz Arık, Cevat Üstün, Fakihe Öymen, Aziz Ogan, Arif Müfit Mansel, Hasan Ali Yücel, Osman Ferit Sağlam, Faik Reşit Unat and Hamit Sadi Selen were registered as the regular members of the Society. Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 215-216.

Turkish history; appoint and mobilize committees to have sources and documents related to the Turkish history; and publish the outcomes of the research in any possible ways. The members would be from any nationality and be chosen related with their contribution to the aims of the association. Access to the membership would be possible with the suggestion of two members and the acceptance of the presidential board. Next division of the regulation was about the organizational structure. 6 members would form the presidential board that includes a chair, two deputy chairs, a secretary general and a treasurer. Upon the invitation of the presidential board, the *Cemiyet* would gather and discuss on the available agenda. The board would have to inform its “protector” (President Mustafa Kemal) on its activities quarterly. Administrative issues would also be dealt within the presidential board. The last part was on management. Income of the association would be provided with endowments, book-journal selling and conference entrance fees. Fiscal administration was under the responsibility of the presidential board, too. Secretary general would be the responsible member before the government and law.⁴⁴¹

As it was stated, during the *Türk Ocağı Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti* days, members of the committee gathered in the Private Secretary Building of the Presidency. After its re-organization as a society, it moved to the building of *Türk Ocağı* in 1931, which later turned to *Halkevi* (People’s House) and today’s *Resim ve Heykel Müzesi* (Painting and Sculpture Museum).⁴⁴² However, as members of the Society closely worked with Mustafa Kemal Pasha, Dolmabahçe Palace and Yalova Pavilion could also be counted as the *de facto* centers of the Society. In 1940, a part of *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi* (Faculty of Letters in Ankara) was allocated for the activities of the Society until 1967 when today’s current building was erected.

⁴⁴¹ T.T.T.C. *Nizamnamesi*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1932), p. 4.

⁴⁴² İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 57.

As early as its foundation, the Society made a point of international affairs. It started library exchange with institutions in Germany, the USA, Austria, Albania, Australia, Belgium, Bulgaria, England, France, Persia, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Soviet Russia, Yugoslavia and Greece. Moreover, on behalf of the Society, most of its members attended international congresses and conferences in London, Paris, Sofia, Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Madrid, Oslo, Bucharest, Geneva, Copenhagen, Zurich, Zagreb and Brussels between 1932 and 1938. Subjects of those events varied from anthropology to history education, Byzantine studies, history of medicine, ancient history, archaeology and other history-related fields.⁴⁴³

The activities of the Society within Turkey and its increasing relations with foreign scientific circles brought it an international recognition. From 1930s onward, world famous researchers on history and social sciences such as Prof. James H. Breasted (Chicago University), Prof. Cornelius Gurlitt (Dresden Technical University), Prof. Eugene Pittard (University of Geneva), Prof. Albert Gabriel (College de France), Prof. Richard Hartmann (Humboldt University), Prof. Paul Wittek (University of London), Prof Kurt Bittel (German Institute for Archaeology), Prof. Franz Taeschner and Prof. G. Jaeschke (Munster University) and Prof. Gyula Nemeth (Budapest University and Hungarian Academy of Sciences) were decorated with Honorary Membership of the Society. Furthermore, Turkish and foreign researchers were selected as Correspondent Members, too. Through the time, this kind of membership has been bestowed on a numerous people from home and abroad to date.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴³ The government also asked for the Society to attend international congresses to represent Turkey. For instance, although there was not a budget for officially attending the international congresses, Prime Minister requested the Society to participate in the history congress that would be organized in Warsaw in 1933. BCA., 30-10-0-0/229-541-8, 31.01.1932.

⁴⁴⁴ Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 213-215.

As a result of these efforts and activities of the Society, it was praised by many foreign research institutions and scholars whose letters to the Society are preserved in archive of the latter. On the other hand, its fame within the country was quickly spread among the people. It can easily be understood from the approach of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who spoke highly of THS and its activities especially in his speeches during the annual inauguration of the Turkish National Assembly between 1934 and 1938. Together with Turkish Language Society, Atatürk appreciated the works of Turkish Historical Society at these moments. For example, his statement in 1937 as “Turkish Historical and Language Societies’ becoming significant institutions for enlightening Turkish national existence is a pleasing fact. Historical Society started carrying out its cultural aim in science world with its congresses, exhibitions, excavations and findings.”⁴⁴⁵ is remarkable.

Though Mustafa Kemal Pasha actively followed the foundation process of the Society, he had embodied his expectations from THS in 1935 as he instructed planning a new program for history across the country. In 19 articles, a campaign for Turkish history was initiated. With the main lines, those articles included completing *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*; a new organization within the Society; establishing contact with all educational and cultural institutions in Turkey and charging them with “national mission” on history; finding, restoring and preserving all sort of historical documents, materials and monuments; translating, editing, publishing historical sources; directing archaeological excavations; keeping contact with Turkish Language Society for linguistic and philological research; launching a scholarly journal; informing the citizens on Turkish art and architecture with visuals; getting in touch with foreign institutions and scholars; appointing correspondence members from high school teachers and Turkish history students studying abroad; and requesting quota

⁴⁴⁵ T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre: 5, İçtima: 3, Cild 20, 1937; Afet İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumu 40 Yaşında”, *Belleten*, XXXV/140, (1971), p. 529.

from the related ministries to send students abroad for history education.⁴⁴⁶ Thus, activities of the Society moved in this direction to a degree.

3.2. Producing Turkish History Thesis and Disseminating through Publications

From its establishment, until the death of Atatürk in 1938,⁴⁴⁷ Turkish Historical Society mainly published more than 20 books and eight issues of the journal of *Belleten*, organized two history congresses, and carried out archaeological excavations. These activities were carried out according to a program called *Türk Tarih Tezi* (Turkish History Thesis) although it has not been clearly announced or explicitly written by the Society.

Indeed, in an article submitted to *Belleten* by Şemseddin Günaltay, when he declared “the victory of Turkish History Thesis”, he also outlined the mainstays of the Thesis.⁴⁴⁸ According to the article, Turkestan was the oldest cultural center and homeland of the Turks (it was not Mongolia); native land of the brachycephalies was Central Asia; the Turks belonged to civilized “white race”; the Hittites and Sumerians of Anatolia had migrated from Central Asia. Günaltay asserts that the thesis has been confirmed with archaeological surveys, historical documents and a settled scientific view.

Still, it was not adequately clear, then, some researchers of the subjects have also made suggestions to formulate the thesis. For example, Suavi Aydın claimed that

⁴⁴⁶ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 26-35.

⁴⁴⁷ After 1938, it is possible to see the traces of a new approach to historiography in Turkish Historical Society; that was Turkish-Islamic understanding of history. See Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine*, p. 54-77. A radical history understanding could prevail in 1930s with strong personal image of Atatürk, however, after his passing away, historiography tended to change. “Cumhuriyet’in Omurgası Atatürk’ün Kitaplığında Saklı”, interview with Zafer Toprak, *İstanbul Life*, (2020/3), p. 20.

⁴⁴⁸ Şemseddin Günaltay, “Türk Tarih Tezi Hakkındaki İntikatlarmın Mahiyeti ve Tezin Kat’i Zaferi”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 337-365.

the thesis sought to legitimize the Turkish existence over Anatolia, to emphasize laicism and extend the Turkish history to pre-Islamic times and place the Turks among the civilized nations of the world.⁴⁴⁹ The same author claims in another article that the Kemalist government promoted the history thesis for two main reasons: to connect cultural and historical ties of the new regime to Central Asia and ancient Anatolia; stress the Turanid roots of civilized communities of Anatolia.⁴⁵⁰ Then, Zorlu Durukan and Ersanlı suggested six clauses of the thesis.⁴⁵¹ According to former author, the thesis claimed that: the Turks created ancient civilizations in Central Asia and it became root for the others; Turkish history was much bigger than Ottoman-Islamic history with more states in larger timespan; Anatolia had been homeland of the Turks for ages; the Turks belonged to the white race; Turkish language was a significant asset of the Turkish nation; and Ottoman rule and Islam could not be reference points of Turkish history and identity.⁴⁵² For the latter, six mainstays of the thesis existed, too: Turks are not from the yellow race, but the Arianids; the Turks in Anatolia had migrated from Central Asia; name and roots of the Turks dated back to 9 to 20 millenia BC; Turkish language greatly contributed to other languages of the world; Turkish history extends to pre-Ottoman and pre-Islamic era including 18 Turkish states; and mismanagement of the Ottomans damaged the Turks and Turkish politic-cultural identity.⁴⁵³

Although these all could provide an insight on the history thesis, picturing it as a whole requires considering the total of the activities of the Society from its

⁴⁴⁹ Suavi Aydın, *Modernleşme ve Milliyetçilik*, (Ankara: Gündoğan Yayınları, 1993), p. 227-228.

⁴⁵⁰ Aydın, “Türk Tarih Tezi ve Halkevleri”, p. 107.

⁴⁵¹ For other formulations, see Toprak, *Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji*, Şimşek, “Türk Tarih Tezi Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme”, p. 85-100; Özkul, “Akademik Literatürde Türk Tarih Tezi Sorunsalı”, p. 38-50.

⁴⁵² Zorlu Durukan, “The Religion of Muhammad’: Early Turkish Republican Ideology and the Official View of Islam in 1930s History Textbooks”, p. 28-29.

⁴⁵³ Ersanlı, “Bir Aidiyet Fermanı: Türk Tarih Tezi”, p. 805-806.

establishment in 1931 (even from the appearance of History Committee under *Türk Ocağı* in 1930) to 1938 through published and unpublished works of the Society. Accordingly, analyzing those actions of the Society would assure introducing that thesis. Therefore, explaining it firstly as a new historiography and history understanding that places the Turks and their glorious past in the center of history of world and humanity would make sense. Moreover, determining still six (but reshaped) reference points of the Thesis would help understand it in a better way. After investigating the works of the Society in the stated timespan, the reference points of the thesis could be suggested as following:

- The Turks were the autochthonous residents of Anatolia and they had been there for at least 7.000 years after their migration from Central Asia.
- The Turks do not belong to uncivilized “yellow race” but to white and brachycephalic group of people who firstly established civilization in their homeland Turkestan-Central Asia and brought it to Near East, Anatolia and Europe.
- Turkish language was one of the oldest and richest languages; and linguistic studies could show the ancientness and level of development of Turkish and the Turks.
- The Turks had an illustrious history before Islam both in pre-historical and historical ages.
- The Turks also had greatly contributed to Islamic history, Muslim states and civilization of Islam.
- History of new Turkish Republic constitutes a “miracle” as honorable phase of Turkish history.

It is for sure that those reference points have been emphasized purposefully, and it is possible to find the narrative of those points within the activities of the Society in 1930s, as will be shown in next chapter. They also bear the trace of Atatürk’s approach to history understood through the questions and answers he dictated to Afet previously. Doubtlessly, making efforts to create a

consciousness among citizens with history for nation building constitutes the great part of that purpose. The people of the new Turkish Republic had lived as subjects under the Ottoman Empire for centuries and they were not conscious of being a nation. Moreover, regarding the political and military side, the Ottoman Empire had long been on the decline and it had resulted in loss of self confidence among the Turks. Therefore, reminding or indoctrinating the people with a discourse that they had been an old and civilized nation which provided examples of heroism and glory in pre-historical, ancient and modern ages could be possible with historical references. On the other hand, against the claims of the Greeks, Armenians and some European powers on Anatolia, laying stress on the historical dominion and possession of the Turks over Anatolia occupied a crucial place. Moreover, the efforts of the rulers of state for participation of the Turks and Turkey in modern world would get easier when the civilization founder role of the Turks in history was uncovered. These purposes necessitated the stressing those reference points of Turkish History Thesis.

Consequently, while Turkish History Thesis means a new historiography of the new Turkish state and nation, it refers to particular points extracted from history; and those points get in touch with certain purpose and needs of the Turks and Turkey. Turkish Historical Society played a central role in this project during 1930s with its activities. It could be claimed that in this process, THS showed commitment to science and scientific methods while carrying out its operations although its works have been criticized or even proven wrong through the course of time. Adoption of the positive sciences by the positivist rulers of the young Turkey could be seen within the activities of the Society. Strong references to archaeology, biological-physical anthropology, linguistics, and other sciences in formulating a historical narrative was a conscious preference, as they could offer concrete evidence to the points of Turkish History Thesis. Therefore, the following activities of the Society could signal their room in the new historiography of Turkey and within the new thesis. Still, the claims and discussions that arose from those activities will be analyzed in next two chapters.

3.2.1. Assignments to Prepare the *Outlines of Turkish History*

Before the official establishment of the Turkish Historical Society in 1931, some members of *Türk Ocağı-Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti*, under the directions of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, began to compose a work which would set the frame of a Turkish History Thesis. It was *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* (*Outlines of Turkish History*).⁴⁵⁴

According to a newspaper of 1930, approximately 600 hundred-page book on the sources of Turkish history had been prepared with the screening of Gazi Mustafa Kemal.⁴⁵⁵ Indeed, Mustafa Kemal Pasha had also prepared a manuscript of the work with his handwriting.⁴⁵⁶ He also had read the French version of *The Outline of History* (*Esquisse de l'histoire Universelle*) of H. G. Wells in 1925.⁴⁵⁷ Thus, its effect was visible on the name and spirit of the newly produced book.⁴⁵⁸ As true to its name, the work designated a Turkish history within the history of universe and civilizations. Though *TTAH* was published in 1930 as limited copies and in state's printing house, it is still meaningful to regard it as the first book of Turkish Historical Society which was established one year later. Because the editors of *TTAH* also became active members of Turkish Historical Society. For the members of the institution, and even for the public opinion, there was no break between the history committee previously established within the Turkish Hearths and the History Society after 1931. Only an administrative arrangement could be mentioned. The majority of the members remained same and they continued to own and defend the book after 1931. Moreover, *TTAH*

⁴⁵⁴ Abbreviated in this work as *TTAH*.

⁴⁵⁵ *Milliyet*, 30 August 1930.

⁴⁵⁶ TTKA, TTK-91-1.

⁴⁵⁷ Turan, *Atatürk'ün Düşünce Yapısını Etkileyen Olaylar, Düşünürler, Kitaplar*, p. 37-38.

⁴⁵⁸ Oral, *Türk Ulusunun İnşası*, p. 44.

basically determined the framework of the activities of the Society for almost a decade, though some corrections and revisions were required for certain parts.

On the cover page of *TTAH*, it is stated that Afet, Mehmet Tevfik, Samih Rifat, Akçura Yusuf, Dr. Reşit Galip, Hasan Cemil, Sadri Maksudi, Şemsettin, Vasıf and Yusuf Ziya attempted at generating the work through collecting, translating and copyright.⁴⁵⁹ Another note on the work claims that it was published only as 100 copies to be submitted to screening and critics of the related specialists. The work includes 11 main chapters in more than 600 pages. First chapter deals with the initiatives on preparing that work, prologue to world history, the theories on universe, world, human, history, race, language and Turkish nation. Then comes the second part including the prelude to Turkish history, homeland of the Turks, and their migrations and civilizations. The following four chapters focus on the history, culture, civilization of China, India, Khalde-Elam-Assur and Egypt, and Turkish contributions to those lands. The seventh chapter involves Anatolian civilizations and peoples from the Hittites to the Lydians. The Aegean and Ancient Greek civilization is touched in the next part. Similarly, Ancient Italy and the Etruscans constitute the ninth chapter. History of Persia and the states on that geography are dealt in the tenth part. The last and largest section of the work is named “Central Asia” and it covers Turkish civilization in Central Asia (including architecture, mining, city-planning, language and writing, law, religion etc.) and the migrations of the Turks to various parts of the world. The Turkish states from the Huns to the Republic of Turkey are also examined within this section and in a chronological order. The work is completed with the bibliography.⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, Devlet Matbaası, 1930. It was re-published in 2014 with some grammar corrections: *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2014). Following notes from this book refer to the revised edition.

⁴⁶⁰ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. V-XIII.

In addition to aforementioned physical features of the work, the spirit of *TTAH* is signaled by the editors under the title “Why is this book written?”. For them, it has been prepared for certain goals. One of those goals was to inform the Turkish people on the scientific viewpoints on the universe, pre-historical and historical eras and human beings. However, more crucial goal was to replace the old and Western type of historical view that had underrated the Turkish history and Turks’ contribution to world civilization for long times. Thus, showing the real role of the Turkish nation in history would correct that previous “biased” attitude against the Turks, while producing a national history for the Turks, whose hearts to be filled with a sense of unity. Associating the national development of the Turks with racial roots was also part of the goal.⁴⁶¹

These could be the instances of the efforts to base the history thesis on scientific roots and to found the national history narrative against the two century-long Western approach.⁴⁶² Yet, despite those “divine” aims, first draft of *TTAH* could not get full approval, especially from President Mustafa Kemal. Some parts of the book had been written by authors who were not expert on the field. Moreover, the endeavor for producing an extensive work in a limited time resulted in the lack of desired success.⁴⁶³ Hence, letters of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to the Society reflects his warnings and critics. According to one of his letters, dated on 16 August 1931, “though everyone wishes achieving the aim in a short time, the way to follow would be logical and especially scientific.” So, he reminds the members of the Society to be aware of the importance of the task they carried out.⁴⁶⁴ A second letter with the same date includes his mostly quoted

⁴⁶¹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 1-2.

⁴⁶² Oral, *Türk Ulusunun İnşası*, p. 48.

⁴⁶³ İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, “Türk Tarihi Yazılırken: Atatürk’ün Alaka ve Görüşlerine Dair Hatıralar”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 349-350.

⁴⁶⁴ Arı İnan, “Prof. Dr. Afet İnan ve Prof. Yusuf Hikmet Bayur”, in *Tarihe Tanıklık Edenler* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2018), p. 351.

words on history and historiography: “We should be the men who always seek the truth and dare to express it after being sure. [...] Writing history is as important as making history. If the writer does not remain true to the maker, then the unchanging truth would turn into confusion for all.”⁴⁶⁵ Albeit scientifically and methodologically insufficient, *TTAH* still seemed significant as a preparatory work of Turkish History Thesis. Therefore, the core point of *TTAH* was kept in another work published in 1931: *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları-Methal Kısmı* (*Outlines of Turkish History-Introduction*). It included 87 pages and was published in 30.000 copies.⁴⁶⁶ The formation of *TTAH-Introduction* was also shaped around the idea that “The aim of this book is to remind the Turks their illustrious history, which had been denied for centuries in spite of the Turks’ efforts and contribution to the very first civilizations.” The words attributed to Mustafa Kemal were added, too: “Oh, Turkish nation! In addition to valor, you are also honor of humankind for thought and civilization. The history which carries the memoirs of thousands of years shows you the place of civilization that you deserve. Walk and reach it! This is both a right and task for you!”⁴⁶⁷ The main theme of *TTAH* was maintained in four-volume *History* textbooks, too. It should be noted that the attempt of *TTAH* did not remain in a narrow circle, but it was also examined by a group of readers who were -mostly- experts or considerable people in the field. Then, there have been more discussions, reports, criticisms (perhaps more than gratulations) about this work than has been supposed up to now, and these issues have been brought to the attention of the institution. Archive of Turkish Historical Society hosts crucial correspondence on the views of readers whose opinions had been asked on *TTAH*. Some of them praised the initiative as a crucial step of Turkish cultural revolution. For example, the journalist-politician Mehmet Asım (Us) wrote a letter to Society

⁴⁶⁵ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 8-9.

⁴⁶⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları-Methal Kısmı*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931).

⁴⁶⁷ Semavi Eyice, “Atatürk’ün Büyük Bir Tarih Yazdırma Teşebbüsü: Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları”, *Bellekten*, XXXII/128, (1968): p. 511.

stating “similar to the Lausanne Peace Treaty defined the borders of Turkey, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* would reveal the wide borders of Turkish history”.⁴⁶⁸ For him, this book should have been read by all of the Turks.

However, although they began with a courteous tone of congratulations and thanks for the emergence of such a book (they may have felt compelled to behave in this way towards a society that the country's rulers actively supported), many reviewers did not hesitate to express their various criticisms of the work. A letter signed by Nafiz -Commander of VI. Army Corps-⁴⁶⁹ informs the Society that such a book should definitely have dictionary, rich bibliography and index. A note on the letter shows that the criticism was read during the review meeting of the Society.⁴⁷⁰ Ahmed Refik was among the reviewers and he also wrote his report mostly on stylistic subjects. He stated that he examined the section of Ottoman history and sent the Society several pages of a list indicating revised uses of names and dates that had previously been written wrong.⁴⁷¹ Similarly, Besim Atalay also expressed his views on Turkish history and suggested the correction of proper nouns. It is also understood from the document that attention was paid to these reports by the Society in its meeting.⁴⁷²

It is obvious that there are reports that brought criticism to *TTAH* with more emphasis on content. To illustrate, Avram Galanti, after stating that he has

⁴⁶⁸ TTKA, TTAH-3-11.

⁴⁶⁹ Considering the military rank and date, he must be Abdurrahman Nafiz Gürman, later Chief of General Staff of Turkey. See “Abdurrahman Nafiz Gürman”, <https://ataturkansklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/abdurrahman-nafiz-gurman-1887-1966/>, accessed on 05.11.2022.

⁴⁷⁰ TTKA, TTAH-3-9, 06.04.1931.

⁴⁷¹ TTKA, TTAH-3-10, 17.05.1931.

⁴⁷² TTKA, TTAH-3-13, 09.04.1931.

studied the topics on Egypt, Sumer and Elam, claimed that many revisions were needed. For him, the book covered a great range of subjects, therefore, corrections would be required in numerous parts.⁴⁷³ Another letter signed by M. Cemil told the Society that Ottoman history during Sultan Selim II involved some mistakes, so head of the Society, Tevfik Bey forwarded it to Yusuf Akçura to redress.⁴⁷⁴ Then, Burhan Asaf asserted that the subject is very broad and that a basic consensus of opinion and style should have been ensured among the authors. He also warned that attention should have been paid to each author's conception of history and methodology.⁴⁷⁵

More comprehensive criticism of the content of *TTAH* was expressed by Zakir Kadiri, Yakup Kadri and Zeki Velidi. In his 70-page report, Zakir Kadiri animadverts upon the book through 11 points, some of which include organization of the book, the style of making use of sources and documents, using anthropological and archaeological concepts, mentioning Turkish dialects, the problem of using “Turk” for pre-historical ages, narrative of Turkish-Slavic relations, and handling modern history of the Turks.⁴⁷⁶ Although he offered revisions on those issues in a polite manner, he implicitly may have suggested that the work be completely canceled and reworked.

Yakup Kadri was one of the people who conveyed the criticisms towards the work more seriously. Actually, he began with the importance of *TTAH* by arguing that Turkish nationalism had been like a religion without a holy book, then *TTAH* would serve to that aim. Still, he announced certain points as to form and substance of the work. Yakup Kadri admits “I am sure that Islam spoiled the

⁴⁷³ TTKA, TTAH-3-12, 21.04.1931. He also makes a complaint that the *Darülfünun* did not have significant sources that would help to examine and revise *TTAH*.

⁴⁷⁴ TTKA, TTAH-3-16, 31.03.1931.

⁴⁷⁵ TTKA, TTAH-3-14.

⁴⁷⁶ TTKA, TTAH-9-21.

essence of Turkish-ness". However, he argues, he did not see enough evidence that the institution agreed with him on this issue. Next, allocation of pages for chapters also seems problematic. For him, history of modern Turkey should have been the largest part, and other parts could have only been introduction to that. In this way, "ideology of Turkish Revolution could have been concrete". Finally, Yakup Kadri comments that the narrative of the book was sometimes objective and based on evidences, but some chapters were written in an unpretentious style that leaves reader with doubt and hesitation. He ends his report with suggestions on use of various historical terms.⁴⁷⁷

Zeki Velidi, who is considered to be against the certain points of Turkish History Thesis because of his views in the congress in 1932, had already conveyed his opinions on *TTAH* to the Society in 1931 with a letter and 9-page remarks, which concentrated on Central Asian Turkish history. Stating that the chapters on the drought in Turkestan were based on problematical claims, Zeki Velidi wants to make an explanation by referring to the studies of foreign scientists in the light of history, geology and other sciences. Therefore, he asks revision for the new publications of the work. The author also makes some warnings about the expressions used during the narrative and the judgments expressed. Accordingly, statements such as "ungrateful Umayyads" in the book would seem contradictory in a work that was intended to be written in a contemporary way. Indeed, that could be seen as a pro-Shiite narrative, but for Turks, it was not necessary to distinguish between Arab dynasties and families.⁴⁷⁸

Within the scope of his ideas that the thesis should have been modified and re-structured, it is also worth mentioning his thoughts on the issue of the race of the Turks. He argues that the Turks are not of the same race as the Chinese and the Slavs, but are a bridge between the Indo-European races and the eastern nations. Hence, he puts forward that if the concept of race is to be used, Turks and

⁴⁷⁷ TTK, TTAH-9-19, 1931.

⁴⁷⁸ TTKA, TTAH-9-22, 02.07.1931.

Mongols should have been evaluated within the Turanid race. When all these issues are taken into consideration, it is understood that Zeki Velidi was not against the *TTAH* or the purpose of the book but proposed different and more scientific methods in handling the subjects and supporting the thesis. He also declares himself that reading *TTAH* after revisions would be a national task for all. Among other things, Zeki Velidi ends his 1931-dated letter to Tevfik Bey, Head of the Society, by asking Mustafa Kemal Pasha to be reminded of arrangements of his travel. Although the details of the trip are not clear, asking the President for help indicates that the travel could be of an international nature. Accordingly, it can be interpreted that he may have made attempts to go abroad before the congress, not immediately after the congress as argued usually.

It can be expounded that the harshest criticisms of this book were brought by Fevzi (Çakmak) Pasha. It is obvious that *TTAH* was sent to Pasha for his review. Then, he responded it with 21-page critique. Actually, Fevzi Pasha confessed that he was not specialist of history and that could not be able to properly examine the work. Then, he told, he understood that it was a political propaganda rather than a scientific work. While he accepted that the work done to show the true place of the Turkish nation in the history of civilization was important, he expressed that in a book where strong and weak claims coexist, those weak claims would harm the whole work. Thus, he made 3 lists for the points that needed serious revision. The first list includes incorrect words, numbers, and Arabic and Persian words that were used unnecessary instead of Turkish; the second list mentioned the ideas and sentences that seemed wrong; and the last group pointed out the weak evidence for the thesis.⁴⁷⁹ Head of the Society answered him with a letter promising that those revisions would be considered.

⁴⁷⁹ TTKA, TTAH-3-1, 12.05.1931.

Consequently, it can be claimed that people outside the institution approached the thesis with a certain suspicion. Some suggested relatively simple corrections, on the other hand, a significant number of readers reported serious and structural revisions. While accepting that such a study was important and Turkish history should have come to the fore, there was a prevailing opinion that the method and narrative should have been corrected. Such reports may have contributed to Mustafa Kemal Pasha's disapproval of this book, as mentioned above. Because it is understood from the archive documents that most of the reports from the examiners were read at the committee meetings, which Kemal Pasha often attended. However, although there were criticisms about the content and form of the study, the idea of emphasizing the superior place of Turkish history in world civilization, which was the main thesis of the *TTAH*, could not be easily abandoned. At this point, mentioning the series of drafts on *TTAH* is of great importance. The idea of *TTAH* was crucial, however, it had to be well organized and written by the real experts of the field. Thus, a new phase began in the journey. According to an order of President Mustafa Kemal to Turkish Historical Society, *TTAH* had to be revised with the latest research and documents.⁴⁸⁰ So, a new classification was made in 1932. Papers had to cover each part of Turkish history in chronological and regional terms, and authors were supposed to reveal the contribution of the Turks to world civilization. Then, ten meetings were held between 13 July and 17 October 1932 to choose the writers of the chapters.⁴⁸¹ The planning and distribution of new *TTAH* could be pictured as follows:⁴⁸²

⁴⁸⁰ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 15.

⁴⁸¹ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 21.

⁴⁸² TTKA, TTAH-1-12.

- Prologue⁴⁸³
- Introduction to General Turkish History in historical, geological, anthropological and linguistic context⁴⁸⁴
- Central Asia⁴⁸⁵
- Far East⁴⁸⁶
- Central East - India and Iran⁴⁸⁷
- Near East – Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Aegean Basin, Egypt, and Syria⁴⁸⁸
- History of Near East and Western Europe in Middle and Modern Ages⁴⁸⁹
- First Civilizations in Europe⁴⁹⁰
- Contributions of the Turks to Civilization in politics, military, ideology, mathematics, medicine, history and geography, philosophy, fine arts, economy, reconstruction and transportation⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸³ By Hasan Cemil and Hikmet Bayur.

⁴⁸⁴ By Afet, İbrahim Hakkı, Şevket Aziz, Prof. Ragıp Hulusi, Arif Müfid. For example, President Mustafa Kemal released a decree for appointing Arif Müfid in Cyprus, Crete and Greece to write his part on “Aegean Civilization” for Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları. BCA., 30-18-1-2/70-98-2, 29.12. 1936. This could show the seriousness attributed to the project.

⁴⁸⁵ By İbrahim Hakkı, Saffet Engin, Şevket Aziz, Sadri Maksudi, Şemseddin Günaltay, Fuad Köprülü, General Halis and Ağaoğlu Ahmed.

⁴⁸⁶ By Hamit Sadi, Hamit Ongunsu and Hilmi Ömer.

⁴⁸⁷ By Afet, Hikmet Bayur and Ağaoğlu Ahmed.

⁴⁸⁸ By Şemseddin Günaltay, Saffet Engin, Hasan Cemil and Yusuf Ziya.

⁴⁸⁹ By Sadri Maksudi, Hamit Zübeyr, Akdes Nimet, Mükrimin Halil, Fuad Köprülü, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Ahmed Refik, Hamit, Muzaffer Göker and Esat, Afet and Hikmet Bayur.

⁴⁹⁰ By Hamit Sadi, Nüzhet Haşim, Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Şükrü, Hüseyin Cahit, Yusuf Ziya and Şevket Aziz.

⁴⁹¹ By a large group of authors both within and out of the Society. They were Sadri Maksudi, Ağaoğlu Ahmed, Baki, Ali Haydar, Fevzi, Ahmet Refik, Ahmet Cevat, Ragıp Hulusi, Ali Saim, Reşit Rahmeti, Yusuf Ziya, İsmail Hakkı, İhsan, Nafi Atuf, Aliyar, Salih Murat, Kerim, Hüsnü

24 of those aforementioned people were the members of Turkish Historical Society.⁴⁹² More than 40 researchers were appointed as supporting members and contributors.⁴⁹³ THS also wrote an official letter to Turkish Language Society asking the compiling of linguistic subjects.⁴⁹⁴ 63 authors sent their papers in 1932 and 1933 on different subjects in compliance with the defined classification.⁴⁹⁵ They were either manuscript or printed copies. Still, all were drafts and scrutinized by a commission under Mustafa Kemal Pasha. First meeting of the commission took place in Çankaya Presidential Palace on 17 April 1933, which was chaired by Atatürk.⁴⁹⁶ The fact that the copies were printed in large numbers in printing houses shows that they were carefully examined by the examiners. It is understood from the documents that the Society requested quote from printing houses for publishing the papers, and more than 3.000 Turkish Lira was paid for printing from 1932 to 1934.⁴⁹⁷ When the drafts were investigated, it was seen that qualified and unqualified, voluminous and weak texts co-existed. On the other hand, some subjects had not been written. In following meetings, available papers were examined as to form and substance,

Hamit, Fatin, Neşet Ömer, Süheyl, Galip Ata, Osman Şevki, İbrahim Hakkı, Salih Murat, Şemseddin, Mükrimin Halil, Ahmet Refik, Hamit Sadi, Niyazi, Şekip, Nevzat, Hilmi Ziya, İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal, Celal Esat, Halil Edhem, Sedat, Selim Nüzhet, Hasan Ali, Abdülkadir, Kösemihaloğlu, Mesut Cemil, İhsan Abidin, Cevat Rüştü, Ali Rıza, Nizamettin Ali, Hasan Sabri, Zühdü, Ali Haydar Emir and Fevzi.

⁴⁹² TTKA, TTAH-1-42

⁴⁹³ Their names, institutions and addresses are listed. TTKA, TTAH-1-46.

⁴⁹⁴ Turkish Language Society responded that a commission formed by Yusuf Ziya, Fuat Köprülü, Hasan Ali Yücel and Ragıp Hulusi would undertake that mission. TTKA, TTAH-3-30, 28.07.1935.

⁴⁹⁵ TTKA, TTAH-1-49. “Ana Hatları Müsveddelerini Gönderen Zevat-I. Devre”.

⁴⁹⁶ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 21.

⁴⁹⁷ TTKA, TTAH-3-19, 20.

and the critics were noted. Mustafa Kemal Pasha pointed those critics and told the importance of the work as it would be guide to teachers and constitute the book of a new theory, which concerned the whole world.⁴⁹⁸ Hence, second episode of the series went on in 1933 with revisions. This time 47 papers emerged and they were printed copies. They seemed more successful in terms of academic styles and methodology. In 1936, new 15 papers were submitted.⁴⁹⁹ So, totally 128 papers were composed for *TTAH* between 1932 and 1936.⁵⁰⁰ A number of those papers were converted to book and was published by Turkish Historical Society in the course of time.⁵⁰¹

Consequently, *TTAH* underwent certain changes and revisions throughout the time. Though some of the papers were published after creation, the project was left half finished. The works that were considered weak or could not be completed in any way were not published and remained in draft form.⁵⁰² Either some writers could not prepare substantial pieces or lack of experts in certain fields prevented a complete success. Moreover, focus of the Society was also broadened after 1935 and it could not concentrate on *TTAH*. Alternative channels as books, *Belleten* or congresses provided opportunity to disseminate the thesis. Yet, *TTAH* was a concrete product of Mustafa Kemal and Turkish Historical Society that aimed at proving the role of the Turks within world history, as well as decorating the citizens with a national consciousness on history understanding. Accordingly, objectives pursued in other activities of Turkish

⁴⁹⁸ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 22.

⁴⁹⁹ TTKA, TTAH-2-1, 2.

⁵⁰⁰ Eyice, “Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları”, p. 522.

⁵⁰¹ 21 of them were published by Turkish Historical Society as a book under the serial of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*. Works of Akçura, Uzunçarşılı, Günaltay, Özer, Bıyıktay, İnan, Ünver, Köprülü, Bayur, Karamursal, Levend, Sarıcık, Genç and Kortel are among them. See *83 Yılın Kitapları*, ed. Yusuf Turan Günaydın, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2015), p. 602-605.

⁵⁰² Analysis of the Thesis through those drafts will be dealt in next chapter.

Historical Society in 1930s mostly was harmonious with the ideas treated in *TTAH*.

3.2.2. Presenting the Thesis in Textbooks

After the proclamation of the Republic, old books were tried to be used by updating them to a certain extent, since there were not enough history books.⁵⁰³ Yet, new understanding of history promoted by the state could be conveyed to the new generations through the appropriate textbooks.⁵⁰⁴ Then, Turkish Historical Society, immediately after its establishment, aimed at producing textbooks focused on national history for the high schools.⁵⁰⁵ On 19 July 1931, a meeting was held in *Doğu Salonu* (Eastern Hall) of *Türk Ocağı* under the presidency of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Tevfik Bıyıklıoğlu, head of the Society, submitted the available copies of the aforethought textbooks to President. Then, the latter instructed Esat Bey, Minister of Education, to publish the textbooks as soon as possible and make them ready for the new school year. Later on, members of the Society moved to Dolmabahçe Palace, Istanbul, to complete the textbooks. Mustafa Kemal Pasha himself closely followed the issue from Yalova. He often sent letters to the rulers of the Society to remind them to pursue a scientific and systematic way in composing the textbooks. After all, in 1933, during his national tour, he sent another letter to Yusuf Akçura (head of Society at that time) mentioning the fruitful outputs of textbooks.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰³ See Erdal Aslan, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti’nin İlk Ders Kitapları”, *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 35/158, (2010): p. 215-231.

⁵⁰⁴ Zorlu Durukan, “The Religion of Muhammad”, p. 29.

⁵⁰⁵ Uluğ İğdemir, *Yılların İçinden-Makaleler, Anılar, İncelemeler*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), p. 196.

⁵⁰⁶ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 9-10.

In comply with the thesis emphasized in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, a more consistent work,⁵⁰⁷ namely four-volume *History* textbooks (*Tarih Ders Kitapları*) were published in 1931 in 30.000 copies. Although it is stated on the cover page that *Tarih* was published upon the instruction of the Ministry of Education (*Maarif Vekaleti*), Turkish Historical Society and its members played a great role in compiling and publishing the book.

The preface of the work explicitly manifests the motivation behind the book. According to this declaration, Turkish history had been underrated in Turkey for centuries. First, the conflict between Islam and Christianity had resulted in an assumption in Western world that portrayed the Turks as savage people. Then, Turkish-Muslim historians had embedded the Turkish history within history of Islam and ignored the pre-Islamic past of the Turks. Eventually, for the last century of the Ottoman Empire, the idea of Ottomanism had required to repress the Turkish nationalism and national history. These all had affected the curriculum of history courses, which finally ended up picturing the Turks as an uncivilized and combatant folk. For these reasons, Turkish Historical Society appointed some of its members in order to uncover the hidden-forgotten Turkish history and to reshape the curriculum. For this undertaking, the editors argued that they benefitted from the latest publications and archaeological excavations in Anatolia, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Central Asia, Northern India, Northern China and Southern Siberia.⁵⁰⁸ The contributors of *Tarih* were Tevfik Bey, Samih Rifat Bey, Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Bey, Reşit Galip Bey, Hasan Cemil Bey, Afet Hanımefendi, İsmail Hakkı Bey, Reşit Saffet Bey, Sadri Maksudi Bey, Şemseddin Bey, Şemsi Bey and Yusuf Ziya Bey as seen on the cover page.⁵⁰⁹

⁵⁰⁷ Oral, *Türk Ulusunun İnşası*, p. 48-49.

⁵⁰⁸ *Tarih I-Tarihten Evvelki Zamanlar ve Eski Zamanlar*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), p. V, VI.

⁵⁰⁹ *Tarih I*, p. VII, VIII.

First volume of *Tarih* includes 384 pages covering seven tables, 22 maps and 136 pictures-drawings. Chapter I is an introduction to history of mankind with basic information on universe, nature, history, historical ages, race and thought. At this chapter, an evolutionist sight is adopted for the roots and ancestors of human being. Then, the emergence of modern human and starting of historical ages are associated and “proto-Turks” are given credit to have experienced those ages earlier than any other group of people and humanities. Chapter II is a look at the history and civilization of the Turks. Turkish historical homeland, migrations from Central Asia, arrival of the Turks to India, Anatolia, Egypt, Aegean Basin and Europe are described with reference to archaeological findings. Turkish civilization in aforementioned regions is also surveyed with regard to law, literature, writing, city planning, religion etc. Following certain chapters thematically deal with the history, geography, people, civilization and states of China, India, Khalde-Elam-Assur, Egypt, Anatolia, Persia, Aegean Basin and Italy till the partition of the Roman Empire. The traces of Turkish existence or influence at those parts of the world are frequently emphasized.⁵¹⁰

Second volume of *Tarih* constitutes 391 pages along with eight colored tables, 46 maps and 113 pictures-drawings. 32 chapters are included in the work. European history from the fourth to thirteenth century is covered through political affairs. Attributing a Central-Asian and civilized roots to some of European residents such as the Celts and Welsh draws attention,⁵¹¹ as the Central Asia is considered as the cradle of civilizations. On the other hand, European Turkish history (involving the Huns, Avars, Alans, Bulgars and Hungarians), Turkish states in Asia before adoption of Islam, and history of Islam and Turkish-Muslim states in Asia and Anatolia until the sixteenth century (with a reference to Babur -Mughal- Empire) are dealt in political and social terms. Sub-

⁵¹⁰ *Tarih I*, p. IX-XXIV.

⁵¹¹ *Tarih II-Ortazamanlar*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), p. 14-16.

title of this volume is “*Ortazamanlar*” (Middle Ages). Editors of the book discuss the issue of periodization in the prologue and claim that they adopted the style which had been suggested by Christoph Kellner in 1688,⁵¹² so the term Middle Ages is used for the time period between the fourth and sixteenth centuries. Comprehensibly, deeds of Turkish history from various times and regions are exemplified in this chapter, too. However, another significant point of the book is that history of Islam is handled in more than 100 pages. Moreover, there is a big number of chapters on Turkish-Muslim states. Consequently, it is possible to argue that history of Islam is not undermined or ignored by the producers of Turkish History Thesis, but the role of the Turks in enriching and contributing to Islam is strictly emphasized, as will be discussed in next chapter.

Third volume of *Tarih* is allocated to the Ottoman-Turkish history in modern era. In addition to 182 pages of text, six colored tables, 10 maps and 136 pictures-drawings take place, too. It is a complete history of the Ottoman Empire in political, social, economic, military, artistic and cultural affairs. The narrative begins with the roots of the Ottoman Turks and emergence of their *beylik* (principality) and ends in 1919 when the Ottoman Empire is thought to have vanished and a new Turkish state is considered to have emerged. Actually, it is not possible to mention the existence of a totally anti-Ottoman story within this work. On the contrary, most of the volume contains praises to the Ottomans as the heroic ancestors that ensured the unity of Turks in Anatolia and developed a high degree of civilization.⁵¹³ To put it in different way, any negative attitude against the Ottomans till the seventeenth century is not found in the work. However, aforementioned date is demonstrated as the outbreak of deterioration and decay which is allegedly both caused and continued by political, ideological and social problems.

⁵¹² *Tarih II*, p. 1-2.

⁵¹³ *Tarih III-Yeni ve Yakın Zamanlarda Osmanlı Türk Tarihi*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), p. 19-21.

The last volume of *Tarih* should be counted as the largest one when considered the relatively narrow timespan it covered (between 1919 and 1931). It is a 374-page work with five colored pictures, eight maps and 162 pictures-drawings. As a continuation of the previous volume, it begins with the new state of the Turks that was rooted in 1919. Post-World War I era and Turkish National Struggle are dealt in first and second chapters. Then, Turkish Revolution is pictured in a detailed manner. The Treaty of Lausanne, proclamation of the Republic of Turkey, religious and legal regulations, reforms in education, improvements in economic life, social and military affairs in the new regime appear in this history book, which also means a justification of Ankara government about its actions in the last decade. Indeed, the volume frequently gives place to citations from the *Nutuk* of Mustafa Kemal.⁵¹⁴

Actually, some criticisms about textbooks were raised during and after the period of publication of the books. First of them was about the content of the textbooks arose during the First Turkish History Congress. Some teachers claimed that the content of the book was too heavy for students. Yusuf Akçura answered that argument as “if the book is weak for teachers, actually, it is not for teachers. If it is heavy for students, they do not need to learn all subjects in the book. For the time being, it is the only book with Turkish scripts, so it has to be comprehensive. Students can apply to those books for research that needed expertise.”⁵¹⁵ However, it is known that these books were abandoned in secondary schools and started to be taught in high schools, after the debates in the congress. Still, according to Yücel Kabapınar, essence of the work survived in the books for various levels of education through decades.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹⁴ *Tarih IV-Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, 1931), p. 8-13.

⁵¹⁵ Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi-Konferanslar, Müzakere Zabıtları, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2010), p. 282-284. It is also abbreviated as *BTTK* in following notes.

⁵¹⁶ Kabapınar, “Başlangıcından Günümüze Türk Tarih Tezi ve Lise Tarih Kitaplarına Etkisi”, p. 143-178.

Indeed, the organization of *Türk Tarih Kongresi* (Turkish History Congress) in 1932 was directly related to the discussions on the *History* textbooks. Esat Bey, Minister of Education stated in the opening speech of the congress that they arranged the program to see the pedagogical side of textbooks, receive the critics from the experts of the fields, and rearrange it for the next years.⁵¹⁷ Doubtlessly, the ultimate goal was to introduce the thesis to the related people, shape it according to the critics and put it in the final form for the history curriculum of the students who should have been provided with necessary materials of a national historiography.

Later researchers also criticize the *History* textbooks that this book caused disengagement and breaks in Turkish history, brought a one-man-centered approach to historical events, caused confusion by covering a very wide period, and actually gave more than necessary space to the history of the Republican era, which was considered current for that period.⁵¹⁸ Nevertheless, despite these views, some of which can be considered correct and some of them do not fully reflect the truth, it is of great importance to deal with the issue within the atmosphere of its time. Based on the conditions and needs that led to the formation of the Turkish History Thesis, the relevant narrative had to be transferred to the nation in various media, including textbooks. In this respect, although revised over time, these textbooks were influential in shaping thousands of students' perceptions of history throughout the 1930s.

⁵¹⁷ *BTTK*, p. 12.

⁵¹⁸ For assessments, see Zeki Çevik, "Milli Mücadele'nin Resmi Ders Kitaplarında Anlatımına Eleştirel Yaklaşımlar", *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye'de Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yayıncılığı Sempozyumu - Bildiriler*, ed. Mehmet Öz, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2011), p. 753-765; Ahmet Şimşek, "Geçen Yüzyılda Türkiye'de Tarih Dersleri", presented in *Avrasya Türk Dili ve Tarihi Eğitimi Sempozyumu*, 15-18 May 2013, Istanbul.

3.2.3. A Modern Journal to Spread the Thesis: *Belleten*

According to the regulation of Turkish Historical Society, it aimed at publishing various materials including the journals.⁵¹⁹ However, early efforts on publication had been allocated for *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, History textbooks and other books. Then, the desire to publish a scholarly journal increased. Although it was not officially seen as the publication of the Turkish Historical Society, it is understood that the members of the Society contributed to the *Türk Tarih, Arkeologya ve Etnografya Dergisi*, which was firstly published in 1933 and even was sold by THS.⁵²⁰

Later on, it is explicitly stated in the working program of Turkish Historical Society in 1935 that publishing a journal would be of great importance. According to Uluğ İğdemir, in November of 1936, a talk on the name of the planned journal between Mustafa Kemal, Afet İnan and himself took place. As İğdemir narrates, Mustafa Kemal asked the meaning of *bülten* (bulletin). Then, they checked it in French *Larousse* and saw that it derives from Italian *bulletino*, and Latin *bullā*. Afterwards, Mustafa Kemal claimed that it also is related to Yakutian word *belieten* with similar meaning and saw it over from the Yakutian dictionary of Eduard Pekarski. Consequently, they all reached a decision to name the journal as *Belleten*, allegedly with Turkish roots and breed from the words meaning *belge*, *belletmek* (document, teach).⁵²¹ The new journal of Turkish Historical Society would be named *Belleten* and it appeared in 1937 with the first issue.

⁵¹⁹ T.T.T.C. Nizamnamesi, p. 4.

⁵²⁰ Its five issues could have been published until 1949. Mahmut H. Şakiroğlu, “Cumhuriyet Tarihimizde Süreli Yayınlarla Kısa Bir Bakış-Tarih Dergileri ve Belleten”, *Belleten*, 47/188, (1983): p. 1207-1222.

⁵²¹ Uluğ İğdemir, “Atatürk ve Belleten”, *Belleten*, III/10, (1939): p. 355-356. Discussion on naming the journal was related to the linguistic claims of the government at that period.

With a declaration in the first issue, Editorial Board of *Belleten* announced the subjects to be published in the journal: scientific research (new research, important translations), archival documents and epitaphs, scholarly news (excavations, activities of the Society, congresses etc.), bibliography, and appendices.⁵²² The end goal of the journal is expressed as explaining and providing proof for the “eternal” Turkish history. It is also stated that members of the Society are authors of the journal. Moreover, Turkish and foreign researchers, and people with interest in history could submit their papers for publication.⁵²³

A brief glimpse of the articles in the eight issues of journal in 1937-1938 could demonstrate the subjects covered in *Belleten*.⁵²⁴ There are 11 articles within the first issue of the journal dated January 1937.⁵²⁵ It is understood that a variety of subjects was provided by the board of the journal and authors. While the distant ages of "Turkish history" are presented with the findings obtained in the

⁵²² “Ön Söz”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 1-2.

⁵²³ “Ön Söz”, *Belleten*, p. 2.

⁵²⁴ More detailed analysis of the discourse in the journal will be dealt in next chapter when the claims of the history thesis are evaluated.

⁵²⁵ Articles of this issue are as follows: Afet, “Gerilla Hakkında İki Hatıra”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 10-14; “Deux Souvenirs sur la Guerilla”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 15-19; Celal Arat, “Tarihe Geçmeyen Bir Kahramanlık ve Büyüklük Menkıbesi”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 20-25; H. Reşit Tankut, “Dil Yolu İle Tarih-Alp Kelimesi ve Alpin Irkı Yurdu”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 26-41; Hikmet Bayur, “Orta ve Yeni Kurunda Ortaasya ve Hindistan Türklerinde Kadınların Mevkii”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 42-46; Y. Ziya Özer, “Ahaman Ailesinin Milliyeti”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 47-55; İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, “Karamanoğulları Devri Vesikalarından İbrahim Beyin Karaman İmareti Vakfiyesi”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 56-127; “Erklaerung und Übersetzung der Stiftungsurkunden im Auszug”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 145-164; M. Şemseddin Günaltay, “Türk Tarihinin Ana Kaynaklarından Camiüttevârih ve Fazlullah Reşidüddin”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 165-179; Şevket Aziz Kansu, “Alacahöyük’te Bulunan İskeletlerin Antropolojik Tetkikleri-Birinci Kısım”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): 180-191; “Etude Anthropologique de Quelques Squelettes d’Alacahöyük”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 192-202; Remzi Oğuz Arık, “Alaca-Höyük Hafriyatının İlk Neticeleri”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 210-221; A. Süheyl Ünver, “İslam Tababetinde Türk Hekimlerinin Mevkii ve İbni Sina’nın Türklüğü”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 271-278; Osman Şevki Uludağ, “Osmanlı Tıp Tarihinde Reaya Hastaneleri ve İmtiyazları”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 279-282; M. F. Köprülü, “Bibliography”, *Belleten*, I/1, (1937): p. 283-288.

archaeological excavations, the civilized aspects of the Turks within the scope of Ottoman and Islamic history are also emphasized. In addition, the thesis has been tried to be supported by linguistic studies. On the other hand, through the position of women in Turks in Central Asia and India in the Middle Ages, a discourse about the current Turkish political environment is aimed. As will be seen in the next issues, Afet's article is aimed at glorifying modern Turkish history. In addition to those articles, as a bibliographic piece, Fuad Köprülü criticizes the paper of Claude Cahen titled “le Diyar Bakr au temps des premiers Urtukides”, which is a signal that the Society wished to take part in international scientific discussions.

Second issue of *Belleten* was published in April 1937.⁵²⁶ With the second issue of the journal, it is understood that a tradition or a certain approach has begun to form. Accordingly, names such as Hamit Zübeyr, Şevket Aziz, Remzi Oğuz should have emphasized the archaeological and anthropological findings in order to support the history thesis. In this issue, the articles of the first two names were in this direction. On the other hand, it seems that a sharp transition of the subject from ancient times to modern Turkey was not preferred, and then, articles reflecting the Turkish-Islamic-Ottoman civilization were included. Next, as Afet did in this issue, articles that would emphasize the developments in recent

⁵²⁶ Table of content includes: Afet, “Atatürk’ü Dinlerken: Vatan ve Hürriyet”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 289-298; “En ecoutant Atatürk: La Societe Patrie et Liberte”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 299-309; “Bir Türk Amiralı-XVİncı Asrın Büyük Geografı: Piri Reis”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 317-331; “Un Amiral, Geographe Turc du XVIe Siecle Piri Reis, Auteur de la Plus Ancienne Carte de l’Amerique”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 333-348; İ. Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, “Amedi Galib Efendi’nin Murahhaslığı ve Paris’ten Gönderdiği Şifreli Mektuplar”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 357-410; Hikmet Bayur, “Son Osmanlı Hariciye Nazırının Bir Layihası”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 449-499; Sadi Selen, “Piri Reisin Şimali Amerika Haritası Telifi-1528”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 515-518; “Die Nord Amerika-Karte des Piri Reis (1528)”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 519-523; Hans Gustav Güterbock, “Alaca Höyük Civarında Ele Geçen Bir Eti Mührü”, *Belleten*, I/2 (1937): p. 501-502; “Ein Hethitissches Siegel aus der gegend von Alaca Höyük”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 503-504; Aziz Ogan, “İstanbul Arkeoloji Müzelerinde Yeni Açılan Para, Madalya ve Mücevherat Koleksiyonları”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 507-512; Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, “Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alaca Hüyükte 1936 Yazında Yaptırılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeler”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 525-533; “The Results of the Excavations Made on Behalf of the Turkish Historical Society at Alaca Hüyük in the Summer of 1936”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 534-542; Şevket Aziz Kansu, “Kumtepe Neolitik Kemikleri Üzerinde Antropolojik Tetkik”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 557-569; “Etude Anthropologique Sur les Ossements de Kumtepe (Troade)”, *Belleten*, I/2, (1937): p. 570-582.

Turkish history and give legitimacy to the new regime were also published. On the other hand, names such as İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı and Fuat Köprülü were preparing articles in accordance with today's classical historiography and were publishing those articles that did not cause much speculation. In fact, they silently contributed to the development of Turkish historiography.

In July 1937, third and fourth issues of *Belleten* were published together. Actually, the fifth-sixth and seventh-eight issues also saw the same format. The third-fourth issues included ten articles, some of which were translations of another.⁵²⁷ The abovementioned tradition was valid here, too. Though some of the names changed, general approach was firm. This time, Arif Müfid Mansel aimed to emphasize the ancientness of the Turks through “concrete” evidences. Moreover, foreign contributions were obviously welcome and piece of Brandenstein, Austrian researcher, found place in the journal. While Fevzi Kurtoglu tried to reveal a part of the Ottoman history, Afet and Hüsrev Sami Kızıldoğan stressed the role of Mustafa Kemal in struggle against the “oppressive” of Sultan Abdülhamid II. In the meantime, Uzunçarşılı published an article showing the importance of archival documents in historical studies.

January-April of 1938 saw the fifth-sixth issues of *Belleten*, which was published after the Second Turkish History Congress that was organized in September of 1937 and declared “victory” of Turkish History Thesis. Accordingly, this issue functioned almost a proceedings book of the congress, in order to disseminate

⁵²⁷ Afet, “Atatürk’ü Dinlerken: Mukaddes Tabanca”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 605-610; “En Ecoutant Atatürk: Le Revolver Sacre”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 611-617; Hüsrev Sami Kızıldoğan, “Vatan ve Hürriyet-İttihat ve Terakki”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 619-625; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, “Arşiv Vesikalarına Göre Yedi Ada Cümhuriyeti”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 627-639; Fevzi Kurtoglu, “İlk Kırım Hanlarının Mektupları”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 641-655; Arif Müfid Mansel, “Preistorik Boyalı Keramik Kültürleri”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 657-671; Halil Edhem, “Stanley Lane-Poole”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 673-676; Wilhelm Brandenstein, “Etrüsklerin ve Tyrrhenlerin En Eski Tarihine Ait Dil Tetkikleri”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 677-713; “Sprachliches zur Urgeschichte der Etrusker und Tyrrhener”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 714-751; Osman Şevki Uludağ, “Bursa Kadifeleri”, *Belleten*, I/3-4, (1937): p. 753-760.

the developments to larger audience.⁵²⁸ Still, almost most of the papers was taken from the congress presentations, selection of the subjects was compatible with the various issues. Indeed, this issue of the journal brought together the articles of foreign researchers (especially Pittard) who confirmed the Turkish History Thesis, as well as the articles on modern Turkey from ancient times presented at the congress. When considering the program of exchange of publications that the Society carried out with foreign research institutions,⁵²⁹ preparing the issue with striking articles for Turkish History Thesis seems reasonable.

The last issue of *Belleten* for the timespan that this study covers, published in October 1938 including the seventh and eighth numbers.⁵³⁰ In fact, this issue can

⁵²⁸ Muzaffer Göker, “İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 1-4; “Türk Tarih Kurumunun İlmî ve İdarî Faaliyeti”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 13-17; Afet, “Türk Tarih Kurumunun Arkeoloji Faaliyeti”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 5-12; “Türk-Osmanlı Tarihinin Karakteristik Noktalarına Bir Bakış”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 123-132; Eugene Pittard, “Neolitik Devirde Küçük Asya ile Avrupa Arasında Antropolojik Münasebetler”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 19-38; M. Fuad Köprülü, “Ortaçağ Türk Hukukî Müesseseleri-İslam Amme Hukukundan Ayrı Bir Türk Amme Hukuku Yok Mudur?”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 39-72; M. Şemsüddin Günaltay, “İslam Dünyasının İnhitâtı Sebebi Selçuk İstilası Mıdır?”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 73-88; Ernst Fon Aster, “Felsefe Tarihinde Türkler”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 89-98; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, “Öndört ve Onbeşinci Asırlarda Anadolu Beyliklerinde Toprak ve Halk İdaresi”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 99-106; “Selim III’ün Veliht iken Fransa Kralı Lûi XVI ile Muahrebeleri”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 191-246; La Rasyonî, “Ortaçağda, Erdelde Türklüğün İzleri”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 107-122; Hikmet Bayur, “16ncı Asırda Dini ve Sosyal Bir İnkılap Teşebbüsü-Ekber Gurkan 1556-1605”, *Belleten*, II/5-6 (1938): p. 133-182; Stefan Przeworski, “Varşovada, Tarsustan Gelme Bronzdan Bir Boğa Heykelciği”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 183-189; Fevzi Kurtoğlu, “Son Altun Ordu Hükümdarının Osmanlı Hükümdarı Mehmet II.ye Bir Mektubu”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 247-250; “Resim Galerisi”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 251-252; “Haberler”, *Belleten*, II/5-6, (1938): p. 253-262.

⁵²⁹ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 97-104.

⁵³⁰ Afet, “Türk İstiklali ve Lozan Muahedesi”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 277-291; “L’Indipendance Turque et le Traite de Lausanne”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 293-307; Hikmet Bayur, “Son Yirmi Beş Yıllık Tarihimize Bakışlar”, *Belleten*, II/7-8 (1938): p. 309-335; Günaltay, “Türk Tarih Tezi Hakkındaki İntikâtların Mahiyeti ve Tezin Kat’i Zaferi”, II/7-8, (1938): p. 337-365; İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılıoğlu, “Yeni Türk Tarihinde Vesikacılık”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 367-371; “Tarihte Vesikacılığın Ehemmiyetine Küçük Bir Misal”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 373-378; Yusuf Ziya Özer, “Cumhuriyette Hukuk İnkılabı”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 379-396; İhsan Sungu, “Tevhidi Tedrisat”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 397-431; Muzaffer Göker, “Türklerde Sanayi”, *Belleten*, II/7-8 (1938): p. 433-444; Osman Şevki Uludağ, “Son Kapitülasyonlardan Biri Karantina”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 445-467; Türkiye Tarihinin

be seen as a tool of legitimacy for the new Turkish state and a victory document for the national history program followed. Various revolutions and reforms (such as in education, law, health, etc.) in Turkey were tried to be justified with references to history. Then, the chronology of last twenty years was planned to show the critical milestones of the new state and its achievements. Afet and Yusuf Hikmet also evaluated the contemporary history with praises to Republican regime. Then, article of Günaltay was manifestation of Turkish History Thesis and its “decisive victory” of the thesis against the criticisms. It could be true for 1938 when the critics of the thesis had been eliminated in cultural-political sphere. Nonetheless, shortly after that year would witness the impoverishment of the thesis ironically.

As it is seen and was declared in the first issue of *Belleten*, new research, translations, historical documents, scholarly news and bibliographical pieces were brought out in the eight issues of the journal during 1937-1938. Based on the regulation of the Society, the subjects handled in the journal have been related with the Turkish history. However, those subjects still constitute a bulk since the Turkish history was extended from the pre-historic times to modern era, and from Eastern Asia to Europe through the history thesis. Publishing many of the articles in commonly used Western languages such as French, German and English also could give an idea on the desire of the Society to pronounce its thesis in the West.

Members of the Society greatly endeavored on different parts of the past for the journal. For instance, Afet İnan published a number of articles on the memoirs of Atatürk and contemporary history of Turkey. Yusuf Hikmet wrote on the Asian roots of Turkish history, as well as on the foundations of Turkish Revolution. Uzunçarşılı laid stress on the use of first-hand sources in history and published documents on Anatolian-Ottoman history. Şemsettin Günaltay highlighted the

Son 20 Yıllık Devrine Ait Kronoloji”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 469-489; “Haberler”, *Belleten*, II/7-8, (1938): p. 491-499.

intellectual history of the Turks. In addition to them, within and out of the Society, many Turkish and foreign researchers submitted papers to the journal on pre-historical eras, archaeology, anthropology, Ancient, Middle and Modern Ages, which all aimed at testifying to the “uniqueness” of Turkish history as demonstrated in the declaration in the first issue of the journal. Meanwhile, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk closely followed the journey of *Belleten*. According to Afet İnan, while Mustafa Kemal Pasha was lying sick in bed, he still wanted to see the latest issue of *Belleten* in 1938, which was the last work that the President saw before his death.⁵³¹ This also shows the importance attributed to *Belleten* by the rulers of the country and the Society.

Later researchers also praise that *Belleten* represents an important stage in Turkish publishing in terms of form and content. The journal, which has been carefully prepared, has been meticulously preserved and has an important place in terms of continuity. It has been stated that *Belleten*, which is an important work of the Society, should be considered as one of the most useful tools for the promotion of Turkish history in international circles.⁵³²

3.3. Channels for Discussing the Thesis: Turkish History Congresses

Participating in or organizing scholarly conferences and congresses was among the task description of the Society defined in its regulation. Most of the members of THS were active scholars who had been appearing in scientific events at home and abroad. Gaining advantage from this experience, too, Turkish Historical Society undertook to hold two important congresses on history and historiography in 1930s. Whereas the first one was national in character and more controversial, the second one was internationally attended and trumpeted

⁵³¹ Afet İnan, “Atatürk ve Tarih Tezi”, p. 244.

⁵³² Fakihe Öymen, “Uluğ İğdemir ve Belleten”, *Belleten*, 43/170, (1979): p. 259-260; Şakiroğlu, “Cumhuriyet Tarihimizde Süreli Yayınlar Kısa Bir Bakış – Tarih Dergileri ve Belleten”, p. 1213-1214.

forth the thesis. Both of them meant a valuable atmosphere to introduce and promote Turkish History Thesis.

3.3.1. First Turkish History Congress

Mustafa Kemal Pasha instructed Turkish Historical Society on 14 February 1932 to organize a course for history teachers in order to discuss the matters on *History* textbooks. The name of the event would be *Tarih Öğretmenleri Kursu* (Course for History Teachers).⁵³³ But it was later shifted to *Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi* (First Turkish History Congress) and was held on 2-11 July 1932, in Halkevi, Ankara.⁵³⁴ It is understood that the Society worked closely with the Ministry of Education to organize the program. Within this framework, a circular signed by the Minister, was sent to the related schools with following instructions: 1) Members of Turkish Historical Society will give conferences (*konferans*, in official documents)⁵³⁵ to history teachers. 2.) Each history teacher shall prepare a conference (*konferans*) based on the notes that they taught in history lessons, and those notes shall be sent to the Ministry. 3) In order to provide that history teachers could reach Ankara at the beginning of July; history exams shall be made earlier. 4) Professors and lecturers of history in *Darülfünun* shall attend the program as reviewers (*münekkit*).⁵³⁶

Two weeks later, the Ministry wrote to the Faculty of Letters in *Darülfünun* on upcoming congress. Accordingly, faculty professors were requested to be present as reviewers at the congress to be held on 2-11 July 1932. It was told that, in these meetings, conferences shall be given on the lecture notes taught by the

⁵³³ TTKA, TTK-8-5, 10.

⁵³⁴ İğdemir, *Cumhuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 11.

⁵³⁵ In order to make the subject clear, official terms declared in the program are revealed here.

⁵³⁶ TTKA, TTK-8-4, 13.03.1932.

history teachers in the schools, and they would be criticized by the faculty professors and lecturers. In addition, faculty professors were asked to inform the Ministry of their views on the four-volume *History* textbooks published by Turkish Historical Society.⁵³⁷

In May 1932, Turkish Historical Society sent to Ministry the daily working schedule from 2 to 11 July.⁵³⁸ Thus, it is visible that although there were some minor changes later, how many people from which institutions and schools would attend the congress, and who would speak on which topic on which day were determined by the Society in May. Accordingly, one or two conferences (*konferans*) would be held every day on behalf of THS and to explain the Turkish History Thesis, and then, they would be followed by the criticism (*müitalaa beyanı*) of the professors and lecturers of *Darülfünun*. Later on, conferences (*konferans* also) of the teachers would take place. Consequently, on the one hand, an environment was prepared for scientific discussion, on the other hand, Turkish Historical Society was positioned as the defender of the Turkish History Thesis and the *Darülfünun* as the opposite. Indeed, as it will be seen, there were differences of opinion on the thesis between the representatives of the Society and *Darülfünun*.

The idea on the motivation in holding the congress could be found in the note to the readers in the minutes of the Congress. According to this note, the Republic of Turkey had attached importance mostly to the national history among the cultural affairs. Mustafa Kemal aspired to teach the Turks their national history which had been underrated or neglected for decades. He, it is stated, patronized Turkish Historical Society to show the history of the Turks who turned on the light of the civilization in the world and used their creative skills in all fields of humanity and culture with historical documents and scientific records. From this viewpoint, Turkish Historical Society prepared the *History* textbooks for the

⁵³⁷ TTKA, TTK-8-8, 30.03.1932.

⁵³⁸ TTKA, TTK-8-12, 16.05.1932.

Turkish youth. Consequently, the aim of the Congress was to introduce the activities of the Society to the teachers and experts; to bring the book up for discussion; and eventually to form a unity of idea among the colleagues.⁵³⁹

25 members of the Society; 11 lecturers from the Faculty of Letters, one professor from the Faculty of Law, four researchers from the Faculty of Theology, one doctor from the Faculty of Medicine and one teacher from the Academy of Fine Arts within *Darülfünun*; 184 teachers from high and secondary schools in various cities of Turkey; and 12 teachers from military schools attended the congress.⁵⁴⁰ Number of participants who gave conferences was 33, except those who took the floor for discussions.⁵⁴¹ Executive Board of the Congress consisted Esat Bey, Minister of Education, as the chair; Prof. Akçuraoglu Yusuf, Head of Turkish Historical Society, as the deputy chair; Faik Reşit Bey (from the Ministry of Education), Uluğ Bey (from Turkish Historical Society), Mustafa Emin Bey (Elementary school teacher in Maraş) and Salahattin Bey (Elementary school teacher in Yozgat) as the secretaries.⁵⁴² Timetable of the Congress was set by the Executive Board with three sessions before the noon and two sessions afternoons between 2-11 July.⁵⁴³

⁵³⁹ *BTTK*, p. XII-XIV.

⁵⁴⁰ It is obvious that the congress lacked international attendance. However, there is no proof that the Society or Ministry expected foreign experts to the event. They rather saw it as an internal affair. Still, an archival document shows that the USA Ambassador to Ankara, Charles Hitchcock Sherril sent a letter to the Society indicating that he was closely following the congress and found the issue of high civilization of the Turks interesting. Then, he offered to Society that if a printed book on Turkish History Thesis would be translated to English, he would have it published with charitable foundations in the USA and disseminate it to the libraries there. Members of the Society thanked Ambassador and seemed happy to convey the thesis to “friendly American people”. TTKA, TTK-8-21. Still, outcome of this initiative is not clear.

⁵⁴¹ *BTTK*, p. XV-XXI.

⁵⁴² *BTTK*, p. 1.

⁵⁴³ *BTTK*, p. XXII-XXIII.

Inauguration speech (*açılış nutku*) of the Congress was given by Esat Bey on 2 July. After evaluating the historiography and history curriculum during the Ottoman Empire, he pointed the need for a national history and mentioned the reason behind organizing the congress.⁵⁴⁴ During the first day, Afet gave a conference, whose subject was pre-historic and first historical ages. Geology, formation of the world and evolution theory was handled. On the other hand, homeland of the Turks, types of brainpans (dolichocephalic and bracycephalic), ancientness of the Turkish history and Turks' being the first residents of Anatolia are covered. Then, representing the *Darülfünun*, Köprülüzade Fuat Bey delivered his opinion on certain matters of Turkish history. As it will be seen below, Afet and Hasan Cemil responded to him in following sessions. Next, the discussion between Caferoğlu Ahmed Bey and Samih Rifat on the origins of some words took place during the afternoon sessions.⁵⁴⁵

Second day of the congress witnessed the severe discussion the debates of drought in Turkestan. Zeki Velidi and Reşit Galip were the actors of this quarrel that continued into the next days and even the next period. Another harsh discussion was seen on July 4, between Fazıl Nazmi from *Darülfünun* and Samih Rifat from the Society. Again, as it would be seen below, the main theme was about finding origins to foreign words. After presentations on anthropology, "connection of Egyptian Gods to Turkish-ness" and relations between Islam and the Turks on 5 and 6 July, the discussion on drought and ancient Turkis cities in Central Asia went on between Reşit Galip, Sadri Maksudi and Zeki Velidi, which resulted in departure of the latter from the Congress and from Turkey, too. According to the reports of the Congress, any session is not seen on 8 July. Concordantly, it is stated in a newspaper that, the Society organized a banquet for the attendants of the congress on 8 July, in Marmara Pavilion. Mustafa Kemal Pasha and certain ministers and members of the parliament participated in

⁵⁴⁴ "Maarif Vekili Esat Beyefendinin Açma Nutku", *BTTK*, p. 10-12.

⁵⁴⁵ Details of some of the discussion will be provided below.

the event, too.⁵⁴⁶ Indeed, President Mustafa Kemal closely followed the congress and had a chat with the attendants on certain occasions.⁵⁴⁷ The sessions of 9 July started with the conference of Afet, which touched upon Medieval history and the Turks' role in European culture and politics at that age. Then, the debate on the origins of ancient Eastern communities put in appearance between Avram Galanti and Samih Rifat. Whereas the former came up with different theories on origins and proper names of the Egyptian, Sumerian and Hittites from the ones asserted in *History* textbooks, Samih Rifat opposed to Galanti and criticized him and profesors of the *Darülfünun*; and rehearsed their commitment to History Thesis. During the last two days of the congress, the museums, methods of historiography, comparison of history textbooks of Ottoman and Republican periods were discussed in a relatively quiet environment.

Eventually, in the afternoon of 11 July, closing remarks (*kapanış nutukları*) of the Congress were addressed. Akçuraoglu Yusuf Bey, head of the Society; Muzaffer Bey from *Darülfünun*; Teacher Mediha Muzaffer Hanım; Teacher Midhat Bey; and Esat Bey, Minister of Education, made the closing statements.⁵⁴⁸ For Yusuf Akçura, conferences and discussions during the ten days of the congress showed that the Turks had established a civilization in Central Asia in pre-historical ages and brought it to other parts of the world; ethnic or racial classifications promoted by the Europeans had lacked scientific bases; the Turks had greatly contributed to the Islam and Muslim states during the Middle Ages; and causes of the fall of Muslim Turks for several centuries had been analyzed for a bright future and development.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁶ "Tarih Kongresi-Gazi Hz. Muallimlerle uzun müddet görüştü", *Akşam*, 09.07.1932, p. 1.

⁵⁴⁷ TTKA, TTK7-1-59.

⁵⁴⁸ For the Minister of Education, a new and extensive horizon had been opened for the Turks. It showed the traces of a glorious past. It was simply a Turkish Renaissance which children, young people and all citizens had to embrace with a national consciousness.

⁵⁴⁹ *BTTK*, p. 617.

In sum, during the Congress, a wide range of subjects was asserted and discussed by many related people. In addition to the theoretical approaches to the concepts of history, historiography, race, nation, language and linguistics, culture and civilization, archaeology and anthropology; various ages and fields of Turkish history were dealt through genuine or spurious ways. As Ersanlı Behar pointed, sometimes severe discussions on using historical sources, origins of the Turkish language, migrations from and climate changes in Central Asia and *History* textbooks were seen.⁵⁵⁰ However, members of the Society defended their views fervently.

3.3.2. Second Turkish History Congress

Five years later from the First Turkish History Congress, Turkish Historical Society planned to treat and announce the Turkish History Thesis at an international platform. Thus, second congress was planned by the Society in 1937. Indeed, in the past five years, activities of the Society had increased and become diversified. The relations with the international community also had deepened. Hence, larger arrangements and organization, compared to the First Congress, were launched.

In a letter, dated 24.05.1937, Hasan Cemil, head of the Society informed Atatürk on the preparation of a comprehensive exhibition for the congress. To demonstrate the national history thesis, an exhibition at a large hall of Dolmabahçe Palace had been planned. It would cover an extensive timespan from the early ages of Anatolia to the history of young Turkish Republic. To indicate the ancient times, reproductions and visuals of the findings from Alacahöyük excavations would be disposed. Personal belongings of Mustafa Kemal (such as his handwritings and documents, binoculars, sword and fur cap -

⁵⁵⁰ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, p. 123-124.

kalpak- etc.)⁵⁵¹ would portray the modern history. So, various materials for each time period would be available, while those that could not be taken to hall due to their size would be reflected on plans, plaques and with models. Last but not least, pictures of the maps and ruins of Hatay -where was not within the boundaries of Turkey then- from the Hittite period would be added to the exhibition.⁵⁵² Mustafa Kemal responded to the letter positively and ordered to start working as soon as possible.⁵⁵³ A committee for exhibition was created in June and it began acting. All related institutions within the country were called for to contribute to the exhibition. Museums, archives, ministries were asked to send related materials for any timespan of history. Moreover, certain museums in Europe, the USA and Middle East also contributed to the exhibitions with materials upon the request of the Turkish government. For instance, a vase from Iraq; and the bust of Atatürk that is still available at the entrance of the building of Turkish Historical Society has been sent from Germany.⁵⁵⁴ The exhibition which was visited by many scholars, teachers and students during the Second Turkish History Congress was not removed after the event. With the instruction of Mustafa Kemal Pasha, it was open to visiting for more time and remained in Dolmabahçe Palace till the death of Atatürk.⁵⁵⁵ On the other hand, he also signed

⁵⁵¹ İğdemir, *Cuhmuriyetin 50. Yılında Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 43. Also, the photographs, news and banners that could reveal the modernization of Turkey in public works, architecture, city planning, and urbanization were exhibited, too. Özkılıç, *1937 İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi Sergisinde Arkeoloji, Sanat Tarihi ve Mimarlık Tarihinin Temsili*, p. 78-84.

⁵⁵² Use of history to emphasize the Turkishness of Hatay is remarkable. Actually, Mustafa Kemal had said “the Turkish homeland of forty centuries cannot remain to the enemies” about Hatay. Tayfur Sökmen, *Hatay’ın Kurtuluşu İçin Harcanan Çabalar*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1978), p. 70., and Turkish History Thesis developed a discourse to join Hatay to Turkey, as it was touched above.

⁵⁵³ BCA, 30-10-0-0/117-817-10, 16.06.1937.

⁵⁵⁴ Uluğ İğdemir, “Türk Tarih Kurumu Binasının Giriş Holündeki Atatürk Büstünün Öyküsü”, *Bellekten*, XXXI/124, (1967), p. 657-659.

⁵⁵⁵ Atatürk himself examined the materials of the exhibition studiously. Arı İnan, “Uluğ İğdemir”, in *Tarihe Tanıklık Edenler*, p. 13.

a decree for publishing commemorative stamps for the event⁵⁵⁶ and they were distributed to the attendants during the congress.

Simultaneous with the preparations of the exhibition, another committee started making arrangements for the conferences and presentations of the congress. Guest speakers of the event were asked to submit their full papers prior to the program. Then, the committee reviewed them. Mustafa Kemal also closely monitored the review process. For example, Dr. Fehmi Bayraktarevich had sent a paper on “Turkish-Yugoslavian Cultural Relations”. However, Mustafa Kemal noted on the paper that it should not have been presented. Accordingly, paper of Bayraktarevich was published in the proceedings but not read during the congress. Next, Mustafa Kemal determined the session of Prof. Şevket Aziz Kansu for his talk on “The Findings in and Near Ankara Dated to Pre-History” and instructed that the lecture should have been supported with a reflecting projector. Moreover, Prof. Sadri Maksudi Arsal had firstly sent a short paper on “The Role of the Turks on the Development of the Concept of State”. Yet, Atatürk informed the committee to ask for full paper. Once it has arrived, it was examined by the Committee and Atatürk, and then added to the program of the congress.⁵⁵⁷ After close surveillance, 97 presentations were accepted to submit in the congress. 46 of them belonged to foreign researchers. Accordingly, translation of all papers to Turkish / foreign languages was carried out, published in leaflets and handed out to the attendants in the congress.⁵⁵⁸

Attendants of the congress could be grouped in 7 divisions. Members of Turkish Historical Society constituted the first one. Afet İnan, Remzi Oğuz Arık, Sadri Maksudi Arsal, Hikmet Bayur, Hasan Cemil Çambel, Halil Edhem Eldem, Saffet

⁵⁵⁶ BCA, 30-18-1-2/77-65-7, 14.07.1937.

⁵⁵⁷ TTKA, unclassified documents.

⁵⁵⁸ Göker, “İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi”, p. 1-2.

Engin, Muzaffer Göker, Behçet Güçer, Şemseddin Günaltay, Şevket Aziz Kansu, Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, Fuat Köprülü, Hamit Ongunsu, Ragıp Hulusi Özdem, Yusuf Ziya Özer, İhsan Sungu, Hasan Fehmi Turgal, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı and Mükrimin Halil Yinanç attended as the member of the Society. Turkish Language Society was represented by Besim Atalay, İbrahim Necmi Dilmen, Ahmet Cevat Emre, İsmail Müştak Mayakon, Naim Hazım Onat, Hasan Reşit Tankut, Refet Ülgen and Ali Canip Yöntem. 37 Turkish and foreign national scholars from Ankara and Istanbul Universities took part in the event. Moreover, 18 researchers from scientific-cultural institutions (museums, libraries, archives, observatory etc.) in Turkey joined the congress. Elementary and high school history teachers from each part of the country formed a large group as approximately 500 hundred teachers were present during the event. Foreign teachers of international schools in Istanbul were also invited. Last group was formed by foreign researchers from abroad. To reflect the transnational character of the congress, members of that last group could be listed as:

Prof. Andreas Alföldi (University of Budapest), Dr. Walter Andrae (State Museum of Berlin), Dr. Ture J. Arne (Swedish Academy of Sciences, Stockholm State Museum), Pere Azais (French Archaeologist), Dr. Fehim Bayraktarevich (University of Belgrad), Prof. J. H. Baxter (England), Prof. Dr. Kurt Bittel (German Archaeological Institute), Dr. Wilhelm Brandenstein (University of Vienna), Gordon V. Childe (University of Edinburgh), Prof. Louis J. Delaport (Louvre Museum), Marguerite Lobsiger-Dellenbach (Geneva Anthropology Museum), Dr. P. Dixon (British Embassy in Istanbul), Dr. Wilhelm Dörpfeld (German Archaeologist), Prof. Geza Feher (Sofia), Dr. Fettich Nandor (University of Budapest), Prof. Albert Gabriel (French Archaeological Institute), Dr. Gömbech (University of Copenhagen), Dr. Franz Hanjar (University of Vienna), Dr. Richard Hartmann (University of Berlin), Prof. Emilie Haspels (French Archaeological Institute), Prof. Giulie Iacopi (University of Rome), Arie Abraham Kampmann (The Netherlands Institute for the Near East), Dr. Wilhelm Koppers (University of Vienna), Dr. Ernst Kühnel (Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin), Dr. Spyridon Marinatos (Heraklion Museum in Chandia), Dr. Oswald

Menghin (University of Vienna), Prof. Myres (Oxford University), Dr. John Nestor (National Museum in Bucharest), Prof. Axel Persson (University of Uppsala), Prof. Eugene Pittard (University of Geneva), Dr. Stefan Przeworski (University of Warsaw), Prof. Psalty Rossi (University of Rome), Prof. Jan Rypka (University of Prague), Dr. Friedrich Sarre (Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin), Prof. Dr. Sheel (State Archives in Berlin), Prof. H. Vallois (University of Toulouse), Prof. Thomas Wittemore (Byzantine Institute of America), Dr. Wright (Robert College in Istanbul) and Prof. Comt Zichy (Hungarian Academy of Sciences).⁵⁵⁹

Actually, international attendance was highly cared by the Society. To ease the works of foreigners, a number of diplomatic gestures was shown. For example, Turkish embassies in those cities where foreign participants lived were instructed to provide them cost free visa.⁵⁶⁰ Next, the Society wrote letters to the Turkish Embassies in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, France, Sweden, Hungary, Serbia and Bulgaria to act as intermediaries for the foreign speakers who would attend the congress to get discounted academic tickets on the trains in their countries.⁵⁶¹ Another telegram sent to the Turkish representation in Bucharest expresses that a Romanian researcher was invited to the congress, that he shall be notified, that the embassy would pay him the travel fee, and that all his expenses would be covered by Turkish Historical Society until his return.⁵⁶² Thus, it was aimed that foreign experts could come to Turkey comfortably and be well received in Istanbul during their stay.

⁵⁵⁹ *İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi-Kongrenin Çalışmaları, Kongreye Sunulan Tebliğler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2010), p.xvii-xix. It is also abbreviated as *İTTK* in following notes.

⁵⁶⁰ BCA., 30-18-1-2/77-68-4, 23.07.1937.

⁵⁶¹ TTKA, TTK-8-30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43.

⁵⁶² TTKA, TTK-8-58, 13.09.1937.

After the preparations, the date for the congress had been set as 20-25 September 1937. The venue of the event was Dolmabahçe Palace, Istanbul. Arrivals of the attendants in Istanbul started on 19 September.⁵⁶³ At that night, guests were welcomed by Afet İnan and hosted across Bosphorus.⁵⁶⁴ Then, the event was inaugurated on 20 September, at 10.00 with exhibition; and the speeches started at 15.00 with the participation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, certain ministers, diplomatic envoys, members of parliament, attendants of the congress and a large group of audience.⁵⁶⁵ Executive board was elected during the inauguration. President of the congress was Saffet Arıkan, Minister of Education. Honorary President was Prof. Eugene Pittard. Then, Hasan Cemil Çambel, Halil Edhem Eldem and Afet İnan from Turkish Historical Society became the Vice Presidents. Secretaries of the program were Mesih Gürer, Sıdıka İnankur, Reşat Kaynar, İsmail Müştak Mayakon, Fakihe Öymen, Faik Reşit Unat and Kemal Ünal.

During the inauguration, as head of the Society, Hasan Cemil gave a speech stating the need and aim to organize the congress. For him, announcing the results of the historical works of past years to whole world was the ultimate goal. Then, Minister Arıkan directed his opening speech and emphasized the application of archaeology, anthropology and linguistics by Turkish Historical Society to prove its thesis. Other speeches were made by İbrahim Necmi Dilmen (on behalf of Turkish Language Society), Muzaffer Göker (on behalf of the Faculty of Letters in Ankara and Istanbul) and Prof. Eugene Pittard (on behalf of foreign attendants). Then, Afet İnan introduced the archaeological research of the Society up to 1937 and shared the results according to the findings. She claimed that archaeological surveys of the Society in Anatolia were so important as to reshape the cultural history of the world. Göker addressed the last talk of

⁵⁶³ *Akşam*, 19 Eylül 1937.

⁵⁶⁴ *Ulus*, 20 Eylül 1937.

⁵⁶⁵ It was also declared in the newspaper that the sessions of the congress would be broadcasted by Istanbul Radio. *Ulus*, 20 Eylül 1937.

the day. He summarized the general activities of the Society from its establishment. On this day, telegrams sent to the Society to congratulate the event from Turkish and foreign institutions were read and sections of the congress regarding the presentations were defined.

The subjects of the presentations could be classified as archaeology, anthropology and linguistics to reveal the high civilization of the Turks, their mediator role between continents and cultures, traces of the Turks from Arab Peninsula to Central Europe, level of development of the Turks from ancient to modern times in numerous parts of life.⁵⁶⁶ For example, during a session moderated by Prof. Hikmet Bayur. Prof. Hamit Z. Koşay displayed the findings from the excavation in Alacahöyük to reveal the splendid civilization of the Hittites.⁵⁶⁷ Then, Prof. Şevket Aziz Kansu made his own presentation on the findings obtained in and near Ankara and dated to pre-historical era.⁵⁶⁸ Paper of Abbe Breuil from Paris was also read by Kansu as the former could not attend the event. The text was about the historical importance of Turkey as a crossroad between Europe, Asia and Africa.⁵⁶⁹ Another absent was Prof. J. Garstang from Liverpool as he could not travel due to his health reasons. So, Prof. Myres presented Garstang's study. It was on the strategy of the rulers of the Hittites in

⁵⁶⁶ Due to constraints, all presentations of the Second History Congress could not be added here. For full texts of all attendants, see *İTTK*.

⁵⁶⁷ Hamit Z. Koşay, "Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alacahöyük'te Yaptırılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeleler", *İTTK*, p. 21-32.

⁵⁶⁸ Şevket Aziz Kansu, "Ankara ve Civarının Prehistoryasında Yeni Buluşlar", *İTTK*, p. 35-48.

⁵⁶⁹ Abbe M. Breuil, "Avrupa, Asya ve Afrika Arasında İltisak Noktası Türkiye", *İTTK*, p. 32-35.

military and political terms.⁵⁷⁰ Last talk of the session came from Prof. Franz Hancar and it was related to the Neolithic findings in Anatolia.⁵⁷¹

A session of the second day was carried out with the close track of Atatürk. With the moderation of Afet İnan, Eugene Pittard presented anthropological relations between Asia Minor and Europe in Neolithic Age. It was one of the strongest pillars of Turkish History Thesis since Pittard claimed the brachycephalic Turks as the ancestors of the Europeans in anthropological and cultural terms.⁵⁷² Then, Prof. Landsberger attributed a crucial role to archaeological excavations in Turkey on the grounds that they extended the known history prior to the Greek civilization and uncovered at least 2500 years. He supported his views with linguistic, religious and cultural sources.⁵⁷³

In another panel ruled by Prof. Hikmet Bayur, certain cultural motif in Anatolia in Roman era was probed by Prof. G. Rohde and he concluded that Anatolia was the giving side in cultural transaction between two cultures.⁵⁷⁴ On the other hand, Prof. Walter Ruben from Ankara University had visited India in 1936-1937 with support of the Turkish government. Thus, he made a presentation on the ancient blacksmiths of India and stated that they were the Turks who had immigrated from Central Asia, which was a reflection of the claim that the Turks had

⁵⁷⁰ J. Garstang, “Muharip Eti Hükümdarlarının Stratejisi”, *İTTK*, p. 48-51.

⁵⁷¹ Franz Hancar, “Kafkas İlk Tarih Araştırmaları Işığında Anadolu’nun Yeni Eneolitik Buluntuları”, *İTTK*, p. 51-64.

⁵⁷² Eugene Pittard, “Neolitik Devirde Küçük Asya ile Avrupa Arasında Antropolojik Münasebetler”, *İTTK*, p. 65-84. It was published in *Belleten*, too, as touched above.

⁵⁷³ B. Landsberger, “Ön Asya Kadim Tarihinin Esas Meseleleri”, *İTTK*, p. 98-110.

⁵⁷⁴ G. Rohde, “Roma ve Anadolu Ana İlahesi”, *İTTK*, p. 228-237.

brought civilization to India.⁵⁷⁵ Role of the Turks in civilization and in large geographical areas was supported by Prof. Geza Feher who investigated the Turkish influence in Europe in the first ages.⁵⁷⁶ Another Hungarian, Dr. Nander Fettich spoke on the findings from an excavation of a prince tomb dated to the age of the Huns in Szeged.⁵⁷⁷ As another piece on the influence of the Turks in Europe, Prof. Oswald Menghin traced the Anatolian impact on southeastern Europe in the third millennium B.C.⁵⁷⁸ Then, a conference given by Prof. T. Bossert on the development of printing pointed the role of the Uyghur Turks in transmitting the printing to Europe.⁵⁷⁹

Prof. Dixon's piece on the relations among Iberian Spanish and Aegean region in pre-Roman era also seems to support the history thesis. He claimed that Iberian art was in debt to Anatolia for the cultural contribution of the latter.⁵⁸⁰ Then, S. Przeworski mentioned the importance of bronze materials found in excavations in Anatolia, since, for him, Anatolian history would play a key role in understanding the mining of the pre-historical ages.⁵⁸¹ It is also interesting that Prof. Koppers discussed the issue of pure Turkish-ness and pure Indo-German-

⁵⁷⁵ Walter Ruben, "Milattan Bin Sene Evvel Asya İçlerinden Muhaceret Eden Hindistan'ın En Eski Demircileri Arasında", *İTTK*, p. 237-243.

⁵⁷⁶ Geza Feher, "Türko-Bulgar, Macar ve Bunlara Akraba Olan Milletlerin Kültürü – Türk Kültürünün Avrupa'ya Tesiri", *İTTK*, p. 290-320.

⁵⁷⁷ Nander Fettich, "Hunlar Zamanına Ait Olup Szeged-Nagyszekszas'ta Bulunan Prens Mezarı Hafriyatında Bulunan Eşya", *İTTK*, p. 320-328.

⁵⁷⁸ Oswald Menghin, "Milattan Üç Bin Yıl Evvel Anadolu'nun Cenubu Şarki Avrupası Üzerindeki Tesiri", *İTTK*, p. 338-350.

⁵⁷⁹ Th. Bossert, "Tabı Sanatının Keşfi", *İTTK*, p. 421-438.

⁵⁸⁰ Dixon, "Romalılar Devrinden Evvel İberyaya İspanyası ile Adalar Denizi Sahası Arasındaki Temaslar", *İTTK*, p. 593-603.

⁵⁸¹ St. Przeworski, "Anadolu Bronz Buluntularının Ehemmiyeti", *İTTK*, p. 608-617.

ness in folklore. He asserted that those two nations had greatly contributed to world culture and civilizations.⁵⁸²

Last session of the Congress was planned to reveal the success of the new Republic. Saffet Arıkan, Minister of Education ruled it. First, Prof. Richard Hartmann evaluated the “new Turkey” within whole Turkish history. He praised the development of Turkish Republic in many fields, as opposed to several centuries fall of the Ottomans. On the other hand, Harttman claimed that Turkey now reached the degree of glory that was equal to heyday of the Ottomans.⁵⁸³ Eventual speech was made by Afet İnan on a brief look at the distinctive points of the Turkish-Ottoman history.⁵⁸⁴ In her talk beginning with “Oh the Greatest Turk!” to Atatürk, she claimed that the Ottomans had established a high degree of cultural life but it had fallen in line with the political-economic failures. Then, she concluded that the reformist new Turkish Republic would progress both in political and cultural affairs for the survival of the Turkish nation.

Later, reports of the sessions were announced and approved. Foreign attendants such as Harttman, Menghin, Rypka, Delaporte, Myres, Persson, Rossi, Przeworski, Comte, Nestor, Marinatos and Bayraktarevich got the floor to present their gratulation and gratitude for the organization of the congress. After the congress, a dinner was organized by the Governorship of Istanbul for the attendants. On the following day, Afet İnan invited the history teachers to a banquet in Beylerbeyi Palace. Then, two important excursions to Troy and Alacahöyük were organized by the Society for the attendants. The excavations and findings in those places as evidence of Turkish History Thesis were revealed to the participants. While a group made excursion to Troy, a larger group visited

⁵⁸² W. Koppers, “Halk Bilgisi ve Cühanşümül Tarih Tetkiki Karşısında Öz Türklük ve Öz İndo-Germenlik”, *İTTK*, p. 645-665.

⁵⁸³ Richard Harttman, “Umumi Türk Tarihi Çerçevesi İçinde Yeni Türkiye”, *İTTK*, p. 746-756.

⁵⁸⁴ Afet, “Türk-Osmanlı Tarihinin Karakteristik Noktalarına Bir Bakış”, *İTTK*, p. 756-765. It was published in *Belleten*, too, as shown above.

Alacahöyük, to see the excavations carried out in both places. Turkish authorities took care to display the important findings from these excavations. According to the Göker's statement, foreign researchers also agreed that the material was valuable pre-historic artifacts.⁵⁸⁵ Still, it is not clear exactly how foreign scholars approached the exhibition of these works as pieces of Turkish history.

Due to the timing problems or decision of the congress preparation committee (and Atatürk himself), certain presentations could not be made during the congress. However, they were published in the proceedings as appendices after screening.⁵⁸⁶ A decision within the minutes of the board of the Society about this issue is noteworthy. According to the board, unread papers of the Congress would have been added to the proceedings book. Nevertheless, the paper of Delaporte, which was considered as opposite to History Thesis in terms of the origins of the Hittites, should have been published along with the notes prepared by von der Osten in favor of the thesis⁵⁸⁷ although the mentioned notes of von der Osten did not take place in the published proceedings. Text of Delaporte presented the relationship between the Hittites and the lower Mesopotamian civilizations in a different way than the interpretation claimed by the Turkish History Thesis.⁵⁸⁸ Still, instead of giving up printing the “unsuitable” text with censorship, planning to publish it, albeit with explanatory notes, is a remarkable issue according to the conditions of the period.

Actually, the election of the papers that were presented and not presented also could give idea on the approach of the Society to the congress and handling the thesis. The speeches which were made in the sessions were mostly relied on

⁵⁸⁵ Göker, “İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi”, p. 3-4.

⁵⁸⁶ For those papers, see *İTTK*, pp. 769-1103.

⁵⁸⁷ TTKA, TTK-8-64, 25.12.1938.

⁵⁸⁸ Louis Delaporte, “Eti (Hatti)nin Aşağı Mezopotamya ile Siyasi ve Kültürel Münasebetleri”, *İTTK*, p. 10903-1103.

concrete facts. Archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, architecture and even positive sciences such as mathematics and medicine were referred in those speeches to reflect the scientific character of Turkish History Thesis. However, certain religious, cultural, or in other words, debated subjects that could not be supported with tangible evidences were not allowed to be presented during the sessions. As Ersanlı Behar cited from Anthony Smith, archaeology and philology would constitute the strongest bases in national historiographies. Hence, Second Turkish History Congress mostly included them and no severe critics from the Turkish or foreign researchers were received.⁵⁸⁹ Actually, it is also needed to show that avoiding criticisms should have been targeted. Because, unlike the first congress, the program of this congress did not include a discussion part and only speeches previously determined by the relevant people were made.

As it could be understood from the attendants, Second Turkish History Congress was an international event in which Turkish History Thesis was introduced, discussed and approved to a degree by foreign scientific circles. Certain European attendants, such as Eugene Pittard, Richard Hartman, Oswald Menghin and Helmut Scheel later wrote on the success of the congress and on behalf of the Turkish History Thesis in their countries.⁵⁹⁰ Therefore, it is possible to deduce that the Society achieved its purpose in organizing the event in terms of announcing it to a large community in a scientific atmosphere and getting approval with the main lines. Consequently, one can argue that Turkish Historical Society aspired to introduce and sell its thesis at an international platform by shaping it in an evidential body, which could have arisen from the positivist understanding of history approved by the Society and its rulers.

⁵⁸⁹ Ersanlı Behar, *İktidar ve Tarih*, p. 174-175.

⁵⁹⁰ TTKA, TTK-8-62, 20.12.1937; Oral, *Türk Ulusunun İnşası*, p. 132-134.

3.3.3. Reflections of the Thesis and Debates

New history thesis, which was expressed and published by the Turkish Historical Society in various publications starting from early 1930s, has been the subject of various criticisms in different environments and by different groups. As revealed above, the views on the history thesis reflected in the *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* were criticized by different experts and reviewers, and these were conveyed to the institution in reports and letters. Then, Turkish History Congresses, on the other hand, have been channels where the history thesis reflected in the *History* textbooks (whose main lines was same as *TTAH*) could be discussed face to face. Especially, The First History Congress was a stage where the new view of history, called the Turkish History Thesis, was heatedly discussed.

Considering these discussions of the First Congress, the primary image that comes to mind may be the disputes between Zeki Velidi and the members of the Society. It is seen that this discussion started with a technical issue related to the history thesis, and eventually turned into a big fight between people. On 3 July, afternoon section, Zeki Velidi took the podium to deliver his ideas. Then, he started his address on the issues of the drought and cities under the sand in Central Asia. (Actually, bases of his conference were not different from his report that he had previously sent to the Society, as revealed above.) According to the claims of Zeki Velidi, there was no great drought in Turkestan during the historical periods, moreover, the population of Turkestan did not decrease due to climate-related migrations, on the contrary, it increased throughout history. On the other hand, according to *History* textbooks and members of Turkish Historical Society, Turkestan had been the homeland of the Turks and they had established a high civilization there. However, a drought and sandstorms in Central Asia many years ago had terminated or covered the cities and monuments of that civilization. Those negative conditions also forced the Turkic groups to migrate to other parts of the world, where they took their civilization. Nevertheless, the claims of Zeki Velidi against this approach, may have weakened the thesis that the monuments and concrete cultural artifacts of the

Turks had been covered due to a drought. Indeed, it may have faded the bases of Turkish History Thesis. Hence, strong reactions of the members of the Society to Zeki Velidi may have arisen from this concern.

Within this framework, Reşit Galip, Sadri Maksudi and Şemseddin (Günaltay) provided lots of evidences in contrast to Zeki Velidi. In fact, for the beginning, these discussions can be considered as a methodological debate in the use and interpretation of historical sources.⁵⁹¹ However, after a while, this discussion turned into a fight, insulting words were said to Zeki Velidi, and he was almost verbally lynched. Still, it may not be too easy to understand the reason of the severity of this discussion based on a historical comment. Therefore, as some put forward, it can be thought that the difference of opinion between Sadri Maksudi and Zeki Velidi, dated to their years of Russia, revived in a congress in Turkey years later, and Sadri Maksudi, who was a member of the Society, attacked Zeki Velidi by taking other members with him.⁵⁹² Indeed, Şemseddin, reflecting the background of this debate, accused Zeki Velidi by mentioning the previous divergences. For him, after the Tsarist government collapsed in Russia in 1917, the nations there were working to save their own existence. The Turks also held congresses first in Moscow and then in the city of Ufa. However, Zeki Velidi Bey opposed the Bashkirs being under Turkish unity at the congress in Ufa and separated them from the Turkish community. Therefore, Zeki Velidi had a share

⁵⁹¹ For those discussions, see *BTTK*; Özbek, “Zeki Velidi Togan ve ‘Türk Tarih Tezi’”, p. 20-27; Emir Öngüner, “Zeki Velidi Togan Türkiye’yi Neden Terketti? I. Türk Tarih Kongresi’nde Yaşanan Tartışmalar Üzerine Kısa Bir Tetkik”, https://www.academia.edu/37003463/Zeki_Velidi_Togan_T%C3%BCrkiyeyi_Neden_Terketti_I_T%C3%BCrk_Tarih_Kongresinde_Ya%C5%9Fan_Tart%C4%B1%C5%9Fmalar_%C3%9C_zerine_K%C4%B1sa_Bir_Tetkik, accessed on 08.11.2022.

⁵⁹² Nevertheless, it would be wrong to label Sadri Maksudi as a person who acted against the principles of science. After a qualified education, he produced great works on law, history and language. See Fethi Gedikli, “Yolunu Kendi Kazanan Bir Yolcu: Türk Hukuku Tarihçisi Sadri Maksudi Arsal”, in *İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Mecmuası-Ord. Prof. Sadri Maksudi Arsal’a Armağan Özel Sayısı*, LXXV (2017): p. 273-288; Gönül Pultar, “Dedem Sadri Maksudi Arsal (1878-1957)”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi Mecmuası-Ord. Prof. Sadri Maksudi Arsal’a Armağan Özel Sayısı*, LXXV (2017): p. 43-74. According to the article of Pultar, it is interesting that Adile Ayda (daughter of Sadri Maksudi) claimed that although Sadri Maksudi was one of the masterminds of Turkish History Thesis, he did not completely accepted all points of the thesis, yet he could not succeed to correct those parts.

in the division of the Russian Turks with separate dialects and separate cultures.⁵⁹³ Then, he claimed that Zeki Velidi would not be allowed to play the same separatist role in this History congress. Ironically, Zeki Velidi, who faced with the accusation of dividing the Turkish world, would be tried in the Turanism case about 10 years later being blamed for defending the unity of the Turks.⁵⁹⁴

Later, those who looked at the subject more analytically uttered that Zeki Velidi, who had a calm disposition, insisted on his scientific attitude and did not give up his opinion despite the pressures he was subjected to. While even Atatürk was provoked by certain groups against Zeki Velidi, he did not intend to give up on the scientific path.⁵⁹⁵ Apart from the scientific discussion, it is understood that he did not deal with this subject in detail, and he did not reflect it in his memoirs, either.⁵⁹⁶

This discussion can also be perceived as a struggle of different groups around the thesis of history. For instance, Hüseyin Namık Orkun, who was close to the government and carried out studies on linguistics for Turkish Language Society and Peoples Houses, alleged that Zeki's ideas on Turkic communities were supported by the Russians, who had divisive ideas towards the Turkish world.⁵⁹⁷ Next, during the Congress, Reşit Galip stated that Zeki Velidi could not analyze

⁵⁹³ *BTTK*, p. 400; In order to see the different claims and opinions of the Turks in Russia at this period, see Baymirza Hayit, *Türkistan Devletlerinin Milli Mücadeleleri Tarihi*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1995), p. 216-225.

⁵⁹⁴ Tuncer Baykara, *Zeki Velidi Togan*, (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1989), p. 22.

⁵⁹⁵ *Zeki Velidi Togan*, ed. Serkan Acar, (İstanbul: Kronik Yayınları, 2021), p. 17; İsenbike Togan, *Tarih ve Kurgu* (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları 2022), p. 521-526; Özbek, “Zeki Velidi Togan ve ‘Türk Tarih Tezi’”, p. 22.

⁵⁹⁶ Zeki Velidi Togan, *Hatıralar*, (İstanbul: Hikmet Gazetecilik, 1969).

⁵⁹⁷ H. Namık, *Türk Dünyası*, (İstanbul: 1932), p. 148, as cited in Hayit, *Türkistan Devletleri*, p. 225.

historical sources and see the truth, and expressed that he was happy not to be his student at the *Darülfünûn*.⁵⁹⁸ Thereupon, Hüseyin Nihal (Atsız), who was research assistant in Turcology of *Darülfünûn*, sent a telegram to Reşit informing that they were happy to be Zeki Velidi's student. After a while, when Reşit Galip became the Minister of Education, Hüseyin Nihal, the owner of the telegram, was removed from his assistantship and assigned to Malatya as a Turkish teacher.⁵⁹⁹

Next, another member of *Darülfünun*, Fuad Bey (Köprülü) delivered his ideas in the Congress and reminded that the states with the name of "Turk" dated to years of AD. Then, he suggested that more studies should have been carried out for Turkishness and Turkish language for the period BC. For him, especially linguistic studies were inadequate "for now".⁶⁰⁰ Thereupon, Afet İnan also took the floor and stated that names such as Hun or Uyghur were tribal names, that Turkish history could not be started at that time because the Chinese mentioned the Turks in the seventh century, and that -for example- the Etruscan issue in Brittanica, which was dated to the seventh century BC, should be evaluated in Turkish history.⁶⁰¹ Hasan Cemil also defended the views of the Society against the criticisms of Fuad Köprülü. Later on, Fuad Köprülü, who saw the lynching campaign toward Zeki Velidi, had to confess that he was not opposite to Turkish History Thesis and agreed with Afet and Hasan Cemil. It is reported that he later explained this situation by saying "what should I do, my house is not on my back".⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁸ *BTTK*, p. 388-389.

⁵⁹⁹ Baykara, *Zeki Velidi Togan*, p. 24.

⁶⁰⁰ *BTTK*, p. 42-47.

⁶⁰¹ *BTTK*, p. 50-51.

⁶⁰² Baykara, *Zeki Velidi Togan*, p. 23.

Caferoğlu Ahmed Bey from the department of History of Turkish Language in *Darülfünun* attacked to the list of the Society, which attributed Turkish origin to a number of words. According to Ahmet Bey, many Arabic and Persian words were made up of Turkish origins by the Society, and he stated that he hoped that no one would be upset because of his criticisms. Upon this, Samih Rifat perhaps was not upset, but was probably quite angry and gave stern answers to Ahmed Bey. After technical explanations on the roots of certain words, Samih Bey claimed that Ahmet Bey -like every professor and teacher- felt compelled to criticize the book given to him, therefore he brought criticism beyond the limits of logic.⁶⁰³ In this statement, a covert complaint about the members of *Darülfünun* may have been aimed.

Fazıl Nazmi Bey from *Darülfünun* also concentrated his views on History Textbooks in three points: a) proper nouns and place names were not used in a standard way; b) logical errors were made to make some foreign names look like Turkish; c) while the language was simplified and Arabic and Persian words were discarded, Turkish words should have been put in their place. It would not make any sense if French words were put in.⁶⁰⁴ The ardent defender of the society, Samih Rifat, gave harsh answers on this issue as well. He first told that the people who criticized the history book mentioned the authors of the relevant chapters; but he declared that this book was the product of the whole Society, not of any one person. Therefore, it can be claimed that the members of the Society defended the THS and its *History* book and thesis as a whole in the congress and did not mention any differences of opinion among themselves. In fact, the discussion was between the Society and *Darülfünun*. Samih Rifat later stated that they actually wanted to receive valuable criticisms of the history books from university professors, but that almost all of the criticisms were in form. He ends his long answer by emphasizing that those who wrote the history books did not

⁶⁰³ *BTTK*, p. 83-93.

⁶⁰⁴ *BTTK*, p. 215-221.

reveal the issues they claimed easily or without evidence, but they followed scientific methods for this process.⁶⁰⁵

Last discussion between the members of the Society and *Darülfünun* was seen between Samih Rifat and Avram Galanti. The latter made a presentation about his views on the origins of Egypt, Sumerian and the Hittites, language of the Hittites, and connection between the Sumerians and Hittites, all of which were directly contrary to Turkish History Thesis. Then, Samih Rifat frankly declared that certain branches of *Darülfünun* opposed to new history thesis for a long time. He claimed, although the aim of the new history project remained same, the Society would be willing to change its views in the face of truth. However, he criticizes that the evidences of the truth put forward by the Society did not fit within the horizons of the opponents.⁶⁰⁶

As it is understood from these debates, the Turkish History Thesis was met with a certain suspicion by the circles outside the Society -especially in *Darülfünun*- and when a congress was the occasion, opposing views were expressed loudly. It seems that there is adequate data that this conflict led to or accelerated university reform and elimination of many professors from *Darülfünun*. On the other hand, after the First Turkish History Congress, the Society gravitated to archaeology and anthropology. Then, the second congress mostly included papers on “concrete and tangible” sources of archaeological studies. In this way, contentious issues would not be on the agenda as in the first congress. Actually, institutions or researchers opposite to the thesis were also somehow deactivated, so that a member of the Society would declare the “definite victory of Turkish History Thesis” in the congress in 1937.

⁶⁰⁵ BTTK, p. 232.

⁶⁰⁶ BTTK, p. 452.

3.4. Unveiling the History of the “Turks” to Fortify the Thesis

3.4.1. Archaeological Excavations

Although archaeology is a science that has emerged relatively later than certain other sciences, roughly in the eighteenth century, it means a lot for the communities. In addition to its contribution to the understanding of the material culture of the previous peoples, it could promise more than that. Archaeology, similar to psychology, depicts the ideas, ideals and way of thinking of the former folks. Accordingly, modern humanity can understand the cultural and material continuities and breaks with the past.⁶⁰⁷ Moreover, archaeology has served like land registers after the age of the nationalism. Though national historiographies emphasize the ancientness/heroism/valor or any virtue of a nation, it could be labeled as being biased or unobjective. However, archaeological findings seem concrete and objective evidences as a course of nature.⁶⁰⁸ Accordingly, just like the claims of the Czechs over Moravia and Bohemia or the Romanians' arguments on Transylvania, many nationalist demands have been supported with archaeological evidences. Instances of this case could be seen during 1930s in Turkey.

It could be argued that archaeological excavations in Turkey began in the eighteenth century. Yet, they were mostly based on research of the foreigners in the Ottoman Empire. Travellers with religious motivations browsed around Anatolia and saw its richness. Thus, they pictured or took a lot of materials to their own countries. Then, recognition of Anatolia in this regard increased and many others came for further excavations. Discoveries in Ephesos by John T. Wood, and in Troy by Heinrich Schliemann in the nineteenth century made tremendous impacts. This kind of research by the foreigners constitutes the first

⁶⁰⁷ Don R. Dickson, “The Importance of Archaeology”, *Central States Archaeological Journal*, VI/1, (1959), p. 15-17.

⁶⁰⁸ Ulrike Sommer, “Archaeology and Nationalism”, in *Key Concepts in Public Archaeology*, ed. Gabriel Moshenska, (London: UCL Press, 2017), p. 181.

period of the archaeological surveys in Anatolia. The second chapter begins with the *Asar-ı Atika Nizamnamesi* (The Regulation on Ancient Monuments) prepared toward the end of the nineteenth century and with the activities of Osman Hamdi Bey. In this way, control and right of the state over the archaeological findings has been definite. The research has been more organized and carried out systematically. Following Osman Hamdi Bey, Halil Edhem Bey also sustained the system as the director of the Imperial Museum.

Third period of the archaeological investigations in Turkey could be thought to have started in 1930's. Development of archaeological tradition for several decades strengthened the hand of the new regime. In addition to that, importance and role of the archaeology in national historiography was known. For instance, Mustafa Kemal sent İsmet Bey a telegram in 1931 from Konya stating that "ancient monuments of previous civilizations that existed at every corner of the country should be uncovered and scientifically preserved by Turkish archaeologists and more students should be sent abroad to study archaeology."⁶⁰⁹ Actually, Remzi Oğuz Arık, Tahsin Özgüç, Ekrem Akurgal, Sedat Alp, Arif Müfid Mansel, Afif Erzen and many others in following years were provided scholarships to study abroad and they contributed to archaeology in Turkey by directing many excavations and with their teaching and publications. Mustafa Kemal also wrote a letter in 1935 to Turkish Historical Society to start firstly small and then large archaeological excavations in line with fiscal situation.⁶¹⁰ Hence, the government concentrated on archaeological excavations in care of Turkish Historical Society. The research was shaped around the idea that the Turks had been in Anatolia for millenia and legitimate inheritor of the past civilizations. Those excavations were also believed to have shown the civilized

⁶⁰⁹ Muazzez İlmiye Çığ, "Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ve Türkiye'de Arkeoloji", *Belgelerle Türk Tarihi Dergisi*, 108-119, (2006): p. 624.

⁶¹⁰ Şükrü Ünar, "Atatürk Dönemi'nde Türk Arkeolojisi", *Anasay*, 11, (2020): p. 129.

character of the Turks for a rightful national pride.⁶¹¹ Until the end of 1938, Turkish Historical Society carried out more than 10 archaeological excavations in various regions of Turkey. Relevant to this, Halil Edhem once proudly manifested that “The great leader and President Atatürk contributed to establishment of archaeology, as well as many cultural fields in Turkey, and even took care of the business himself through Turkish Historical Society that he guided. The government also did not refrain from any help on this issue when needed.”⁶¹²

According to the rulers of the state and members of the Society, both the archaeological artifacts underground and the historical remains above ground played a major role in illuminating Turkish history and supporting the new history thesis. For these reasons, a campaign was declared, demanding the protection of these artifacts and the reporting of new discoveries to the Turkish Historical Society and the government immediately. Then, the Society prepared a circular under the title of “*Türk Tarih Kurumu Yurttaşlardan Şunları Diliyor*” (*Turkish Historical Society Requests the Following from Citizens*), which includes certain demands on preservation of all artifacts. It is as such in meaning:

Citizen, the top and bottom of the Turkish soil is full of valuable antiquities, monuments and historical artifacts. They say that the Turkish nation established the first culture in the world, that our nation is the cultural leader of other nations. They are witnesses who will introduce what our nation has contributed to all world. By preserving these ancestral relics, which show the creative existence of the Turkish nation in establishment, development and progress of human culture, we will preserve Turkish history.

Citizen, Turkish Historical Society, which tries to introduce the antiquity and breadth of Turkish history from its beginnings until now to the whole world - under the supreme leadership of our great President Atatürk- relies on historical artifacts and sources in all studies. These remainings are our national and common property. Thus, it is a national duty for every Turk to protect them from being destroyed and from being taken over to foreign provinces and hands.

⁶¹¹ Tuğba Tanyeri Erdemir, “Archaeology as a Source of National Pride in the Early Years of the Turkish Republic”, *Journal of Field Archaeology*, 31/4, (2006): p. 384-385.

⁶¹² Remzi Oğuz Arık, “Les Fouilles en Turquie Republicaine”, in *Halil Edhem Hâtıra Kitabı*, Cilt. 1/*In Memoriam Halil Edhem*, vol. I, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1947).

Citizen, try to fulfill this assignment with all your heart. If you find historical artifacts, if you see or hear the places of these works, notify museums and government officials before letting them fall into foreign hands. Do not attempt illegal or irregular excavations that would turn history upside-down. Then, the artifacts that you will find in searching for treasures will benefit neither to you nor history. Do not give over the remainings from your ancestors to the foreigners. Giving them to national institutions is your sacred mission.⁶¹³

It is understood from the archival document that the Society has this circular published in 141 national and local newspapers and magazines in all provinces of the country. It was important to inform people, especially when the society's level of awareness about history and historical artifacts was not high, and there was a possibility of finding undiscovered historical artifacts in every corner of the country. It was also aimed to make the issue a national duty to the citizens and to gather information from them in finding new works to support the thesis, before they were spoiled by any act.

With this increasing importance attributed to archaeology, the excavation in Ahlatlıbel started in 1933 as the first archaeological research directed by the Turkish researchers. Hamit Z. Koşay directed the survey. At that time, the field was 16 kilometers away of Ankara. Remains from the Bronze Age and pieces from the Hittite period have been obtained.⁶¹⁴ Mustafa Kemal himself visited the field during the working.⁶¹⁵ Another excavation in 1933 was carried out in Kazan to enlighten the history of Ankara. Site director was Remzi Oğuz Arık and forms from the Hellenic, Roman, Byzantine and Ottoman times have been

⁶¹³ TTKA, TTAH-2-28, 24.10.1935.

⁶¹⁴ Afet İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumunun Arkeolojik Faaliyeti”, *İTTK*, p. 10; Aykut Çınaroğlu&Duygu Çelik, *Atatürk ve Alaca Höyük*, (Ankara 2010), p. 51.

⁶¹⁵ TTKA, TTK-312-19.

found.⁶¹⁶ Arık directed another research in Göllüdağ in 1934, which resulted in finding an ancient city dated to post-Hittite and Phrygian period.⁶¹⁷

Epochal excavation of Turkish Historical Society began in Alacahöyük in 1935. It was the first archaeological research of the Society and should be considered as the first national excavation with fully applied scientific methods. It was commenced with the instruction and even personal donation of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.⁶¹⁸ The excavation report dated 1935 gives information about the beginning of the investigation in Alacahöyük: “While the Ministry of Culture, whose role in the acceleration of Hittitology was known by everyone, was making a map showing the ruins and excavation sites in the country, Turkish Historical Society was planning to collect materials to write the history of the Hittite in the latest and most accurate way.”⁶¹⁹ It was also stated that reputed foreign researchers began to consider Hattuşaş and its environs as the center of the Hittite civilization, and that the Society -as a correct action of methodology- decided to excavate the mound, which was still untouched then.

H. Zübeyr Koşay and R. Oğuz Arık directed the excavation in Alacahöyük where they made themselves heard to the science world. As a significant cultural center and reflection of the Hittite civilization, the site is located in today’s Çorum province. During the first surveys, tombs of the kings from the Old Bronze Age and jewelry made of gold and silver were found. 13 layers were discovered in the site and the last layer accounts for the Chalcolithic period,

⁶¹⁶ Remzi Oğuz Arık, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Maarif Vekaletince Yaptırılan Karalar Hafriyatı”, *Türk Tarih, Arkeologya ve Etnografya Dergisi*, II, (1934): p. 102-103.

⁶¹⁷ İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumunun Arkeolojik Faaliyeti”, *İTTK*, p. 10.

⁶¹⁸ Coşkun Özgünel, “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Arkeolojisi”, *Belleten*, L/198, (1986): p. 902.

⁶¹⁹ *Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Yapılan Alacahöyük Hafriyatı: 1935'teki Çalışmalara ve Keşiflere Ait İlk Rapor*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1937), p. 2-3.

which could mean the first civilization founded on the main land.⁶²⁰ As the excavations on the area has been going on, Alacahöyük ensured the qualifying and gaining experience of numerous archaeologists and researchers in Turkey.⁶²¹ The research in Alacahöyük was closely followed by the top managers of the state and Society. Because the findings obtained here were seen as undeniable concrete proofs of the history thesis. So much so that Atatürk, in a speech in the Parliament in 1936, stated that the Turkish Historical Society revealed 5.500 years old material Turkish historical artifacts with the excavations in Alacahöyük, and this development would be instrumental in the reinterpretation of world cultural history.⁶²² Moreover, Saffet Arıkan, Minister of Education, sent a telegram to Hamit Z. Koşay to celebrate their new findings in Alacahöyük.⁶²³ Near Alacahöyük, Pazarlı site has also been excavated in 1937-38 by the same group.⁶²⁴ So, important information on the Phrygian civilization has been uncovered.

Between 1936 and 1939 Arif Müfid Mansel was appointed by Turkish Historical Society to make research in the Thracian tumuli which counts a great number. Certain of them in Alpıllu, Vize, Sinanlı and Lüleburgaz were excavated by

⁶²⁰ Anatolian Agency prepared a news draft on Alacahöyük on 05.11.1936. The Society made certain corrections on the draft. TTKA, unclassified documents. Then, that news was published by the newspaper *Ulus* on 06.11.1936. In the text, important findings and their value in Alacahöyük were announced to the public. It is also stated that the remainings would connect the Anatolian civilization to that of Central Asia.

⁶²¹ Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 150-151.

⁶²² *T.B.M.M. Zabıt Ceridesi*, Devre: 5, İçtima: 2, Cild 3, 1936.

⁶²³ TTKA, HZK-1-2, 20.08.1936.

⁶²⁴ İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumunun Arkeolojik Faaliyeti”, *İTTK*, p. 11.

Mansel who published the reports afterwards.⁶²⁵ Valuable findings from the excavations were exhibited in Dolmabahçe Palace.⁶²⁶ In 1937, Turkish Historical Society was informed that students in Ankara found remnants of pots and pans in Çubuksuyu Valley. Then, Prof. Şevket Aziz Kansu started the excavation there on behalf of the Society. Findings dated to Paleolithic Age and lots of goods made of flintstones were discovered.⁶²⁷ Another important archaeological research in Anatolia was started in Karaoğlan, near Gölbaşı-Ankara in 1937. Firstly, Afet İnan drew attention to the field and later, Remzi Oğuz Arık began excavations. For him, the last layer of the site was dated to the Chalcolithic Age. It was thought to have been a settled area and provided important findings from Hellenic-Roman, Phrygian, Hittite and Old Bronze ages.⁶²⁸ The research in Karaoğlan went on until 1941.

Though not being large excavations, certain other surveys were carried out by the Society or with its supports. The investigations in Fidanlık (Ankara), Namazgâh (İzmir) and Sarayburnu (Istanbul) could be added as among those.⁶²⁹ The public also seemed interested in those activities and followed the

⁶²⁵ For example, see Arif Müfid Mansel, “Trakya Hafriyatı”, *Belleten*, IV/13, (1940): p. 89-114; “Vize’de Bulunan Maskeli Miğfer”, *Belleten*, VIII/30, (1944): p. 165-183; TTKA, TTK-2-16, 20.05.1938.

⁶²⁶ Anatolian Agency gave forth the significant remainings discovered in Thracian excavations on 08.09.1938. TTKA, unclassified documents.

⁶²⁷ İnan, “Türk Tarih Kurumunun Arkeolojik Faaliyeti”, *İTTK*, p. 10.

⁶²⁸ Türkiye Arkeolojik Yerleşmeleri (TAY) Projesi, [http://www.tayproject.org/TAYages.fm\\$Retrieve?CagNo=1656&html=ages_detail_t.html&layo ut=web](http://www.tayproject.org/TAYages.fm$Retrieve?CagNo=1656&html=ages_detail_t.html&layo ut=web) accessed on 28.08.2021.

⁶²⁹ During the related timespane, R. O. Arık, H. Z. Koşay and Ş. A. Kansu either directed or attended excavations on behalf of the Society, including Alacahöyük, Ahlatlıbel, Kumtepe, Pazarlı, Karaz, Augustus Temple, İkiztepeler, Etiyokuşu, İznik, Edirne and İnönü. Yunus Koç, “Türk Tarih Kurumu ve Türk Tarihçiliğindeki Yeri”, in *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye’de Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yayıncılığı Sempozyumu - Bildiriler*, ed. Mehmet Öz, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2011), p. 658.

excavations through press.⁶³⁰ Arousing both scholar and public interest, Turkish Historical Society increased its works and supports in the field of archaeology in the following years.⁶³¹ For Afet İnan, the Turks's possession of Anatolia-Turkey had started at the dawn of history. Proto-Hittite and Hittite periods were the concrete witness of that fact. Following immigration of the other Turkish groups to Anatolia throughout history reinforced it. Though the names of those peoples varied, their Turkish-ness was certain.⁶³² Consequently, archaeology would play a central role to support that thesis.

Apart from conducting archaeological excavations, it was also important to publicize, publish and make them known internationally. Then, the relationship of the members of the Society with international organizations in this field was also lively. To illustrate, Afet İnan was a member of a number of *Societe d'Histoire et d'Archeologie de Ceneve* and *Institut Internationale D'Anthropologie*, and usually gave conferences abroad. The famous site director, Hamit Zübeyr Koşay actively took part in German Archaeological Institute, Finnish Archaeological Society, Swedish Academy of History and Antiquity, Vienna Anthropological Society, Prague Orient Institute and many others.⁶³³ As it can be understood from the minutes of a meeting of the Society, Hasan Cemil was also elected as a permanent member of the German Archaeological Institute.⁶³⁴ These people helped to announce the archaeological studies carried

⁶³⁰ *Ulus* published the list of ongoing excavations of Turkish Historical Society and spoke of their processes on 01.08.1938. It is easy to see numerous news on archaeological research through media.

⁶³¹ Yet, the Society was aware of its limits and opportunities. That is to say that a letter from the Ministry of Culture had reached to Society informing that a tumulus had been found near Erzurum and asking to start excavation there. Nevertheless, the board of the Society discussed it in its meeting and concluded that main purpose was to finish the existing excavations and new excavations could not be started before they were finished. TTKA, TTK-8-63, 23.12.1938.

⁶³² İnan, "Türk Tarih Kurumunun Arkeolojik Faaliyeti", p. 9.

⁶³³ Mahmut Şakiroğlu, "Hamit Zübeyr Koşay", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 26, 2002, p. 225-226; Çoker, *Türk Tarih Kurumu*, p. 255-256.

⁶³⁴ TTKA, TTK-8-64, 25.12.1938.

out in Turkey to the outside world with their international publications and networks.

A correspondence from the archive of THS reveals that the government also promoted the Society to actively attend international congresses of archaeology. Within this framework, Minister of Education had asked the Society to participate in “Congress international d’Anthropologie et d’Archaeologie prehistorique” to be organized in Bucharest in 1937. Then, a Turkish delegation formed by the members of the Society headed by Afet İnan joined the program and made presentations about the excavations in Turkey and their results. Consequently, the Ministry sent another letter of thanks, since Turkish science was adequately represented in the western world with concrete examples from Turkish scientific investigations.⁶³⁵

Indeed, Second Turkish History Congress of the Society in 1937 clearly shows the tendency to archaeology and anthropology to support the history thesis. As it was shown above, many Turkish and foreign archaeologists attended the event and made presentations on ongoing excavations and their findings. Within this Congress, an exhibition on history from the pre-historical ages to modern times was inaugurated in Dolmabahçe Palace, which would mostly rely on archaeological knowledge. It aimed at showing the monuments of ancient and modern Turkish history for animating the history thesis and for a national consciousness among the people. Models, moulages, drawings and graphics were used in this event. The plans to exhibit the old artifacts were included in a book of the Society.⁶³⁶

⁶³⁵ TTKA, TTK-18-26, 04.11.1937.

⁶³⁶ *Türk Tarih Kurumu Sergisi (1937)*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1937); *Türk Tarihi ve Eski Eserleri Sergisi Hazırlık Planları*, (İstanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1937).

After 1935, more books and articles about the excavations started to be published by the institution. As it was expressed above, Alacahöyük -as one of the first national archaeological excavations started by the Society- is a crucial cultural center of the Hittites and dates back to Late Calcholitic Age. Since archaeological findings mean a great importance for a history thesis, the Society was willing to publicize it with books. Accordingly, a leaflet on the findings from Alacahöyük was published⁶³⁷ and presented as gift to the attendants of Third Language Congress in 1936. Additionally, Remzi Oğuz Arık prepared a report-book in Turkish and French on the excavations and findings in Alacahöyük.⁶³⁸ Halil Edhem added a preface, too. Both of the works include more than 200 pages with pictures, drawings and tables belonging to Alacahöyük. In the introduction, Arık mentions previous research on that place and reasons of the Society for the excavation. Eventually, the visuals of the discoveries from the excavation were attached to the work, which were regarded as the concrete evidences of the Hittite (namely ancient Turkish) civilization.

As the excavations in Alacahöyük went on, the reports were collected into books by Hamit Zübeyr Koşay.⁶³⁹ Four strata in the field belonging to Chalcolithic, Bronze, Hittite and last cultural layers ages are presented in the book. The reports on skeletons (by Prof. Şevket Aziz Aksu), animal bones (by Prof. Hilmi), coins (by Mr. Bosch and Osman), grain analysis (by Institute of Agriculture) and mine analysis (by Mineral Research Institute) were added to the research.

⁶³⁷ *Türk Tarih Kurumunun 1935 Alaca-Höyük Hafriyatında Elde Ettiği Etiler Devrine Ait Tunç Güneş Sembolleri*, (İstanbul ? : Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1936)

⁶³⁸ Remzi Oğuz Arık, *Les Foilles D'alaca Höyük, Entreprises Par La Societe D'Histoire Turque: Rapport Preliminaire Sur Les Travaux En 1935* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1937); *Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Yapılan Alacahöyük Hafriyatı: 1935'teki Çalışmalara ve Keşiflere Ait İlk Rapor*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1937).

⁶³⁹ Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, *Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alacahöyük'te Yaptırılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeleler*, (Ankara: 1937); *Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Yaptırılan Alacahöyük Hafriyatı: 1936'daki Çalışmalara ve Keşiflere Ait İlk Rapor*, (Ankara: 1938).

Four volumes of excavation compiled with the hand writing of H. Z. Koşay include information and documents, photographs, lists, inventories related to the excavation, too. Moreover, local or foreign officials as visitors to the site and working conditions of the employees could also be traced through these notebooks.⁶⁴⁰ In addition to them, articles written by site directors and local or foreign archaeologists were frequently published in the journal *Belleten*. According to a survey, between 1937-1950, a great part of the journal was allocated to archaeology and ancient era, which was an indicator of the efforts to prove the Turkishness of the Sumerians and the Hittites.⁶⁴¹

3.4.2. Repercussion on Material Cultural Elements

It should also be noted that the Society has created an awareness about historical and archaeological artifacts, and become an authorized institution on such artifacts, which acted like a High Council for the Conversation of Cultural Property (*Kültür Varlıklarını Koruma Yüksek Kurulu* of modern Turkey) for a time. Official writings written by various local authorities to Turkish Historical Society could support this argument. For example, in a letter written from the Second Inspectorate General (*İkinci Umum Müfettişliği*) with the subject of "antiquity", the Society was informed that there was a building in Keşan province that had previously been converted into a mosque by Sultan Mehmed II. It was claimed that this structure needed repair and could be saved with a reasonable price. Because it was argued that the preservation and revival of the region, which was important for the Roman, Byzantine and Pecheneg Turks, would make positive effects to promote Turkish history.⁶⁴² Another request of

⁶⁴⁰ *Alacahöyük Hafriyat Defterleri, 1936-1937*, Türk Tarih Kurumu Kütüphanesi, Y/0869.

⁶⁴¹ Yüksel Özgen, "Belleten Dergisinin Cumhuriyet Dönemi Türk Tarihçiliğindeki Yeri", in *Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye'de Tarihçilik ve Tarih Yayıncılığı Sempozyumu - Bildiriler*, ed. Mehmet Öz, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2011), p. 621.

⁶⁴² TTKA, TTK-20-23, 15.10.1936.

the same institution was that the Rüstem Pasha Caravansary, a work of Mimar Sinan in Edirne, should have been saved from commercial activities and restored by the state.⁶⁴³

General Directorate of Istanbul Museums also wrote a letter that firstly gives a list of significant buildings in Istanbul, including Siyavuş Paşa Pavilion, Davutpaşa Pavilion, Yeni Cami, Amcazade Hüseyin Paşa Mansion, Emirgân Pavilion, Atmeydanı Palace, Sadabad and Çağlayan buildings, Aynalı Kavak Pavilion, Efgan Lodge, and some mansions of closer centuries. The Director claims that though they -as the museum- worked hard to conserve those buildings, their authority and capacity fell short of that task. Hence, unless the Turkish Historical Society did not enter into the preservation of them, the significant artifacts of Turkish history would be under the risk of termination.⁶⁴⁴

It is also interesting that the reputed architect Sedat Çetintaş informed the Society that the Feruh Kethüda Mosque in Balat was collapsing, and that THS informed the General-Directorate of Foundations (*Evkaf Umum Müdürlüğü*) on the repair of the building.⁶⁴⁵ Even the municipality of Istanbul asked the Society's opinion about the value of the area where the historical city walls were located, since a regulation was needed in terms of city planning. As a document indicates, the municipality asked the institution whether the walls could be demolished to enlarge the city and what kind of action should be taken in those regions.⁶⁴⁶

⁶⁴³ TTKA, TTK-2-17, 29.11.1938.

⁶⁴⁴ TTKA, TTK-2-15, 17.10.1938.

⁶⁴⁵ TTKA, TTK-2-24, 13.05.1938.

⁶⁴⁶ TTKA, TTK-2-18, 01.11.1938.

There is no doubt that this type of communication was not one-sided, and sometimes the Society itself sent letters to the related institutions, indicating that they should show concern for historical artifacts. For instance, THS wrote a letter to Istanbul Municipality on 10 September, 1935 to make a warning on the situation of the shrine of Cerrah Osman Ağa whose architecture was Mimar Sinan. The letter claimed that there was a sport area near the building and children would destroy it during their activities. Even the marble sarcophagus, which was a work of art, was broken in the tomb and its epitaph was shattered. Within this framework, the letter ends with a clear message: “Since you know the importance our government gives to historical artifacts and to protect them, I request that necessary measures be taken to protect this tomb, which is the work of the greatest Turkish architect.”⁶⁴⁷

It is also an attention-grabbing point that Turkish Historical Society wrote to the Prime Ministry that the Çoban Mustafa Pasha Mosque in Gebze is used as an ammunition depot by the army, but that this situation poses a danger to the structure and therefore it would be appropriate to evacuate it.⁶⁴⁸ This case indicates that the Society was in a competent position in the field of history and historical artifacts and showed great sensitivity to the subject. On the other hand, it is obvious that, with the support it received from state administrators, the Society was very confidently involved in the issues and was aware of its own strength when communicating with many institutions including the Prime Ministry and other ministries and administrations.

While giving importance to ancient archeology, Turkish Historical Society’s efforts to preserve artifacts from recent times are not actually contradictory or irrelevant issues. It is understood that the institution has approached in a very pragmatic way when it comes to national history, emphasizing the concrete

⁶⁴⁷ TTKA, TTK-2-32, 10.09.1935.

⁶⁴⁸ TTKA, TTK-2-31, 09.10.1935.

indicators of Turkish history and civilization regardless of historical ages.⁶⁴⁹ Of course, archaeological studies were important in terms of showing the antiquity of Turkish history. However, the works of the later ages on the ground were also considered valuable in terms of showing the richness of Turkish civilization. Therefore, the Society's laying claim to and protection of every tangible heritage of Turkish history was the result of a holistic perspective stemming from the history thesis. On the other hand, even if there is a political purpose behind it, intense efforts to protect Ottoman artifacts - as it can be clearly understood from the archive documents- are important in terms of reflecting the Society's view towards the Ottoman period.

As a result, with the establishment of the new state, the rulers envisaged the adoption of new ideology by the society, and they were aware that the state had to organize the understanding of history and its education in line with this purpose. Thus, with a new historical fiction, an official historical institution was created, benefitting from the intellectual accumulation of previous decades. The institution developed an understanding of history for the needs of the era and the country and planned it by following scientific methods - or claiming to do so. The new view of history, which initially faced certain doubts and criticisms, remained the dominant view until the end of 1938, with the elimination of the opponents from cultural life to a great extent. However, this thesis could not be sustained after the death of the charismatic leader of the state, who promoted, defended and sustained it for a decade. The next section aims to present an examination of the claims of the new historical view on Turkish history, through the activities of the institution.

⁶⁴⁹ The report of Hamit Zübeyr Koşay, active member of the Society, on the establishment of state archives under the Ministry of Culture was also related to this issue. Institutions and artifacts that were thought to contribute to national history in any way have been preserved, promoted and supported. That report is available at TTKA, TTK-1-30, 12.01. 1935.

CHAPTER 4

DEFINING THE TURK, INTERPRETING THE ISLAM AND LEGITIMIZING THE REPUBLICAN REGIME IN TURKISH HISTORY THESIS

The young Turkish Republic had been established in Anatolia after an extended period of tiresome wars. Still, military victory was not the sole and ultimate goal of the rulers of the state, nor was it adequate for a stable government. Therefore - as it could explicitly be understood from the discourse of the ruling elite of new Turkey- building and maintaining pillars on economic, legislative, social and cultural spheres was crucially needed.⁶⁵⁰ Doubtlessly, a closer look at efforts in all of those spheres would exceed the limits of this study. Yet, new historiography promoted by the government should be considered among the bases of aforementioned social and cultural affairs. Therefore, fourth and fifth chapters of this study seek to comprehend the corner stone claims of the state-sponsored history writing. Indeed, foundation of Turkish Historical Society meant, above all, a reflection of a new understanding on Turkish history for a new identity for the Turks, who must have been decorated with a sense of belonging, unity and pride for a mighty nation state, as well as withstanding against the libelous discourse of the West for the Turks and Turkey. This attempt brought various claims and arguments on the history and characteristics of the Turkish people.

As seen in the previous chapter, the Turkish History Thesis has six basic claims on Turkish history. This chapter focuses on two of those claims, one for the contributions of Turks to Islam (which brings a new interpretation to the

⁶⁵⁰ For certain traces of the needs of the state of the era, see “İzmir İktisad Kongresinde Gazi Paşa’nın İlmi ve İctimai Mühim Bir Nutku”, in *Gazi Mustafa Kemal Paşa Hazretleri İzmir Yollarında* (Ankara: Matbaat Müdüriyet-i Umumisi, 1339 [1923]), p. 103-126; *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, (Ankara: Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1997).

religion) and the second for the glory of modern Turkish history (which seeks ways of legitimizing the new regime). So, a look at Islam and Islamic history, Ottoman history, and the history of the modern Republic of Turkey, which was the newest part of Turkish history for the relevant period, will be presented within the narrative of the Turkish History Thesis. In fact, although these narratives or historical periods seem distant or independent from each other, it is understood that a connection has been established between them in the history thesis. Of course, as will be seen below, the emphasis on Turkish-ness has come into play here as well. Indeed, it was of great importance to define and reveal the characteristics of the Turk, about whom a history thesis was created.

In order to cover these issues, it is significant to examine the Society's view of Turkish-ness and Islam. While doing this, we tried to address both the general situation in the country and the Society's approach to these two issues. After discussing the Society's approach to and views on Turkish-ness and Islam, the way to history of modern Turkey through the Ottoman history is handled.

In the light of these discussions, the following two claims of the Society emerge clearly: The Turks greatly contributed to Islamic civilization and Muslim states for centuries, and modern Turkish history -after 1919 until 1930s- meant a period that includes the most glorious and heroic history of the Turks in almost every field, in which great things were accomplished in a short time.

4.1. Changing Definitions of “Turk” and Content of Turkish-ness in Time in Republican Turkey

4.1.1. Pillars of Nationalism in 1920s

As it was shown in previous chapters, defeat of the Ottomans in World War I and termination of the empire invalidated the ideologies of Islamism and Ottomanism which had been seen as remedy to cure the state for a time. On the other hand, the resistance in Anatolia that started in 1919 against the Allied

Powers had a strong nationalist character. Yet, an influential component of war-time nationalism was religion or Islam. As Erik Jan Zürcher points, Gotthard Jaeschke and Dankwart Rustow emphasizes the role that religion played to provoke the people of Anatolia to confront the enemy.⁶⁵¹ The latter claims that element of Islam was dominant in Turkish National Struggle and the program of salvation was carried out on behalf of the Caliphate-Sultanate.⁶⁵² According to Zürcher, although some researchers could argue that the situation was an outcome of a political-pragmatic approach, he insisted that it was reflection of an existing truth. The reports and declarations of congresses of Erzurum and Sivas, and National Muslim Congress (*Milli İslam Şurası*) in Kars explicitly reveal the religious character of national discourse. While the congress in Kars advocated the indivisibility of the Muslim population of the Caucasus, a group of members in Erzurum Congress stated that “the Muslim nation composed of the Turks and Kurds for centuries are represented”. Similarly, the demands announced in Sivas Congress include the “continuity of the state that belonged to the Muslims” and existence of Muslim elements (*anasır-ı İslamiye*).⁶⁵³ Thus, being Turk was directly related with being Muslim, and it is clear that Islam and Kurdish-ness does not seem contradicting with Turkish nationalism of early 1920s at all. A speech of Mustafa Kemal in National Assembly in 1920 is remarkable, as he admitted that “the people who make up the assembly are not only Turkish, Circassian, Kurdish or Laz, but it is a Muslim union made up of all. Every element of Islam is our brother and our citizen with common interest.”⁶⁵⁴ Indeed,

⁶⁵¹ Dankwart Rustow, “Politics and Islam in Modern Turkey”, in *Islam and the West*, ed. R.N. Frye, (The Hague: Mouton, 1957), p. 71.

⁶⁵² Erik Jan Zürcher, “İslam Milliyetçiliğinin Dili”, in *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), p. 229.

⁶⁵³ Zürcher, “İslam Milliyetçiliğinin Dili”, p. 233-234. This article elaborately analyses the discourse of Turkish Nationalists, especially of Mustafa Kemal during the Turkish National Struggle. When Mustafa Kemal arrived in Ankara, he addressed a speech and said “Our nation has given freedom to non-Muslims for centuries.” According to Zürcher, by saying “we/us/our”, Mustafa Kemal usually meant the Muslims.

⁶⁵⁴ *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, p. 74-75.

first constitution of the new government in 1921 (*Teşkilat-ı Esasiye*) could not renounce counting on impact of Islam.⁶⁵⁵

End of the military phase of Turkish National Struggle brought about the diplomatic stage. At that point, Turkish nationalism was not yet isolated from Kurdish population of Anatolia and Islam, which could be traced through the negotiations at the Lausanne Conference. While the Turkish side persisted the inclusion of Mosul and its neighborhood into the Turkish borders, the delegation put forth that the majority of the population in the district was composed of Turks and Kurds, rather than the Arabs. It means that Kurdish population was not seen as contrary for Turkish national borders. Then, when it was about the destiny of Western Thrace, Turkish delegation demanded a plebiscite by stressing the Muslim character of the region, which located the religious identity into nationalist claims.⁶⁵⁶

However, as of 1925, as Soner Çağaptay describes, Turkey had become a more secular state when compared to the previous periods. Abolishment of Caliphate, dervish lodges and foundations administration (*Şeriye ve Evkaf Vekaleti*); unifying the education; organizing dress codes, new calendar regulations, and the adoption of the civil code in late 1926 showed that the influence of religion in the public sphere was greatly limited. Eventually, annulment of the constitutional article stating that the religion of the state is Islam in 1928, and adoption of the Latin scripts instead of the Arabic one represented a break with the religion and

⁶⁵⁵ <https://www.anayasa.gov.tr/tr/mevzuat/onceki-anayasalar/1921-anayasasi/>, accessed on 11.12.2022.

⁶⁵⁶ Erik Jan Zürcher, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Sınırlarına Yeniden Bakarken” in *Savaş, Devrim ve Uluslaşma*, (İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2009), p. 280; M. Cemil Bilsel, *Lozan* (İstanbul: Sosyal Yayınları, 1998).

culture of Islam.⁶⁵⁷ At this point, a definition of Turkish nation was started to be developed on the basis of the citizenship based on the will.⁶⁵⁸

Afet İnan gave critical explanations on nation in her lecture notes which dated to late 1920s and would turn into a book later. (For İnan, the book actually reflects Atatürk's views and it should be counted as his work.) Accordingly, “the Turkish people who founded the Turkish Republic are called the Turkish nation” and in addition to national ideals, national moral, and common language; what formed the nation was a common and rich history, common will to live together, and common decision to continue the preservation of the heritage together.⁶⁵⁹ As Çağaptay elaborates, regulation of Republican People’s Party in 1927 pointed the unity in language, feelings and ideas as the strongest connection among the citizens. Still, toward the end of the decade, a significant part of the total population of Turkey was formed by non-Turkish speaking Muslims (who spoke Kurdish, Arabic, Circassian, Albanian, Tartarian and Bulgarian). According to projection of Ziya Gökalp, if these Muslim communities could be assimilated, they could become Turks. In this direction, Turkish culture should be internalized and Turkish language should have been taught to them. Çağaptay likens this to the culture-based assimilation efforts in France in previous decades.⁶⁶⁰

In relation to this, the Settlement Law of 1926 prevented the immigration of the non-Muslims to Turkey, while non-Turkish Muslims (who were thought to be assimilated) were allowed to migrate to places permitted by the government,

⁶⁵⁷ Çağaptay, *Türkiye’de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 22-24.

⁶⁵⁸ According to Reşit Galip, “Consent would turn non-Turkish into Turkish”. Tanıl Bora, *Cereyanlar-Türkiye’de Siyasi İdeolojiler*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2017), p. 219.

⁶⁵⁹ Afet İnan, *Medeni Bilgiler ve M. Kemal Atatürk’ün El Yazıları*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2020), p. 23-24.

⁶⁶⁰ Çağaptay, *Türkiye’de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 25-29. As it was touched above, “the wish for all citizens of Utopia to speak Utopian” was the French version of nationalism.

without forming a majority anywhere. The decision to “settle the nomadic tribes in suitable places” also meant the Kurds, and there was a plan to place them among the Turks.⁶⁶¹ Indeed, the government was aware of the existence of non-Turkish communities at various parts of the country and the law on settlement could provide necessary tools to make Muslims look like Turks in terms of character, language and way of living.⁶⁶² On the other hand, being Muslim was not enough, since the migration of Balkan Muslims, who was supposed that they could not be included in Turkish culture, was not considered warmly.⁶⁶³

Indeed -assumed or actual- ethnic, religious and political opposition and challenges to Republic of Turkey led the government to launch a policy aimed at homogenizing the society after 1926. It is clear that the issue has different and deeper dimensions. There were some who objected to the recognition of non-Muslims as Turkish by citizenship, if not by ethnicity. Next, while non-Turkish Muslims in Turkey were somehow included in the circle of Turkish-ness, there have been criticisms that, for example, the Christian Gagauz Turks were not accepted as Turks or their immigration to the country was not welcomed. There were people who thought about such issues and developed theses within the government or among the political-cultural actors of the period. Still, it could be argued that the state promoted the Turkish nationalism mostly based on language and culture until early 1930s⁶⁶⁴ when ethnic attributions of nationalism increased.

⁶⁶¹ Muhammed Sarı, “Atatürk Dönemi İskan Kanunları”, in *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/ataturk-donemi-iskan-kanunlari/>, accessed on 12.12.2022.

⁶⁶² Çağaptay, *Türkiye’de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 159.

⁶⁶³ Yunus Pustu, *Türkiye Muallimler Birliği*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2022), p. 102-103. According to a report, certain Balkan Muslims such as the Bosnians, Albanians and Pomaks -along with the Arabs and Circassians- were proud of surviving their cultures and way of living. Therefore, a special effort was needed to include them into Turkish culture.

⁶⁶⁴ Çağaptay, *Türkiye’de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 64.

4.1.2. Re-defining in 1930s

The increasing emphasis placed on the link between citizenship and ethnicity resulted in the promotion of a Turkish nationalism on an ethnic basis. Actually, that link dates to the French Revolution. The idea that the fundamental basis of the sovereignty principle is the nation has been expressed, and national identity and nationality have become the main source of sovereignty. For G. Hegel, individuals could exist only as members of the nation-state. At this point, the concept of citizen developed and the citizen had to have a consciousness of national identity and his/her responsibilities for the nation. Therefore, the nation was pointing to a more valuable and conscious community than the people. According to this, nation states started to try to make the people within their borders citizens.⁶⁶⁵ Turkish nationalism, having got rid of its religious features and with the non-Muslims leaving the country to a large extent, started to build a nation on an ethnic basis at the end of 1920s. Non-Turkish Muslim communities within the borders would also be treated according to this policy. This process seems compatible with periodization of Turkish nationalism between 1919-1938 that was suggested by Ahmet Yıldız.⁶⁶⁶ sources of Turkish nationalism depended on religion between 1919-1923. Then, the period between 1924-1929 witnessed the secular elements in national discourse. 1929-1938 era was the phase of nationalism with ethnic-cultural motifs.

There are primary records of the period and later research showing that Turkish nationalism increased its ethnic and race-based discourses in the 1930s. As Yıldız put it, that decade saw the growing emphasis on ethnic-racial roots in the definition of the Turkish nation, in addition to previous cultural and secular

⁶⁶⁵ Ayşe Kadioğlu, “Vatandaşlık: Kavramın Farklı Anlamları”, in *Vatandaşlığın Dönüşümü-Üyelikten Haklara*, ed. Ayşe Kadioğlu, (İstanbul: Metis, 2008), p. 22-23. Also, for related discussion, see Ayşe Kadioğlu, “Vatandaşlığın Ulustan Arındırılması: Türkiye Örneği”, in *Vatandaşlığın Dönüşümü-Üyelikten Haklara*, p. 31-54.

⁶⁶⁶ Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene* p. 16-17.

characteristics.⁶⁶⁷ The Settlement Law of 1934 could help us see the increasing importance of racial characteristics in the definition of nation and population policies. By law, the country was divided into three regions of settlement. In the first region, it was desired that the Turkish cultured population settled. Then, communities requested to represent Turkish culture will be placed in the second region. Finally, settlement in the third region would not be allowed for political, economic, military and security reasons. This law also includes many subsections and conditions.⁶⁶⁸

According to the law, people of Turkish descent and residents affiliated with Turkish culture who wanted to come to Turkey for the purpose of settling down would be accepted by the Ministry of Interior. Who and which people of the country could be deemed to be affiliated with Turkish culture would be determined by the decision of the Council of Ministers. On the other hand, there would be differences in terms of rights and treatments between those of the Turkish race and those who were not. For example, immigrants of second group would be compelled to resettle in towns and cities so that they could not establish separate villages and neighborhoods. In addition, those who were Turkish citizens but not affiliated with Turkish culture (namely Kurds), those who were affiliated with Turkish culture but did not speak Turkish (mostly other Muslim communities), and those who were neither Turkish citizens nor Turkish cultured would be settled in places indicated by the state in a way that would not constitute a majority. Even the removal of citizenship could come to the agenda for those who did not comply with the determined plans. It is clear that this law attaches importance to ethnicity, along with culture and mother tongue, in population policy and in defining the nation.

According to Yardımcı and Aslan, Şükrü Kaya, the architect of the relevant law and the Minister of Interior of the period, admitted that the law was not just

⁶⁶⁷ Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*, p. 17.

⁶⁶⁸ T.C. Resmi Gazete (2510 Sayılı İskan Kanunu), 21/VI/1934, no. 2733, p. 4003-4010.

about settlement, but it meant entering into environment of language and civilization for the people of the region. The report of İnönü (Kurdish Report) would also target the Kurds to teach them Turkish and to bring them to Turkishness. As the authors cited from İlhan Tekeli,⁶⁶⁹ the number of Kurds sent from east to west in the 1930s was more than 25,000 in 5074 households, which was much higher than in the 1920s. According to the authors, these all meant biopolitical arrangement of the state.⁶⁷⁰

With the strengthening of one-party rule in the 1930s, the authoritarian trend became dominant and increased the ethnicist aspect of nationalism. Expressions up to racism can also be encountered in the political and literary discourses of government members or people close to the government. To illustrate, Mahmut Esat Bozkurt declared “both friend and foe should listen, my opinion and conviction is that, the master of this country is the Turk. Non-Turkish people have one right in the Turkish homeland, which is to be a servant, to be a slave.”⁶⁷¹ Certain mottos like “The worst Turkish is better than the non-Turkish. / The affairs of the Turkish state should be headed by no one other than the real Turk. / We will not believe anyone but Turkish.” were promoted by influential people.⁶⁷² Then, in one of his speeches, a lecturer, bureaucrat and politician Muzaffer Göker compares the Turk with God, states that Turk was willing to fight the God, and attributes a demigod character to the Turk. Here, too, a sanctity has been established over race. Next, Behçet Kemal (Çağlar) produced a theatre play that drew the attention of the rulers of the state with strong

⁶⁶⁹ İlhan Tekeli, “Osmanlı İmparatorluğundan Günümüze Nüfusun Zorunlu Yer Değiştirmesi”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 50, (1990): p. 49-71.

⁶⁷⁰ Sibel Yardımcı & Şükrü Aslan, “1930’ların Biyopolitik Paradigması: Dil, Etnisite, İskan ve Ulusun İnşası”, *Doğu Batı*, 44, (2008): p. 143-145.

⁶⁷¹ Taha Parla, *Türkiye’de Siyasal Kültürün Resmi Kaynakları Cilt 3* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1995), p. 208.

⁶⁷² Tanıl Bora, “Türkiye’de Milliyetçilik ve Azınlıklar”, in *Medeniyet Kaybı-Milliyetçilik ve Faşizm Üzerine Yazılar*, (İstanbul: Birikim Yayınları, 2007), p. 87-88.

references to Turkish race and history. The work included catchwords and lines such as “Get to know Turk, your eternal master! / The world was created for the sake of Turk / While other races were herds, Turks were their shepherds / Turk is the one who turns, cheers and creates the world / The Turkish heart, the Turkish head is thirty thousand years old and showed people what it is to love and believe / World, you are blessed; world, wear green! Here comes your former master and lord again.”⁶⁷³ According to Bora, cultural production in 1930s Turkey was in a state of supreme racist exaggeration. “Against the Turks, everything was nothing.” The whole history was drawn as a wimpy character trembling with fear in the face of Turkish raiders in Hakkı Günal's *Bozkurt* play.⁶⁷⁴ That kind of statements definitely pointed the racial superiority of the Turks from the views of the nationalists of the era.

According to Nazan Maksudyan, Turkish nationalism did not have a racist feature afterwards. On the contrary, almost from the very beginning, it contained racist overtones. For her, state-sponsored institutions (Turkish Anthropology Institute, Turkish Historical Society) and publications (*Türk Antropoloji Mecmuası*) are crucial in showing this racist nationalism. Research and publications made in this context also show the racist aspect of Turkish nationalism.⁶⁷⁵ Indeed, there is no doubt that there were practices and discourses that can be described as racist by the state or by nationalists. However, it does not seem reasonable enough to state that Turkish nationalism had an officially and completely racist aspect in the given era. Moreover, it is necessary to reveal whether the anthropological activities shown as evidence of racism were carried

⁶⁷³ Akman, “Türk Tarih Tezi Bağlamında Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Resmi Tarih Yazımının İdeolojik ve Politik Karakteri”, p. 103-105. *Her zamanki Efendin Türk'ü tanı!.. / Türk örnektir Tanrının her pürüzsüz huyuna / Dünya, yaratılmıştır Türk'ün yüzü suyuna / Türk kalbinden geçti ilk Tanrıların kanları / Öbür ırklar sürüyken Türklerdi çobanları! / Dünya, murada erdin; dünya, yeşiller giyin! / Geliyor gene eski sahibin, eski beyin!*

⁶⁷⁴ Bora, *Cereyanlar*, p. 232.

⁶⁷⁵ Nazan Maksudyan, *Türklüğü Ölçmek-Bilimkurgusal Antropoloji ve Türk Milliyetçiliğinin İrkçi Çehresi, 1925-1939*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2005).

out in the name of racism or in the name of being scientific. For Bora, the character of Turkish nationalism is defined by the dichotomy between the definition of nation based on homeland and citizenship and the definition of nation based on race/ethnicity. In following pages, he expresses that eclectic combination of those two approaches was the characteristic of Turkish nationalism.⁶⁷⁶ Similarly, Zürcher propounds that Turkish nationalism in 1920s and 1930s carried out its national and nation-building policies both in territorial and romantic approaches.⁶⁷⁷ Moreover, some researchers have argued that the racist discourse of Turkish nationalism stems from political pragmatism rather than an ideological attitude.⁶⁷⁸

Çağaptay asserts that although Turkish nationalism stressed the ethnical roots for being Turk, it did not close the door for those who would adopt Turkish-ness based on will. The campaigns to promote speaking Turkish and get a Turkish surname kept the ways of entry into Turkish-ness open for ethnic non-Turks. In this respect, the racist aspect of Turkish nationalism in the 1930s was different from the biological, genetic and physically based policies of Nazism or other racist ideologies. Accordingly, the racial expressions used in 1930s Turkey and the anthropological studies carried out indicated a national society, not a biological one. Again, the basic policy was exercised through language, not biological features.⁶⁷⁹ In conclusion of his work, Çağaptay pictures a model that depicted a three-layered Turkish-ness in terms of Turkish nationalism of the 1930s. The outermost was the most inclusive definition of Turkish-ness, which was territorially defined as in the 1934 constitution. Accordingly, all residents of the country were considered Turkish citizens. The second tier was less inclusive

⁶⁷⁶ Bora, “Türkiye’de Milliyetçilik ve Azınlıklar”, p. 82-85.

⁶⁷⁷ Erik Jan Zürcher, “Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Sınırlarına Yeniden Bakarken”, p. 282.

⁶⁷⁸ Eissenstat, “Erken Dönem Türk Milliyetçiliğinde Irkçı Düşünce”, p. 48.

⁶⁷⁹ Çağaptay, *Türkiye’de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 100-101.

and based on religion. As a legacy of the understanding of nationalism in previous periods, Kemalists saw Islam as a way for being Turk. Thus, non-Turkish Muslims were seen (through culture) as members of Turkish-ness. The third and least inclusive stratum defined Turkish-ness as ethnically based. For the state, only the members of this stratum were considered as real Turks, and it could also be seen in the daily practices of the state. However, the state was willing to accept non-Turkish Muslims as Turks if they shifted to Turkish language. Policies of settlement and integration should have served to this plan.⁶⁸⁰

Therefore, it is possible to apply to the suggestion of Brubaker revealed in the second chapter. Turkish nationalism in 1920s and 1930s was shaped and promoted by the state to a great extent. During this process, the state sometimes adopted the method accepted as French type nationalism, which is both based on will and includes the assimilation of different identities. On the other hand, the approach of emphasizing linguistic and ethno-cultural features -attributed to German-type nationalism- was also applied. Of course, the ruling class also had an ideology and different approaches to the subject. However, political benefits rather than ideology should have been considered in the operation of the process. Thus, two approaches, which were thought to be in conflict with each other, could be applied simultaneously.

4.1.3. Point of View of Turkish Historical Society

Special importance is attached to the Turkish Historical Society in the evaluation of Turkish nationalism of the 1930s. While there is no doubt that the Society has developed a strong nationalist historical narrative, it has been suggested in some studies that it also supported and promoted racist discourse. According to Maksudyan, First and Second Turkish History Congresses showed numerous

⁶⁸⁰ Çağaptay, *Türkiye’de İslam, Laiklik ve Milliyetçilik*, p. 253-255.

examples of racist thought. For example, Afet⁶⁸¹, Fuat (Köprülü)⁶⁸² and Reşit Galip⁶⁸³ made presentations with robust emphasis on the ancientness and greatness of Turkish race during the first congress. The second one also included many presentations on race as a decisive factor in world history. Moreover, anthropological studies of Şevket Aziz, member of the Society, supported the Turkish History Thesis with racial approaches.⁶⁸⁴ Similarly, Yıldız sets forth that especially Second Turkish History Congress served to the formation of discourse on “supreme race” with presentations on blood types and anthropological data.⁶⁸⁵ For Aydın, main points of Turkish History Thesis (brachycephalic race, autochthonous residents of Anatolia, claims on ethnic connections with the ancient Anatolians -especially Hittites- etc.) were fostered by anthropological research and it showed racist inclinations at this period.⁶⁸⁶ In summary, in those studies, it is claimed that the Turkish Historical Society emphasized an ethnic-based Turkish nationalism in the 1930s and even resorted to racist methods in this discourse. Indeed, discourse of the institution emphasizing the Turkish ethnicity at some research and publications⁶⁸⁷ that can be described as racist -

⁶⁸¹ Afet, “Tarihten Evvel ve Tarih Fecrinde”, *BTTK*, p. 18-41.

⁶⁸² Fuat, “Türk Tarihi Hakkında Bazı Umumi Meseleler”, *BTTK*, p. 42-49.

⁶⁸³ Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 99-161.

⁶⁸⁴ Maksudyay, *Türklüğü Ölçmek*, p. 59-65.

⁶⁸⁵ Yıldız, *Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyebilene*, p. 190. Still, he admits that this process did not give way to a systematical racism but was adopted pragmatically.

⁶⁸⁶ Suavi Aydın, “Cumhuriyet’in İdeolojik Şekillenmesinde Antropolojinin Rolü: Irkçı Paradigmanın Yükselişi ve Düşüşü”, in *Modern Türkiye’de Siyasi Düşünce II: Kemalizm* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2001), p. 359. For the evaluation of discussions on the racist discourse of Turkish Historical Society, see Akman, “Türk Tarih Tezi Bağlamında Erken Cumhuriyet Dönemi Resmi Tarih Yazımının İdeolojik ve Politik Karakteri”, p. 80-109; Ahmet Kerim Gültekin, “Cumhuriyetin Kuruluş Dönemi Açısından Antropoloji ve Irkçılık Tartışmaları Hakkında Görüşler”, *Ankara Üniversitesi Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Dergisi*, 55/1, (2015): p. 91-111.

⁶⁸⁷ Especially on craniological research and studies on blood types.

especially from today's perspective- can be found. Still, it is useful to look at the institution's views on nation, nationalism, and race through its own works and the records of its representatives.

History textbooks and *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* should be regarded as handbook of the Society. Hence, the narrative within them would provide insight for the questions above. According to the textbook, although Islamism, Turkish nationalism, Turkism and Turanism had appeared since the second half of the nineteenth century in Turkey, their definitions, aims and methods were vague. But new Turkish Republic and ruling *Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası* (Republican People's Party) recognized Turkish nationalism as a principle of state system in its political, economic and cultural forms. This nationalism would regard the Turkish nation as an honorable member of humanity and does not foster enmity against any nation unless a threat is faced to Turkish dignity and interests. Moreover, despite wishing prosperity for and caring about all the Turks living in any part of the world, political focus of this new nationalism would be limited to territories of modern Turkey; and in Turkey, any person who could speak Turkish, was raised in Turkish culture and adopted Turkish ideals would be embraced as Turk regardless of his/her religion.⁶⁸⁸ In other words, elements of being a nation were accepted as common language, common culture and common ideals; all of which could be fortified with historical narrative. It can also be inferred from *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* that sole racial identities could not suffice to form the nation when common language and culture is missing.⁶⁸⁹ Moreover, presentation of Ali Fuad Başgil in Second Turkish History Congress (it is known that Atatürk read and approved it) provides a detailed picture of Turkish nationalism.⁶⁹⁰ Although the author describes Atatürk as “the great genius that was created by noble and pure Turkish blood” in a racist way, whole

⁶⁸⁸ *Tarih IV*, p. 181-182.

⁶⁸⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 359.

⁶⁹⁰ Başgil, “Türk Milliyetçiliği-Doğuşu-Manası-Gayesi ve Vasıfları”, *İTTK*, p. 983-995.

of his narrative is based on a democratic and political type of nationalism. For Başgil, Turkish nationalism -made up of self-belief and trust- aims to work to ensure the integrity and greatness of the nation, to keep the national needs and interests above all needs and interests, to create a bond of brotherhood among Turks based on unity and cooperation. It is also understood in other parts of the paper that “Turk” came to mean citizens of Turkey. Furthermore, it has been argued that this nationalism also had a program in the fields of culture, education and economy. At the same time, it is noted that this nationalism knew how to limit its desires, that its own rights and interests would not conflict with the rights and interests of the world's nations, and that it was based on peace in the international order.

Regarding racism allegations originating from archeology and anthropology studies, it could be argued that main goal of the research on those fields was to show or establish connections between Central Asian, ancient Anatolian and twentieth century Turks. Since the generation of the founders of Turkish Historical Society had intensely been influenced by the positivistic philosophy, “objective” arguments were sought to point the Turkish existence in Anatolia. As Samih Rifat elucidated, the twentieth century was the age of analysis and observation, and rumors and stories should have been approached with suspicion.⁶⁹¹ One of the lecturers of *Darülfünun*, Halil Nimetullah Bey also stated that Turkish Historical Society aimed at generating scientific works contrary to the previous religion-based subjective studies.⁶⁹² Hence, in addition to archival sources, which could hardly be available for the ancient times, archaeology and anthropology were referred as objective sciences to support the claims.⁶⁹³ Cultural revolution and “enlightenment” of Turkey in 1930s was

⁶⁹¹ BTTK, p. 230.

⁶⁹² BTTK, p. 330.

⁶⁹³ Mustafa Kemal described those two sciences as such: “[...] Human intelligence found out new methods and sciences to enlighten the history. Archaeology and anthropology are at the top of them. As long as history relies on the findings of those sciences, it will be well-founded. And

shaped with the trends in the Western world and leading social scientists such as George Wells, Eugene Pittard and Carl Brockelmann; accordingly, archaeology and anthropology were promoted while history of the Turks was extended to thousands of years ago.⁶⁹⁴ This situation was highly related with the transformation in Europe in ideological terms. The period between two world wars saw the regression of sociology and increasing demand for anthropology. At the same time, the racial discourse in Europe gave way to racial-physical anthropology. This branch started to highlight Central Asia as a cradle of civilization. Starting from this, Turkish ruling elite, who was in pursuit of solution to the problem of identity in a young state, opted for gravitating to anthropology.⁶⁹⁵ These motivations oriented the Society to focus on both archaeology and anthropology.

It is possible to encounter thoughts and explanations about race and racism in the basic publications of the Society and in the statements of its representatives. In *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, the subject of “race” was dealt as a basic term. The explanation on the term in the book could be summarized as such: the people had been scattered on different parts of the world. Each part would offer its own material and social features for the ones living there. Then, different groups of people could emerge in different places. Those differences could make categorizing the people possible, which formed the basis of the racial classifications. According to this division, “white” people in Central Asia, Northern Asia, and Europe; “yellow” and Mongoloid people in East Asia; “black” people in Africa; and “red” people in America could be divided in different groups. On the other hand, it is stated that a division based on the skin

the nations whose histories are base off of the findings of those sciences would know and find themselves. Indeed, Turkish history relies on that kind of scientific evidences”, *Düşünceleriyle Atatürk*, ed. Arı İnan (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2018), p. 143.

⁶⁹⁴ Toprak, *Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji*, p. xix.

⁶⁹⁵ Zafer Toprak, *Atatürk-Kurucu Felsefenin Evrimi*, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Yayınları, 2020), p. 342.

color could not be applied for the skeletons of people who had lived earlier. Then, the surveys on the brain pans and linear measures of the body from the skeletons could help dividing the races. In this division, two types of skull pans are offered: brachycephalic and dolichocephalic. The types were determined through elaborative measuring of the brain pans/heads and the results obtained with the research. The Turks are considered to have the former type of the brain pans, namely the brachycephalic type. The chapter ends with the conclusion on the definition of the race: it is a unity of the people with same blood and similar physical features.⁶⁹⁶ Accordingly, Turkish race (considered as a larger group than the current Turkish nation) was correlated mostly with physical features in 1930s.

However, there was not an agreement on the definition of “race” among the members of the Society. In the First Turkish History Congress, Sadri Maksudi, despite being one of the editors of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, questioned the existence of “race” for human beings and whether it could result in any differences between the people or not.⁶⁹⁷ Moreover, “Turkish race” and “Turkish nation” were used interchangeably, too. It was declared that Turkish race constituted the Turkish nation with a common language, culture and history, which was accepted as the description of the nation at that time.⁶⁹⁸ Still, in spite of the ambiguity of the term to a degree, members of the Society usually pronounced “race” in publications or conferences. However, rather than containing political or discriminatory meaning, it is used as an anthropological and scientific term according to the period.⁶⁹⁹ They also often felt the need to record that Turkish History Thesis was not racist. To illustrate, Reşit Galip

⁶⁹⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 22-25.

⁶⁹⁷ Arsal, “Tarihin Amilleri”, *BTTK*, p. 348.

⁶⁹⁸ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 27.

⁶⁹⁹ Özkul, “Akademik Literatürde Türk Tarih Tezi Sorunsalı”, p. 44.

harshly criticized and accused the Western world of dividing the humanity based on the color and bones of the people.⁷⁰⁰ For Sadri Maksudi, (without forgetting that the issues on race could not be solved) the stance of Turkish Historical Society and Turkish History Thesis toward race was clear: it was not way of discrimination between people and their abilities.⁷⁰¹ On the other hand, what motivated the Turkish Historical Society to investigate the brain pans and body types was to settle the matter in objective evidences. For the Society, that matter was as such: Turkish nation belonged to the white race with brachycephalic brain pans and they were the descendants of the ancient brachycephalic people who had established and carried civilizations.⁷⁰² Indeed, starting from the nineteenth and during the first half of the twentieth centuries, the Western world saw “scientific studies” on physical and racial anthropology⁷⁰³ which underrated the Turkish and other eastern communities. Turkish Historical Society responded to this view and had the intention of applying the same “scientific methods” in its claims as counter attack. As Toprak utters, antidote of the anthropology-based European racist ideas would still be anthropology itself.⁷⁰⁴ To illustrate, as Afet put forward, defining the type of brain pans was the latest and most scientific way to group people as races.⁷⁰⁵ Consequently, discourse of the Society in the

⁷⁰⁰ Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 158.

⁷⁰¹ Arsal, “Tarihin Amilleri”, *BTTK*, p. 350.

⁷⁰² Samih Rifat, “Türkçe ve Diğer Lisanlar Arasında İrtibatlar”, *BTTK*, p. 66; Arsal, “Tarihin Amilleri”, *BTTK*, p. 350.

⁷⁰³ See Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man*, (Various cities: The Macmillan Company, 1938); “Report on an Anthropometric Investigation of the Population of the United States”, *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 138, (June 1922): 181-209; *Bioarchaeology-The Contextual Analysis of Human Remains*, ed. Jane E. Buikstra & Lane A. Beck, (Various cities: Elsevier, 2006).

⁷⁰⁴ Toprak, *Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji*, p. xviii.

⁷⁰⁵ Afet, “Tarihten Evvel ve Tarih Fecrinde”, *BTTK*, p. 31.

framework of archaeological and anthropological activities in 1930s had such a background.

After all, Turkish history would serve to reveal the ancientness and virtues of the Turkish nation with the help of archaeological, anthropological, linguistic and archival records without getting a quarrelsome position. Given this approach, it could be suggested that Turkish Historical Society tried to set the bases of new historical narrative mostly around a cultural nationalist manner despite its frequent emphasis on race, anthropology and ethnic roots. In order to explain this situation, the model proposed in the nationalism type can be applied: just as it has been claimed that Turkish nationalism in 1920s and 1930s was an example of "state-framed nationalism" that included both civic and ethnic elements; the national historiography of the Society was also inevitably affected by this situation, and it should have been shaped sometimes on a civil and sometimes on an ethnic basis. At this point, it can be considered that the Society acted according to political pragmatism rather than a completely democratic or completely ethnic-racist point of view. On the other hand, it is also understood that the primordialist view of nationalism was adopted by the Society as thousands of years of existence was attributed to Turkish nation.

4.2. Views on Islam and Islamic Civilization

In the works of the Turkish Historical Society and in the Turkish History Thesis, there is a wide narrative about the religion of Islam and the history of Islam. But, as will be pointed out below, this narrative involves intense reinterpretations. Thanks to these interpretations, a claim has been made within the history thesis that the Turks made great contributions to Islamic civilization and Muslim states. But before evaluating this claim, it is necessary to identify some issues regarding the general view of Islam in Turkey in 1930s. Subsequently, it will be understood to what extent the Society's thesis on Islam is compatible with the view in the country.

4.2.1. Understanding of Islam in Turkey in 1930s

In the previous part, within the issue on Turkish nationalism, it was pointed out that religion and religious discourses played a major role during the National Struggle and the early years of the Republic. Yet, as it is known, in the course of time, changes have occurred in terms of the position of religion, view of religion, and the relationship between religion and politics in from the eyes of state administrators. According to İsmail Kara, the importance Mustafa Kemal Pasha attributed to Islam in a parliamentary speech in 1920 (also mentioned above) and the secular/non-religious/worldly and science-based needs he expressed at the opening of Ankara Faculty of Law in 1925 clearly reveal this change.⁷⁰⁶ Thus, for the author, it is possible to examine religion-politics relations in three periods in modern Turkey.

The first one, which started with the Turkish National Struggle and ended in 1924, was the period in which Pan-Islamic and pro-Caliphate discourses were dominant, and members of the sects and religious leaders were considered reputable in the social and political arena. So much so that during this period, it is reported, Mustafa Kemal Pasha delivered a sermon in a mosque in Balıkesir in 1923 covering the unity of Allah, confirming that the Prophet Muhammad was a messenger for religious preaching, that the *Kanun-i Esasi* (constitution) was in accordance with the provisions of the Koran, and that Islam was the last religion and was compatible with reason and science. Then, the second period included timespan between 1924 and 1944 (even the 1950 elections). This era witnessed religion-based restrictions, repressions and detentions, imprisonments and even executions. Again, in this period, processes such as the abolition of the Caliphate, the closure of madrasahs and lodges, the neglect of religious services

⁷⁰⁶ “[...] The common bond that the nation thinks between individuals for the continuation of its existence has been provided by the connection of Turkish nationality instead of religious and sectarian connection. [...] As a natural and necessary consequence of the mentioned change and revolution, the general administration and all laws shall be composed of worldly needs; and it has been approved that a worldly (secular) administration mentality will be formed in a way that will change and develop depending on the changes in needs over time.” İsmail Kara, “Din ile Olmuyor Dinsiz de Olmuyor! Cumhuriyet Devri Din Politikaları”, in *Cumhuriyet Tarihinin Tartışmalı Konuları*, ed. Bülent Bilmez, (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2013), p. 87-88.

and mosques, shifting the call to prayer to Turkish, and the conversion of Hagia Sophia into a museum were observed.⁷⁰⁷

It was stated that in Turkey in the 1930s, when nationalism accelerated in the political arena, exaggerated discourses about the Turkish nation increased. Similarly, when religion began to fall into the background in Turkish politics, anti-religious rhetoric, which would almost declare the Republic and Kemalism as the new religion, was encountered. Onur Atalay provides clear examples of the discourse in 1920s and 1930s, which aims to present Kemalism as a new religion (by replacing Islam). For Atalay, the Turkish Republican elite was aware that the dominant political view in authoritarian regimes such as in Russia, Germany and Italy was almost considered as religion in society. In this period, Falih Rifkî, Yakup Kadri and Hamdullah Subhi made statements praising the Italian and Russian way of politics in consecrating the ideology and wished the same for Turkey. Perhaps one of the most extreme examples of the issue can be seen in the Hatay National Anthem, accepted by a society founded by Atatürk for Hatay's struggle to join the motherland: “Our sect is Kamâlist, we are modern Hata’s / We existed before history, we have existence after history / We worship Kamalism instead of Sunni, Shiite / We existed before history, we have existence after history”.⁷⁰⁸ Doubtlessly, it is possible to multiply such examples. The important point here is that as a result of the removal of Islam from the political and public sphere, its exclusion or limitation of its influence, sanctity has begun to be attributed to the state ideology to fill this gap.

⁷⁰⁷ The third period covers post-1960 era. Kara, “Din ile Olmuyor Dinsiz de Olmuyor!”, p. 82-83. Although this is a different issue, it seems useful to point out that the suggestions made in an article (by Kılıçzade Hakkı) as early as 1912 seem to herald the revolutions in the field of religion in the Republican era. Accordingly, it was suggested that women should be given freedom in their clothing, closure of dervish lodges and zawiyas, religious offerings should be banned and donations should be directed to national institutions, and sermons (khutbah) should be read in Turkish according to the needs of the period. Kara, *ibid*, p. 84.

⁷⁰⁸ “*Mezhebimiz Kamâlist, biz asrî Hatalarız / Tarihten önce vardık tarihten sonra varız / Sünni, Şii yerine Kamâlizme taparız / Tarihten önce vardık tarihten sonra varız.* Onur Atalay, *İki Dünya Savaşı Arasında Türkiye’de Siyasetin Kutsallaşması*, Ph.D. Dissertation, (Galatasaray Üniversitesi, 2016), p. 230-235.

On the other hand, besides those who described Kemalism as a new religion, it is possible to see approaches that criticized and insulted Islam in various ways. To illustrate, in the opening of Assembly in 1937, Atatürk's words "Our main program in our state administration is the program of the Republican People's Party. However, these principles should never be according to the dogmas of books that are thought to come down from the heavens." are reputed and usually referred to show that he was against Islam and that he saw the fundamentals of Islam as unrealistic. Although relatively limited in the academic field,⁷⁰⁹ there is also an opinion in social psychology that Atatürk had an anti-religious attitude and this issue is frequently discussed in popular history publications in Turkey.

Moreover, there is an extensive literature on the Republican regime and state administrators targeting Islam and prohibiting religious practices, more than the texts about the relationship between Atatürk and religion. As Zürcher put forward, beyond the well-known and mentioned reforms (such as the abolition of the Caliphate, the closing of dervish lodges and sects,⁷¹⁰ the adoption of the Latin alphabet, the unification of education, the synchronization of calendar and measurement units with the western world etc.), there were also interventions in the religious sphere in daily life. Regulations on popular religious elements such as the type of clothing, amulets, fortune-tellers, holy sheikhs, shrines of saints, pilgrimages and holidays were also introduced, which provoked greater reactions than the one to the abolition of the caliphate or madrasas.⁷¹¹ Certain other laws and regulations (for example collection of the skins of the sacrificed animal by

⁷⁰⁹ Andrew Mango reported Mustafa Kemal's anti-religious comments in an interview with Grace Ellison in 1928. See *Atatürk*, trans. Füsun Doruker, (İstanbul: Yeni Binyıl Yayınları, 2000), p. 447.

⁷¹⁰ As Hüseyin Kara cited from Setaç Solgun, legal action has been taken against more than 1000 people for their covered sectarianism between 1929-1937. See Hüseyin Kara, "Tek Parti Dönemi Din Politikası (1923-1946)", *Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, 9/19 (2017): p. 121; Setaç Solgun, *Menemen Olayı Sonrasında İkinci Dünya Savaşı'na Türkiye'nin İç Güvenliği (1931-1939)* Ph.D. Dissertation, (İstanbul Üniversitesi, 2010), p. 148.

⁷¹¹ Erik Jan Zürcher, *Modernleşen Türkiye'nin Tarihi*, trans. Yasemin Saner Gönen, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 1999), p. 279.

the state and the necessity of giving *zakat* to official associations) have also caused reactions as the state's restrictions on religious life or perceived as insults to the religion.⁷¹² These examples show that the state has also been included in the religious field that was previously practiced among the people and has shaped the rituals from the past in line with its own program, which is generally interpreted as the oppressive practices of the state on religion and religious people.

Consequently, the narratives on the relationship between Atatürk and Islam, and about the position of the single-party government against Islam, claim that relations with Islam in the early Republican era were extremely problematic. Interpretations such as that Islam is ignored, rejected and insulted by the state are also frequently encountered. Yet, it has been shown by Kara and Zorlu Durukan⁷¹³ in relatively recent studies that this is not exactly the case, and new suggestions have been made to understand the relationship between the republican government and Islam. As the former claimed, the Republican administration did not pursue an understanding of laicism that would completely separate religion from state affairs and, accordingly, religious policies. Although religion was wanted to be controlled and suppressed on the one hand, on the other, the state encouraged to spread religion in its own way and to become more religious of the people. Moreover, abolition of the Caliphate and closure of the madrasa and religious schools were carried out with vague statements and operations, which somehow kept the way back open when needed. Next, according to the author, İsmet Pasha once argued (on the Law of Unification of Instruction) “[...] seeing the work we do contrary to religion is not seeing the work done. We are of the opinion that the work done has nothing to do with irreligion. [...] those who oppose us or are concerned about our actions with

⁷¹² On this issue, Cemil Koçak produced various works. See *Madalyonun Arka Yüzü* (İstanbul: Timaş, 2021); *Tek Parti Döneminde Muhallif Sesler*, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2015). Of course, there are many publications that do not come to the fore with scientific-academic style, but have potential to affect large audiences.

⁷¹³ It will be touched below especially regarding the role of Islam in Turkish History Thesis.

religious sensitivity will see that the purest, clearest and most genuine form of Islam has been manifested in us.”⁷¹⁴ As can be seen from this example, the Republican administration did not completely discard Islam. On the contrary, issues such as the establishment of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs under the Prime Ministry, and the provision of religious lessons in schools and universities by the Ministry of National Education show that the Republican administration did not have a negative attitude towards religion, as is often claimed. It would not be right to see the religious policy in this period as a holistic and systematic program. Because, as partly stated above, there have been changing meanings in politics related to religion or areas that were left consciously or unconsciously ambiguous. However, it can be argued that the entire ruling elite agreed on the usefulness of a religion that the state could control and promote. This ambiguous (but not indifferent) attitude towards religion in the political sphere similarly appeared in the narrative of history.

As Zorlu Durukan portrayed in her article, the generally adopted view on related literature is that the early Republican historiography until 1940s excluded Islamic and Ottoman historiography, stressed the pre-Islamic and remote past to show the glorious Turkish history, and hardly included Islam and the Ottomans while designing a new identity for the Turks. However, as the author points, it is not entirely true that these two concepts were completely excluded. It was stated above that religion was not excluded in the political arena but was used and even encouraged in line with a new interpretation and based on needs. The same is true in the field of historiography. Rather than a sharp exclusion or ignorance, national historiography -without abandoning to put the nation and ethnic roots to the center- aimed to include Islam coherent with national discourse and ideological priorities.⁷¹⁵

⁷¹⁴ Kara, “Din ile Olmuyor Dinsiz de Olmuyor!”, p. 94.

⁷¹⁵ Zorlu Durukan, “The Religion of Muhammad”, p. 24-25.

That is to say, despite the strong emphasis of Turkish Historical Society about the existence of a long and rich Turkish history before Islam, that religion was not completely ignored in the narrative of the Society as it was argued so.⁷¹⁶ Rather, it was mostly absorbed into the telling of Turkish history. In this new form of history of Islam, the Turks were praised as figures who reinforced the Muslim states or established powerful Turkish-Muslim states and contributed to the civilization of. Then, a look at the portrayal of Islam and conversion of the Turks to this religion according to Turkish History Thesis would be needed.

Actually, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* did not allocate much space for Islam; and it was given place only in mention of the religion of the Turks throughout the history. However, second volume of *History* textbook deals with the history of Islam in more than 100 pages. Subject of Muslim-Turkish states makes the issue larger. That physical size itself could give idea that Islam was in no way excommunicated. The narrative begins with geographical and demographic information on Arab lands and people. The Arabs -with their Semitic origin- are introduced as tribal and primitive people.⁷¹⁷ Then, it is argued that Mohammad saw the poor moral and cultural situation of the Arabs before his showing up as prophet; and after his call to Islam, firstly slaves and needy people began to convert as the new religion offered social and legal equality. On the other hand, personality of Mohammad was praised as he was pictured as a touching, wise and enterprising leader and he had proved his superiority over his contemporaries with his actions. Furthermore, he was introduced as a great and brave military leader who fought in the front and battled better than anybody in his army.⁷¹⁸ However, death of Mohammad resulted in the lagging and fall of the Muslim world as his followers could not understand the spirit of the work of Mohammad. This comprehension would be realized during the Republican

⁷¹⁶ Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine*, p. 54.

⁷¹⁷ *Tarih II*, p. 80.

⁷¹⁸ *Tarih II*, p. 93-95.

era.⁷¹⁹ This interesting and frank claim means that Turkish Republic -and Turkish History Thesis- did not fend off Islam (and Mohammad) but contemplated to re-interpret it in a new form. Then, the reign of the Caliphs, and Umayyad, Abbasid and Andalusian reigns were covered in terms of political issues, cultural affairs, Arab-Turkish relations and conversion of the Turks to Islam. In fact, this narrative does not openly include negative remarks on Islam as a religion, but the Arabs are harshly criticized for not understanding and implementing Islam accurately, and for bearing enmity among the Turks because of their envious and low character.

Actually, a reconciliation between the Turks and Islam must have been intended. İsmail Hakkı İzmirli declared radical claims with his text submitted to the Second Turkish History Congress.⁷²⁰ To illustrate, for him, certain significant tribes in Arabian Peninsula were of Turkic origin and they had settled there before Islam. Then, one of the wives of Mohammad was Turk. The Prophet also allegedly wrote a Turkish letter and praised the Turks while prohibiting his followers from struggling with the Turks. Some marginal arguments in this conference included that the Prophet himself could have been of a Turkish origin; and he cited the words of God including compliments for the Turks. Moreover, it was asserted that numerous verses in Koran pointed the Turks with their brave, warrior and fearless character. On the other hand, linguistic theories were put to use to prove the Turkish-ness of a number of words in Koran. These assertions -which were tried to be supported with references to primary sources of previous ages- seem to contend that Islam and the Turks were not conflicting; on the contrary, Islam -actually the God, Prophet and Koran- pronounced the merit of the Turks. Therefore, what seems anti-Islam in Turkish History Thesis must basically imply an anti-Arab discourse.

⁷¹⁹ *Tarih II*, p. 118.

⁷²⁰ İsmail Hakkı İzmirli, “Şark Kaynaklarına Göre Müslümanlıktan Evvel Türk Kültürünün Arap Yarımadasında İzleri”, *İTTK*, p. 280-289.

At this point, Zorlu Durukan claims that the discourse on Islam, Prophet Mohammad and Koran was different from the common respective style. For instance, non-existence of the phrase *Hazret-i* (His Excellence) for Prophet Mohammad, emphases on his earthly qualities, doubtful statements about the sources of Koran and its consider as a kind of literary book, inquiries about the meaning of worship such as pilgrimage, and, finally, the view of Islam as the result of a historical process rather than its divine aspect⁷²¹ were outside the usual interpretation of Islam and was contrary to the centuries-old views of Muslims. In fact, this situation was also a reflection of the uncertainty and ambiguity in the view of religion in the political arena. Similarly, it is clear that a non-standard discourse on religion has been developed in the historical narrative as well. Nevertheless, religion should not be considered to be excluded in this national history program. Hence, the case should be viewed within the scope of shaping the construction of national identity with a new history and a new interpretation of religion. The main point here was not to exclude, ignore or insult religion, but to place it in the national Turkish history appropriately.

Subsequently, entrance of the Turks to Islam as masses constituted the second phase of telling regarding the issue of Islam. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* outlined the story as such: Throughout the history, the Turkish communities had had various religions and belief systems from old Turkish religion to Judaism, Manicheism and Christianity in different parts of the world. Toward the end of the seventh century, Muslim-Arab army had reached to Khorasan. Simultaneously, the Turks of the region were struggling with the Chinese and could not stand out against the Arabs. Thus, an Umayyad commander, Khutayba, tyrannized over the Turks and killed many of them while destroying their cities and flourishing compositions with pillage. In this way, the Turks saw the looter face of the Arabs and kept their distance from them and their religion. However, when the Samanids, who were of Turkish race, established a Muslim administration in Transoxiana, the Turkish clans and states began to accept

⁷²¹ Zorlu Durukan, "The Religion of Muhammad", p. 31-34.

Islam. During the tenth century, thousands of Turks had been Muslim in Central Asia and neighboring regions. Since the Arabs did not refrain from slaughtering even Muslim Turks, the Turks could be reconciled to Islam only when their cognates represented that religion.⁷²² This approach could imply the precedence of kinsmanship over being coreligionist in national historiography. Namely, it was shadowed out by the Society that the issue of nationalism played role in acceptance of Islam for the Turks. On the other hand, it was a way of dismantling the old argument that the Turks had easily converted to Islam and did not have any difficulty in adapting to it thanks to the convenience of this religion. Dissociating from the Arabs as ummah to accommodate the concept of nationhood must also have been aimed.

Anyhow, the acceptance of Islam by most of the Turks toward the end of the first millennium AD was and is a generally accepted fact. Yet, connection of the Turks and Muslims -and Turkish and Islamic history- was re-interpreted in the narrative of Turkish Historical Society. At this point, the Turks were given the higher rank with their contributions to various Muslim states and with their individual efforts in strengthening Islamic civilization.

4.2.2. Contributions to Muslim States in Turkish History Thesis

In the narrative of the Society regarding the relations between the Turks and Islam, one point was about the contributions of the Turks to Muslim states; or establishment of tough and prosperous Turkish states that represented Islam. Within this framework, firstly, the Tuaregs, a tribe in North Africa, were considered and reflected as a Turkish group, possibly with the influence of linguistic similarity of the name. Then, the Umayyad commander, Tariq ibn Ziyad was claimed as a Turk with Tuareg origin who established an army with his Turkish fellows and marched to Spain; and took over certain regions there. However, the Umayyad ruler Musa ibn Nusayr nourished hatred against Tariq

⁷²² *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 322.

instead of appreciating him. This situation was caused by the fact that Musa was Arab whereas Tariq was Turk; and the former could not confess the superiority of the Turks. Nevertheless, as a Turk, Tariq had greatly contributed to the Umayyads and Islam in political and military terms.⁷²³

Next, the Abbasids also benefited from the Turks in state administration. Mothers of al-Mamun and al-Mustasim, the Abbasid rulers, were of Turkish origin. Thus, personal success of al-Mamun and scholarly progresses during his reign were closely related with Turkish influence in his period.⁷²⁴ Moreover, those rulers trusted in Turks in political and administrative duties. Establishment of the city of Samara for the Turks was a gesture and respect of al-Mustasim, and he also lived there till his death. Actually, the Turks became masters at this period despite the plurality of the Arab population. They did not get involved in struggles among the Arabs and strived for ruling the Islam Empire. Indeed, they proved their ability in soldiering and administration and trustworthy character, which placed them above other Muslim communities. For instance, Afşin, Karabuğa, Ferganalı Ömer, Semerkantlı Haris, İtah, Mehmed Aşnas Vasıf and Zirek were famous Turkish commanders of the Abbasids. They were at the top of state management and expanded the boundaries across Anatolia and the Caucasus. On the other hand, the Turks contributed to this state with their supreme abilities in cultural, scientific and fiscal fields.⁷²⁵ To illustrate, Turkish sophistication in science highly influenced the Abbasid city, Baghdad, and created a new cultural and intellectual era there.⁷²⁶ It is stated that many

⁷²³ *Tarih II*, p. 136-137.

⁷²⁴ Güneş, “İslam Dünyasının İnhitatı Sebebi Selçuk İstilası mıdır?”, p. 75.

⁷²⁵ *Tarih II*, p. 159-160.

⁷²⁶ Sayman, “Riyaziye Tarihinde Türk Okulu”, *İTTK*, p. 627.

contemporary and later authors and sources gave the Turks credit for their role in history of Islam.⁷²⁷

With their hegemony on the Islamic world, the Turks also started to establish their own Muslim states from North Africa to India from the ninth century on. The Tulunids, Ikhshidids, Samanids, Kara-Khanids, Ghaznavids, Khwarazmians and Babars (Mughals) were among the Turkish-Muslim states that were claimed to have enhanced the Islam over an extensive area. For instance, For Afet, Ahmed, son of Tulun, was a Turkish ruler who established an autonomous government in Egypt. He built irrigation channels around the Nile, prepared an army mostly composed of Turks, and gathered capable man in administration. As a result, Egypt had reached to prosperity that it had not lived for ages.⁷²⁸ The Samanids, Ghaznavids and Kara-khanids were some other Turkish-Muslim states that increased the fame and honor of Islam. Though it was the Arabs that firstly propagated Islam, the Turks enhanced it in cultural and geographical level.⁷²⁹

Bayur portrays Akbar Shah of the Babars as making significant improvements to Islam in religious and social terms.⁷³⁰ Similarly, Günaltay embraced those states in his conference during the First History Congress. For him, from the tenth to twelfth centuries, the Samanids, Ghaznavids, Kara-khanids, Khwarazmians and Seldjukids created a Turkish age. It was a bright time of evolvement of ability and intelligence of the Turks. Not only political developments, but progresses on science, civilization and art also were encountered. They gave birth to globally known philosophers, poets, historians and mediciners. To illustrate, the

⁷²⁷ Günaltay, “Türk Tarihinin Ana Kaynaklarından Camiüttevarih ve Fazlullah Reşidüddin”, p. 165-179.

⁷²⁸ Afet, “Orta Kurun Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 431.

⁷²⁹ Afet, “Orta Kurun Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 442.

⁷³⁰ Bayur, “16ncı Asırda Dini ve Sosyal Bir İnkılap Teşebbüsü”, p. 133-182.

Samanids greatly contributed to the knowledge of humanity in natural and social sciences. The Ghaznavids built monumental cities with architectural and scientific structures. These all must have been among the greatest service to Islam by the Turks.⁷³¹

Although there was not an open expression of being Muslim states for the Seldjukids and Ottomans, the narrative of the Society did not avoid pronouncing that they had been established by Muslim Turks. Therefore, certain accomplishments of aforementioned states were unhesitatingly chalked up as Turkish service to Islam. For example, the criticism directed to the Seldjukids on the ground that they weakened Islam was responded by Günaltay by counting the labor of them. For him, when the Seldjukids began to rule the Muslim world, the following progresses were made: Political chaos in Near East was ended and a large and disciplined empire was established. Within this administration, laws secured the life and assets of people, tax system was re-organized while trade was flourishing. Sectarian tension within Islam was settled down. On the other hand, foreign attacks to Islam by the Crusaders were blockaded. This political and economic tranquility gave way to rising of Islamic sciences and scholarly life, since medicine, mathematics, physics and philosophy developed in cities such as Ray, Isfahan, Nishapur and Baghdad.⁷³² These all mean that the Seldjukids represented a government which aggrandized Islam in numerous ways.⁷³³

Regarding the Ottomans, it is claimed that the Muslim Turks who flowed into Anatolia constituted the core of the Ottoman Empire. However, whereas Islam was declining, the Ottomans were developing as a world power from the

⁷³¹ Şemsettin Bey, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, *BTTK*, p. 302.

⁷³² Günaltay, “İslam Dünyasının İnhitatı Sebebi Selçuk İstilası mıdır?”, p. 87-88.

⁷³³ For example, Köprülü argues that Seldjukid public administration and law system had an impact upon the Abbasids and certain Northern Africa Muslim states. “Ortazaman Türk Hukuki Müesseseleri”, p. 63.

thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. Yet, religious bigotry clipped the wings of the state for further progresses, which resulted in the infirmity of the Ottoman Turks.⁷³⁴ Still, the Ottomans were held up as members of a high civilization with improvements in astronomy, geography, cartography, medicine, art and architecture. If Turkish power and civilization would not have taken care of Islam, it could not have survived after the twelfth century.⁷³⁵

Consequently, conservatism within Islam was shown as drawback for development. It could only be overcome with fresh blood which was provided by the Turkish contributions in the Abbasids, Ghaznavids, Seldjukids and Ilkhanids in the Middle Ages.⁷³⁶ As Günaltay articulated the ideas and approach of the Society with reference to Leon Cahun, if the Turks had not converted to Islam, Islamic civilization could not have developed and spread as it did. When the Arabs encountered with the Turks, the latter had already reached to a high level of development. Then, their conversion to Islam turned that religion into a major civilization. Thus, the heyday of Islam between the eighth and thirteenth centuries -which even formed the bases of Western civilization in following centuries- was an output of Turkish existence.⁷³⁷

4.2.3. Individual Contributions to Islamic Civilization in Turkish History Thesis

In addition to Turkish-Muslim states that contributed to Islam in various ways, certain individuals were promoted by Turkish Historical Society as Muslim Turks who served to Islamic civilization with their skills. They could be of

⁷³⁴ See Afet, “Türk-Osmanlı Tarihinin Karakteristik Noktalarına Bir Bakış”, p. 123-132.

⁷³⁵ Yusuf Hikmet, “Şarkta İnhitat Sebepleri”, *BTTK*, p. 491.

⁷³⁶ Yusuf Hikmet, “Şarkta İnhitat Sebepleri”, *BTTK*, p. 504

⁷³⁷ Şemsettin, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, *BTTK*, p. 289.

Turkish origin in truth; or they could allegedly be considered as Turks. Yet, what seems significant is that the narrative on the utility of the Turks for Islam included a large list of individuals from different fields (politics, military, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, medicine, literature etc.) and geographies (from Central Asia to Caucasus, Mesopotamia, Anatolia etc.).

Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları firstly treats Nureddin Mahmud, ruler of the Zengids, as a great Turkish Muslim leader. His strong commitment to justice brought him the title of *Melikü'l-Adil* (Fair King). His ethical and moral thoughts also turned him into a prudent, virtuous and propitious man. Accordingly, he made great efforts to improve the spiritual and material world of his subjects. On the other hand, he endeavored to drive the Crusaders out from Jerusalem on behalf of Islam. Thus, with his personality and mentality, he took place on Islam's side and laid the foundation for further success. Then, Saladin Ayyubi brought the matter to conclusion with his victory against the Christians.⁷³⁸ In the meantime, the narrative discusses the ethnic origin of Saladin. It is stated that there were various arguments about him as being of Turkish or non-Turkish origin. Nonetheless, regardless of his racial identity, it is claimed, Saladin had been raised in a Turkish manner and he was a Turk in terms of education, culture and nurture.⁷³⁹ This approach shows the tendency of the Society toward cultural nationalism and role of culture in Turkish-ness, especially when the subject is not ethnically Turkish.

Next, famous Muslim scholars and scientists of the Middle Ages were emphasized with their Turkish identity. Bukhari, Avicenna, Al-Biruni, Al-Farabi and Al-Khwarizmi were among the remarkable examples. Regarding the religious scholars, Bukhari was a Turkish pundit who produced the well-known and mostly referred hadith book. It was even regarded as the most valid work of

⁷³⁸ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 350-351.

⁷³⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 352.

Islamic teaching after the Koran.⁷⁴⁰ In addition to him, İzmirli adds that Abu Khanif, Muslim, Abu Daoudi, Abu Tirmidhi and Nesei also were Turkish religious scholars whose works and teachings could not have been rivalled; and they enhanced the Islamic civilization substantially.⁷⁴¹ Günaltay claims “with a national pride” that Abu Khanif provided the hegemony of rationalism for Turkish-Muslim world in the ninth century; and the Europeans could not reach that level of rationalism even in the eighteenth century.⁷⁴² Thus, the Turks were given credit for embodiment of Islam as a religion, as well as its appearance as a civilization.

For Süheyl Ünver, the Turkish-ness of Avicenna was an uncontestable fact which had been denied by the Europeans or Arabs for centuries. According to him, as a religion, Islam had taken precedence over the Turkish or any other nationality for ages. With that said, Islamic culture was overidentified with the Arab culture. Therefore, any Muslim with high profile was regarded as Arab. This resulted in the false perception that Avicenna was also an Arab scholar. However, Ünver firstly claimed the Turkish-ness of him with several arguments. To begin with, Avicenna was born in Bukhara where Turkish culture was dominant in his time. Second, referring to prevailing thesis of the Europeans that the Turks had lived in rural areas rather than cities in the Middle Ages, Ünver points that Avicenna was raised in a countryside. Next, he applies the linguistic methods to connect the city of Balkh -hometown of the ancestors of Avicenna- to Turkish *balık* (city); and concludes that Avicenna was a Turkish learned man without any doubts.⁷⁴³ Thus, his contribution to knowledge of medicine in

⁷⁴⁰ *Tarih II*, p. 163.

⁷⁴¹ İzmirli, “Şark Kaynaklarına Göre Müslümanlıktan Evvel Türk Kültürünün Arap Yarımadasında İzleri”, *İTTK*, p. 287-289.

⁷⁴² Şemsettin, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, *BTTK*, p. 297.

⁷⁴³ Ünver, “İslam Tababetinde Türk Hekimlerinin Mevkii ve İbni Sina’nın Türklüğü”, p. 270-273.

Islamic world was manifestation of Turkish efficiency in that civilization. Moreover, he also influenced the development of medicine in the West which could turn into a scientific profession after long time.⁷⁴⁴

On the other hand, Ünver gave a list of Turkish-Muslim physicians of the Middle Ages (Abubakr Radhi, Al-Biruni, Fakhraddin Radhi, Nedjibuddin, Fakhraddin, Azraqi, Badraddin Mehmed, Nedjibuddin Abu Khamid, Abu Yazd, Abu Ibrahim, Sharifaddin Ismael, Abu Abbas, Abu Taher, Mohammad, Sherif, Mahmoud, Talha, Geylan, Huseyn, Mahmoud b. Mesoud and Mehmed b. Tarhan) who had been thought as Arab previously. With an objective approach, he also listed the Arab and Persian physicians of the Muslim world. Hence, his real concern was to restrain the neglect of the Turks and make clear their visibility for the formation of a civilization.⁷⁴⁵

It seems that according to the members of the Society or attendants of the First Turkish History Congress, Al-Biruni faced the same destiny with Avicenna, since he had also been regarded as Arab for long times. According to Zeki Velidi, Al-Biruni had written in Arabic as a medium of culture but claimed that he was neither Arab nor Persian. Then, for Zeki Velidi, he was a Turk from Khwarazm.⁷⁴⁶ Next, Reşit Galip also emphasized that the Turkish-ness of Al-Biruni was a long-standing claim of Turkism. It was certain that he was a great Turkish-Muslim scholar and the Society would focus on him and his works throughout the time.⁷⁴⁷ Al-Farabi was another representor of Turkish-Muslim civilization and he was called as *Muallim-i sani* (Second Teacher) alongside of

⁷⁴⁴ Şemsettin, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, *BTTK*, p. 306.

⁷⁴⁵ Ünver, “İslam Tababetinde Türk Hekimlerinin Mevkii ve İbni Sina’nın Türklüğü”, p. 276-277.

⁷⁴⁶ Zeki Velidi, discussions in *BTTK*, p. 375-376.

⁷⁴⁷ Reşit Galip, discussions in *BTTK*, p. 377.

Aristo.⁷⁴⁸ He had played a great role in formation of the philosophy of Turkish-Islam teaching.⁷⁴⁹ On the other hand, it was argued that he was aware of his national identity and denoted the high Turkish intelligence. As a scientist, physician, musician and philosopher, he engraved on Turkish-Islamic civilization. Still, his most remarkable influence was on theology.⁷⁵⁰ Moreover, Western philosophy and philosophers of following centuries had also benefited from his teaching.⁷⁵¹ Therefore, Al-Farabi was portrayed as a great Turkish polymath who had contributed not only to Islamic civilization but also to Western world of thought.

Finally, al-Khwarizmi was a significant Turkish mathematician who added to Islamic and European knowledge on math and algebra. He was also known with contribution to geometry and geography with his noteworthy studies.⁷⁵² Even the term “algorithm” was derived from Al-Khwarizmi.⁷⁵³ Therefore, along with his (almost) contemporaries mentioned above, Al-Khwarizmi was also a Turkish member of the Islamic Golden Age.

All in all, it is possible to increase the examples provided by the members or in the works of the Society about the Turkish individuals who made huge contributions to Islam. However, it does not change the general discourse which places the Turkish intellectuals at the center of the so-called Islamic civilization. During the First Turkish History Congress, Şemsettin Bey flattered himself by

⁷⁴⁸ Günaltay, “İslam Dünyasının Sebebi Selçuk İstilası mıdır?”, p. 76.

⁷⁴⁹ Fon Aster, “Felsefe Tarihinde Türkler”, p. 92.

⁷⁵⁰ Şemsettin Bey, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, *BTTK*, p. 300.

⁷⁵¹ İsmail Hakkı İzmirli, “Peygamber ve Türkler: Birinci Kısım”, *İTTK*, p. 1027.

⁷⁵² Uzdilek, “İki Büyük Türk Aliminin Medeniyete Hizmetleri”, *İTTK*, p. 736-739.

⁷⁵³ Şemsettin Bey, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, *BTTK*, p. 299.

declaring that: “My heart swells with pride as most of the creators of this high civilization -called as Islamic civilization- were the Turks.”⁷⁵⁴ This discourse was meaningful that it would fortify the national pride of the citizens with the great achievements of the previous Turks. On the other hand, it shows again that the Islam was not completely ignored or neglected; but -as argued above- it was incorporated into the narrative of Turkish history in a manner that could bolster up the Turkish History Thesis.

4.3. Rising from the Ashes: History of Modern Turkey

Formulating a new historiography for the Turks brought about a diversity of subjects in a large timespan. The narrative for the Turkish history -in addition to covering a wide geography- began from the pre-historical ages, passed through ancient and medieval ages, and extended to the twentieth century. Yet, the story could not be remained open-ended there. To button up the matter, the history of the Turkish Republic should have been inserted to the syllabus of the new Turkish history writing, although it included relatively contemporary events. Still, it was thought that citizens of Turkey -and mostly young students and new generations- must have learnt the latest and most glorious part of Turkish history that was made by the current rulers of the country. Moreover, it was considered essential to connect the previous and modern Turkish history. A little chapter in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, a massive volume of *Tarih* textbooks, certain articles in *Belleten* and various conferences in the congresses were directly related with the “illustrious history” of Turkish Republic. This attempt clustered around two subjects: while one meant the telling of political-cultural transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey and achievements of the latter, the other was on Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. These subjects constituted the “Turkish Miracle” which appeared from within a number of impossibilities.⁷⁵⁵

⁷⁵⁴ Şemsettin, “İslam Medeniyetinde Türklerin Mevkii”, p. 297.

⁷⁵⁵ *Tarih IV*, p. 132.

At this point, it would be useful to look at how Ottoman history was handled in order to determine both the effort made to show the new Turkish state as a phoenix rising from its ashes, and the views on the Ottomans in the history thesis.

4.3.1. Views on Ottoman History

Though Mustafa Kemal was the founder and head of new Turkey in 1930s, modern Turkish history was a larger subject which provided triumph and progress in a large spectrum of affairs. Therefore, the story of evolution and advancement of the Turkish Republic from a collapsing empire was told within the operations of the Society. A brief look at the reflection of the Ottoman Empire in 1930s could provide benefits to see the cruxes of the story.

First of all, the Ottomans were appreciated for having established a Turkish union in Anatolia in the fourteenth century.⁷⁵⁶ It was asserted that although the time of arrival of the ancestors of the Ottomans to Anatolia was not completely known, they were Central Asian Turks who had moved to Anatolia via Persian route.⁷⁵⁷ Actions of Osman Ghazi against the Byzantine forces had arisen from the heroism peculiar to the Turks.⁷⁵⁸ Then, their march to Rumelia and having the authority was considered as a cause of pride. Conquest of Istanbul by the Ottomans was also dealt as one of the great events of Turkish history. “The Turks who ended the Roman Empire” was a settled approach. Eventually, the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent was recorded with a huge respect:

The reign of Kanuni Süleyman was the most brilliant period of the Ottoman Empire which was the greatest and most powerful state of the world at that time. The territories were large, prosperity and well-being existed. There was not any

⁷⁵⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 380.

⁷⁵⁷ *Tarih III*, p. 1.

⁷⁵⁸ *Tarih III*, p. 3.

power to challenge our army and fleet. Ottoman Turks dominated the three continents of the old world. Simultaneously, we were the most advanced people of the earth on civilization and science. We have imported nothing and produced all what was needed at home. All people within the country were rich. The most valuable poets, scholars, artists, architects were men of that era. Mimar Sinan, Baki and Fuzuli were among them. [...]⁷⁵⁹

Instances of embracing the Ottomans could be visible in books, articles and conferences of the members of the Society. One could easily see the use of first-person plural form of the subject in the passage given above. Mentioning the Ottomans as “we/us/our” by the creators of a new historiography in Turkey should make sense. The examples of praising the Ottomans can be multiplied. What seems critical here is that there was not a total exclusion of the Ottoman history from Turkish historiography in 1930s. Indeed, the claim that Turkish History Thesis carried antagonism directed to the Ottoman history has been a prevalent argument for a long time. In addition to such a discourse that could easily be encountered in daily life, academic works have also been produced in this direction. For instance, Copeaux asserts that the twentieth century Turkish historiography and national consciousness developed against the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁶⁰ However, although the Ottoman-centered historiography was rejected and began to be changed, it is not possible to find a totally anti-Ottoman approach or its ignorance in the works of Turkish Historical Society in 1930s. As shown above, many praises about the Ottoman history were freeheartedly shared in the works of the Society. Obviously, this situation is related to fortify the Turkish image with the achievements of the Ottomans (as well as many other communities in various ages), but revealing their positive sides was not avoided by the Society and its rulers.

However, the Ottoman period from the seventeenth century raised complaints and criticisms in many aspects from politics to economics, land system, diplomacy, culture and so on. Hence, second part of the approach of the Society

⁷⁵⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 395-396.

⁷⁶⁰ Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine*, p. 15

to the Ottoman history brought about severe attacks to the Ottomans. In this way, deeds of the new Turkey would be promoted in a better way after the decadence of the former administration.⁷⁶¹

Afet summarized the deterioration of the Ottoman government in her conference in the Second Turkish History Congress. For her, the Ottoman Empire was a supreme power until the end of the sixteenth century. Then, military descension of the state had a huge role in the fall of the Ottomans. Constant defeat in the battlefields damaged martial, fiscal and territorial structure of the state. Incompetence of the statesmen after Sokullu Mehmed Pasha was another factor. As well as the viziers and bureaucrats, the sultans also lacked the qualification to rule. In a manner of tacitly praising the laicism of 1930s, Afet went on criticizing the Ottoman Empire as religion and state affairs had been mixed in governing. Then, a degenerated dynasty, misgovernment, internal insurgencies, external invasion and exploitation trials turned the Ottomans into “sick man of Europe” in following centuries. In spite of the *Gülhane* and Reform Edicts in the nineteenth century, army and fleet had fallen, economic life had been subjected mostly by the non-Muslims, intellectual sphere had been forgotten.⁷⁶² It is clear that the empire had been pictured in a miserable situation.

In the *History* textbook, lagging of the Ottomans was dealt in a more detailed way. Progress of the Europeans in science, industry and economy from the sixteenth century on while the Ottomans lapsed had resulted in the dominance of the former and regression of the latter. National movements of the European communities to get their independence from the Ottoman Empire had deranged the state. On the other hand, non-compliance of the Ottoman local governors to the administration pulled the carpet from under *Devlet-i Aliyye*’s feet. All in all,

⁷⁶¹ As an indicator of this, Mustafa Kemal once stated that Turkish nation had been sufferer and aggrieved for several centuries, but recent actions and ability of the Turks during Turkish National Struggle would help reaching of the Turks to the deserved stage. Mazhar Müffit Kansu, *Erzurum’dan Ölümüne Kadar Atatürk’le Beraber*, vol. II, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2019), p. 599.

⁷⁶² Afet, “Türk-Osmanlı Tarihinin Karakteristik Noktalarına Bir Bakış”, *İTTK*, p. 128-132.

gradually worsening position of the state had continued in military, political, economic, social, legal and diplomatic spheres until the second decade of the twentieth century when the incessant wars in North Africa, Balkans and the Great War annihilated the Ottoman Empire.⁷⁶³ While a part of this narrative gave credit to the superiority of the West and changing world order in political and economic terms, the Ottoman government was also accused of implementing totally wrong policies. The last Ottoman rulers were blamed even with treason.⁷⁶⁴

In addition to that general narrative, certain specific articles have been published by the Society to criticize the various aspects of the former administration. For instance, approach of the Istanbul government to Ankara administration and Turkish National Struggle was reprobated by Hikmet Bayur. Moving from a report of Ahmed İzzet Pasha, latest Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Ottoman Empire, the author claims that rulers of the last Ottoman era saw the Turks incapable of anything and believed that they deserved to live a “wormy” life; that the Turks were always unjust and faulty; that protecting the Sultan and his rights were above all; and that holding the political power was more important than any principles.⁷⁶⁵ The story was combined with the harsh critique directed to Ottoman political and religious elite as they had opposed to the Turkish War of Independence and even cooperated with the enemies.

Then, educational underdevelopment of the Ottomans was dealt by İhsan Sungu who was a member of the Society and the Ministry of Culture. The religious influence had spread over the regular schools and even *Darülfünun*. Before

⁷⁶³ *Tarih III*, chapters III and IV.

⁷⁶⁴ *Tarih IV*, p. 13.

⁷⁶⁵ Bayur, “Son Osmanlı Hariciye Nazırının Bir Layihası”, p. 452-456.

them, the madrasah itself had resulted bigotry in the country.⁷⁶⁶ Therefore, irregularity in education until the Republican period was shown with examples. Next, legal system of the Ottoman Empire till the promulgation of the Civil Code in 1926 became a subject of disapprobation from the eyes of the new rulers of Turkey.⁷⁶⁷ Then, people subjected to ill-treatment and insufficient health care service from the eighteenth century were elaborated by Dr. Osman Şevki,⁷⁶⁸ who was a member of parliament in 1930s and nominated by Atatürk himself. Another article of him unbared the existence of ignorance and absence of technical methods in medicine in Turkey until the Republican era,⁷⁶⁹ which eventually resulted in poor public health.

In the narrative, in which the strong periods of the Ottoman Empire were mentioned and these successes were recorded as the success of the Turkish nation, the Ottoman state after the seventeenth century is considered as the “history of decay”. Actually, the narrative about this bad course was actually set up as a background to emphasize the gaining and achievements of the Republican era.

4.3.2. Achievements of the New Turkey

It is obvious that the creators of Turkish History Thesis exhibited the general situation regarding the Ottoman history before moving to the deeds of new Turkey. In this attempt, favorable and strong sides of the Ottoman history were presented first. Then, decay of the Ottomans was elaborated both in basic and detailed ways. Breakdown of the empire in military, political, fiscal and certain

⁷⁶⁶ Sungu, “Tevhidi Tedrisat”, p. 398-410.

⁷⁶⁷ Özer, “Cumhuriyet Hukuk İnkılabı”.

⁷⁶⁸ Uludağ, “Osmanlı Tıp Tarihinde Reaya Hastaneleri ve İmtiyazları”, p. 279-282.

⁷⁶⁹ Uludağ, “Son Kapitülasyonlardan Biri Karantina”, p. 445-467.

other fields; and the opposition of the Ottoman rulers to Turkish national resistance and leaders were delineated as signs of a corrupt administration which was considered as a justification of a new and national government. Accordingly, struggle and achievements of modern Turkey were settled over such a background.⁷⁷⁰

The year 1918 when the World War I ended and Ottoman Empire *de facto* ruined was considered as the birth time of the new Turkish state which emerged thanks to the “might of the Turks”. In his *Nutuk*, Mustafa Kemal portrayed the general situation of the empire after the end of the war as a slough of despond.⁷⁷¹ However, the Turks -“real owner and ruler of the country”- had started to act to change the situation and save the country. Though being wounded and tired, they were strong, lively and hopeful. Just like they had established the stronger Ottoman Empire after the fall of the Seldjukids, now they were determined to found a new and forcible administration with their own names after the abolition of the Ottomans.⁷⁷² Moving of Mustafa Kemal to Samsun and his circular letters about the condition of the country, gathering of the nationalists around the idea of independence, congresses in Erzurum and Sivas and opening of the Turkish Grand National Assembly were the footsteps of a new Turkish state. *History* textbook of the Society embodied that process in details as the just and right emergence and flourish of the Turkish National Movement.

⁷⁷⁰ Prof. Richard Hartmann from Berlin skillfully formulated the approach of the new Turkish leaders in his work published within the proceedings of the Second Turkish History Congress. For Hartmann, new Turkish Republic was strictly different and more advanced than the Ottoman Empire in political terms. So, there was a sharp contrast between two administrations. On the other hand, Turkey of 1930's could be linked to the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century in terms of prosperity. Thus, a continuity in the success could be mentioned. “Umumi Türk Tarihi Çerçevesi İçinde Yeni Türkiye”, *İTTK*, p. 748. Creators of the Turkish History Thesis also adopted such a view about the Ottoman Empire and Turkish Republic comparisons.

⁷⁷¹ Gazi Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk*, (Ankara: Kaynak Yayınları, 2015).

⁷⁷² *Tarih IV*, p. 14.

For the creators of the history thesis, the aims of that movement included saving the Turkish land from the invaders, refusing the economic and legal dependence of the Ottomans, abolishing the monarchy or limited government that dragged the Ottoman Empire into downfall, settling laicism in order to codify civil, social and political systems harmoniously with contemporary theories while limiting the religious principles to the relation between human and god, annulling the Caliphate which could damage the laicism, shifting to Western civilization from the Eastern one which remained stable since the seventeenth century, and exterminating the superstitious traditions and institutions remaining from the Medieval.⁷⁷³ It is obvious that those aims were compiled ten years after the National Movement. Hence, it bears some traces of anachronism and reconstructed view of past since the editors already admitted that those aims had been fulfilled. It is highly probable that they wrote down what was somehow achieved later, rather than what was planned at the beginning. Nevertheless, that passage is significant to reflect the approach of the Society to the National Struggle related to the intention of projecting it into the minds of the people.

As stated above, War of Independence, the military side of the National Movement, constituted an aspect of the accomplishments of the Turkish movement in the historiography of 1930s. According to prevailing view, the Armistice of Moudros had given unfair rights to the Entente Powers over the defeated states including the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans got a slap in the face with the occupation of Istanbul and Izmir, which resulted in the march of Mustafa Kemal Pasha to Samsun in disguise of Ottoman officer. Then, he disclosed his plans with letters about the situation of the country and various congresses. Next, the battles against certain powers in a number of fronts in Anatolia ended with the entrance of the glorious Turkish soldiers to İzmir.⁷⁷⁴ It was followed with an international conference in Lausanne for the confirmation

⁷⁷³ *Tarih IV*, p. 56-57.

⁷⁷⁴ Afet, "Türk İstiklali ve Lozan Muahedesi", p. 282.

of the results of the war. Mustafa Kemal depicted the adventure of Lausanne in his *Nutuk* as following:

Although we were not responsible for the indulgence and mistakes of history and we should not have been asked on the accrued affairs of ages, encountering the world fell to our share. We had to stand up to difficulties and devotion for the nation and state to obtain full independence and sovereignty. I was sure about the positive result and did not have any doubt on the confirmation of the principles of the existence, independence and sovereignty of the Turkish nation by the world public opinion. Actually, those principles had already and de facto been achieved with power and merit. What was expected in the conference was a symbolic confirmation of the actual gainings.[...] ⁷⁷⁵

Afet supported that view and concluded that all the rights of the Turkish nation were accorded in Lausanne. In this respect, the Treaty of Lausanne was an expression of the supremacy of the justice over injustice. ⁷⁷⁶ Afterwards, it was claimed that Turkey reached a highly prestigious status -unlike the Ottoman Empire of last several centuries- in international affairs, and the diplomatic victory in Lausanne was continued with respected and equal relations with previously enemy countries. ⁷⁷⁷ Russia, Greece, Yugoslavia, Romania, Persia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Germany, Italy, and the USA were held up as the countries that appreciated the Turks and sovereignty of Turkey. For Yusuf Hikmet, though it did not draw much attention, establishing good relations with those and other countries was a great achievement of the Republican Turkey and it gave way to a comfortable and peaceful life for the Turks. ⁷⁷⁸ Consequently, the subject on emergence of Turkish nationalists for independence after the fall of the

⁷⁷⁵ Gazi Mustafa Kemal, *Nutuk*, p. 535.

⁷⁷⁶ Afet, “Türk İstiklali ve Lozan Muahedesi”, p. 291.

⁷⁷⁷ For Cemil Bilsel, significance of the Treaty of Lausanne does not come from its ceasing a long war (since there were longer wars in Turkish history); nor its importance is based on the victory of Turks (as the Turks had won many battles throughout history). But the high cruciality of the treaty originates from the fact that it established the principles of the Turkish National Struggle before the opposite states and provided that Turkey could carry out her relations according to the principles announced in Lausanne. Bilsel, “Lozan Barış Andlaşması”, *İTTK*, p. 996.

⁷⁷⁸ Bayur, “Son Yirmi Beş Yıllık Tarihimize Bakışlar”, p. 332-334

Ottomans, execution of a national resistance movement by them and affirmation of the victory and rights of the Turks in battlefield and diplomatic sphere occupied an important place in the narrative of the deeds of new Turkey. Then, boasting of developments/achievements/reforms in political, educational, social and economic life after 1923 has a wide coverage within that narrative.⁷⁷⁹

On the political side, abolition of the sultanate and caliphate was among the significant achievements on which the rulers of new Turkey prided. According to the thesis, upon the military triumph of Anatolian powers between 1919 and 1922, Ottoman government showed its hand to attend the international peace conferences in addition to Ankara government. Then, it could mean “fall of the nation into the clutches of the Ottoman sultanate” again. Furthermore, invitation of the Ottoman government to Lausanne Conference was a reflection of the intrigue of the Western powers to stir controversy among the Turks. Then, Turkish National Assembly proscribed the sultanate with the proposal of Mustafa Kemal. However, the story was not ended. Existence and potential risk of the Caliph for intervening in politics required its dissolving, too. Actually, the National Assembly could not share its authority and power of representation of the citizens with the Caliph or any other organization. Thus, the institution of caliphate was extinguished in 1924 after several months of promulgation of the Republic as the type of new government.⁷⁸⁰ It was emphasized that while the Turks had shed their clean blood to honor the Islam for centuries, Muslim-Arabs

⁷⁷⁹ The Society did not only record the deeds of modern Turkish history, but it also mentioned various reforms from previous ages and large areas to legitimize the Turkish transformation. Article of Yusuf Hikmet Bayur on the reforms of Ekber Shah is highly critical from this point of view. Examples from a sixteenth century Turkish state in India could make modern Turkish initiatives more meaningful. Limiting the power and intervention of religion on political affairs, giving rights to women and arranging the marriage-divorcing processes, organizing the calendar and inventing secular festivals -in addition to religious ones-, regulations in economic, social and educational spheres were reforms of Ekber Shah in Babur (Mughal) Empire. Publishing this article in an early issue of *Belleten* should not be a coincidence. Thus, it could be argued that the telling of the deeds of contemporary Turkish history was reinforced with references to historical events that could seem irrelevant at first glance. “16ncı Asırda Dini ve Sosyal Bir İnkılap Teşebbüsü”, p. 133-182.; Similarly, the Sumerians were portrayed to have educated boys and girls in schools together, in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 131. It is also an instance of referring to past to justify the modern decisions of the government.

⁷⁸⁰ *Tarih IV*, p. 123-124.

did not refrain from collaborating with the non-Muslims to kill the Turks. So, it was impossible to find any community except the Turks under the flag of the Caliph when it was needed. Only this could show the impropriety of the caliphate.⁷⁸¹ Proclamation of the republic as the ultimate and perfect administration of the Turks, codification of *Teşkilat-ı Esasiye* (Constitutional Law), doctrines of the Republican Party, activities of the National Assembly, legal reforms and organization,⁷⁸² and woman rights⁷⁸³ have also been placed in the telling of political gaining of the Turkish Republic.

It could be argued those political reforms were depicted as the most radical transformation movements for the origination of new Turkey. A complete disengagement from an empire and showing up as a new nation state was formulated in the narrative of modern political history of Turkey. Then, the following steps in various fields are revealed as the adjuvant progresses in a sense. For instance, reforms in education system such as *Tevhid-i Tedrisat*

⁷⁸¹ Specifically, Mehmed Vahdettin, the last Caliph-Sultan, generally the Caliphate itself became the target of severe criticism and accusations in *History* textbooks. “Many non-scientific and figment roles had been made up for the caliphate; a madrasah literature composed of great expenses, titles, positions, exemption of religious fanatics from military service had been created. All these resulted in nothing but keeping the people in ignorance while strengthening of the madrasah, daring of the enemies of the Turks to exterminate the Turkish nation and land. [...] Ottoman Caliph-Sultan even got ahead of the non-Muslims in attacking the Anatolian forces that dedicated themselves to save the Turkish dignity and independence. He could not show honor even as much as Byzantine Emperor Constantine who had perished in the streets of Vefa [Istanbul] for throne and Christianity; and escaped from the Turkish land by an enemy battleship only taking memories of meanness of the Caliphate Army, fatwas of killing the patriots and traces of slavery of Sevres Treaty with him.” *Tarih IV*, p. 157-158.

⁷⁸² Atatürk and Republican government was praised for establishing modern law system to raise the Turkish nation above other nations. The legal reforms would bring countless benefits to citizens of the country on social and judiciary organization, and importance of those reforms would be understood in a better way day by day. Özer, “Cumhuriyette Hukuk İnkılabı”, p. 396.

⁷⁸³ “Turkish woman, after having lost her place in the society because of non-Turkish traditions, has again obtained her rights after a thousand-year break. While the women of many nations struggle to have some of the human rights, today Turkish women have all the civil and political rights as men do. [...]” Hıfzı Veldet, “Türk Kadınının Hukuki Vaziyeti (Tarihte ve Yeni Türk Hukukunda)”, *İTTK*, p. 972.

*Kanunu*⁷⁸⁴ (The Law of Unification of Education),⁷⁸⁵ re-organization of school curriculum, alphabet reform, issues on minority schools, rights of teachers, and importance attached to sports in the schools have been evaluated within the chapter of learning and nurturing in new Turkey. Next, fiscal and financial reforms also formed a big part of the progress of the Republican era. Adopting the national economy in agriculture, industry and trade; achievements in mining, forestry and husbandry, public works like railways, roads, bridges; statistical data and population ranked among the economic accomplishments of the new government.⁷⁸⁶ Related to that, improvements in health and social welfare (with well-functioning governmental and non-governmental organizations) were expressed to have contributed to prosperity of the country. Last part on the deeds of new Turkey were allocated to army and military. Mentioning the historical ability of the Turks on martial arts, military power of the new Turkey was magnified even despite of the defeats during the fall of the Ottomans. According to textbook, Turkish soldiers had not been defeated but the Ottoman administration.⁷⁸⁷ So, it was claimed that Turkish soldiers, commanders and equipment in Republican period reached to top level and became the first in the world in an unrivalled manner. According to Bayur, all those developments mentioned above could still be extended to larger areas with a number of

⁷⁸⁴ It is argued that while France had laicized the schools a century after the Revolution, Turkey accomplished radical reforms immediately after the promulgation of the Republic. Sungu, “Tevhid-i Tedrisat”, p. 431.

⁷⁸⁵ Mustafa Kemal asked to the audience in Kastamonu in 1925 in following meaning: “Could Turkish nation tolerate dividing the education of their children to two different institutions? Without unifying the education and schooling, could building a nation composed of people with same ideas and mentality be possible?” in *Atatürk’ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, p. 220. Significance of education in nation building and the aim of building the nation of the Turkish rulers with education -as well as other instruments- could frankly be seen here.

⁷⁸⁶ A brief financial statement for the first two decades of new Turkey was given by Göker in his article. Increasing the national income and abolishing the tithe with policies on national economy, promoting industrial activities, redoubling the budget of the state while decreasing the tax burden on people, building railways, opening schools and universities, rising the number of the teachers and students, and improving public health were dealt as the accomplishments of new Turkey that proceeded toward prosperity and welfare. See “Türklerde Sanayi”, p. 434-435.

⁷⁸⁷ *Tarih IV*, p. 332.

examples. Moreover, they were significant events which could blow up the citizens, increase the loyalty and commitment of the people for the rule of Atatürk and Turkish Republic.⁷⁸⁸ This approach could openly reveal a part of motivation behind the works of the Society.

4.3.3. Cult of Personality of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk

A successful military commander, spearhead of Turkish National Struggle, first president of the new Turkey, charismatic leader and founding father of Turkish Historical Society... Among many titles attributed to Mustafa Kemal in related works, only five of them have been mentioned above. Writing modern Turkish history without him could not be thought within the bounds of possibility. An awareness of it existed in 1930s, too. Therefore, presenting the honorable history of modern Turkey through the life and actions of Mustafa Kemal Pasha was logical, practical and somehow necessary for the legitimization of the new government. Then, it was dealt in the works of Turkish Historical Society in various forms.

As it was stated above, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* should be considered as a guide for future studies of the Society in 1930s. Hence, the portrait of Mustafa Kemal in the last chapter of the work would give idea on the approach to the personality and activities of him. He was mentioned as a hero who knew the valor of the Turkish people, gathered everyone under a single roof for a struggle, beat the enemy, announced the independence of the Turks to whole world in Lausanne, and oriented the Turks to progress with his reforms.⁷⁸⁹ Thus, it is possible to suggest that the savior role of Mustafa Kemal was above all other titles associated with him. Still, looking at the portrait of Atatürk in the works of the Society in a chronological order could show the way of treatment for various periods of his life in a better way.

⁷⁸⁸ Bayur, “Son Yirmi Beş Yıllık Tarihimize Bakışlar”, p. 335.

⁷⁸⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 413-414.

Understandably, Mustafa Kemal was delineated as having outstanding qualifications even since his youth. First, in the *History* textbook, a brief life story of Mustafa Kemal Pasha was provided at the beginning of the fourth volume. Interestingly, the year of birth of Atatürk was recorded as 1880 (contrary to today's general acceptance as 1881) in those pages which were closely monitored by himself. Then, his eminent merit from the elementary school was emphasized to bring him into the front. He could learn quickly, master in a number of courses and attract the attention of his classmates and even teachers. As a result of academic achievement, receiving the second name - Kemal- by his teacher was a reflection of this narration.⁷⁹⁰ According to memoirs about the military college years of Mustafa Kemal cited by Afet, he was the most hardworking of his classmates and he used to read until late at night so that he could not wake easily.⁷⁹¹ Moreover, as it was pointed, everybody who knew him in school years could understand that young Mustafa Kemal was born to be a great soldier. Besides his scholarly abilities, he was also portrayed as a patriotic cadet who bothered about the situation of his country and talked to his friends on politics. Then, immediately after his graduation, Mustafa Kemal was taken into custody for interrogation by the forces of Abdulhamid II and relegated to Damascus.⁷⁹² It is clear in these works that it was aimed to make an impression that Mustafa Kemal had opposed to the totalitarian government as early as in 1900s and struggled for freedom. This kind of impression would influence the Turks in 1930s in showing the worth of the new government by exemplifying the tortures suffered before.

Next, the activities of Mustafa Kemal within secret societies during his mission in the Ottoman army in Damascus, Thessaloniki and other places were dealt as a sign of his patriotism. After being dispatched to Damascus in 1905, his activities

⁷⁹⁰ *Tarih IV*, p. 17.

⁷⁹¹ Afet, "Gerilla Hakkında İki Hatıra", p. 9.

⁷⁹² *Tarih IV*, p. 18.

there against threats to the security of the state and “fraud” within the army; then his initiation for establishing the organization *Vatan ve Hürriyet* (Fatherland and Freedom)⁷⁹³ in Damascus with his friends were propounded as his aspiration for his country. Then, according to Afet, upon the arrival of Mustafa Kemal to Thessaloniki from Damascus, Zübeyde Hanım, mother of Mustafa Kemal, asked him whether he would act against the will of the Ottoman Sultan; and then, he responded that true color of the Sultan would soon be seen. Actually, it was emphasized that he worked on behalf of his patriotism and reformist ideas which were superior to the law, regulations and ethics of that era.⁷⁹⁴ In addition to personal virtue of Mustafa Kemal, his organization *Vatan ve Hürriyet* was also demonstrated as being highly effective in the beginning of the Second Constitutional Era in 1908. For Hüsrev Sami, only three survivors in 1937 – himself, Mustafa Kemal and Hakkı Baha- knew the real role of *Vatan ve Hürriyet* in the struggle against Abdulhamid II and now it was an obligation for him to disclose it for the sake of Turkish national history. In his words, research into works of Atatürk required digging down deep as he was history, present and future.⁷⁹⁵

Bravery and valor of Mustafa Kemal was usually touched upon in the works of the Society on modern history. A memoir of Celal Arat, who was a military officer in the Battle of Gallipoli in 1915 (later a diplomat and member of parliament respectively), was based on the prowess of Atatürk in the front; and for him Çanakkale meant Mustafa Kemal after his great contributions there.⁷⁹⁶ Moreover, in the narrative of Yusuf Hikmet, during the most critical period of the battlefield, which could cause a great devastation for the Turks, Mustafa

⁷⁹³ Afet, “Vatan ve Hürriyet”, p. 295.

⁷⁹⁴ Afet, “Mukaddes Tabanca”, p. 606-609.

⁷⁹⁵ Kızıldoğan, “Vatan ve Hürriyet-İttihat ve Terakki”, p. 625.

⁷⁹⁶ Arat, “Tarihe Geçmiyen Bir Kahramanlık ve Büyüklük Menkıbesi”, p. 24-25.

Kemal -“man of destiny” as the British minister Churchill called- had appeared and paralyzed the enemy forces. The author added the documents of the British official military records stating that a field officer rarely could change the course and fate of a battle, of a campaign and even of a nation throughout the history. Thus, Atatürk was depicted as a genius commander who changed the course of his nation’s and world history and created the current situation.⁷⁹⁷ From *History* textbooks, one could read the missions of Atatürk in various fronts of World War I in which he took part decisively. On the other hand, previous failure of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkan Wars should have been caused due to great mistakes made by the Ottoman rulers, which Mustafa Kemal severely criticized for not implementing the appropriate policies and strategy.⁷⁹⁸

It was also stressed in certain works that Commander Mustafa Kemal had the intention of saving his nation from the “inside and outside enemies” while he was an officer of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. Related to his activities and meetings before moving to Samsun in 1919, he was shown to have set his mind on starting a national struggle to seal the nation’s fate.⁷⁹⁹ Indeed, with the defeat of the Ottomans in the Great War, Mustafa Kemal had appeared as the sole liberator of the state and nation. It is recorded that Mustafa Kemal had warned the rulers of the state about the negative side of Moudros Armistice before its signing.⁸⁰⁰ However, inability of the Ottoman government and disablement of the “sultanate army” resulted in Mustafa Kemal Pasha’s taking action. He, with his organizational skills, gathered nationalist and patriotic officers and started to conduct a national defense reflex of the Turks. From that time on, “Istanbul would be subject to Anatolia but not dominate it.” Mustafa

⁷⁹⁷ Bayur, “Son Yirmi Beş Yıllık Tarihimize Bakışlar”, p. 327.

⁷⁹⁸ *Tarih IV*, p. 20.

⁷⁹⁹ Afet, “Gerilla Hakkında İki Hatıra”, p. 13-14.

⁸⁰⁰ See *Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’ün Söyleyip Yazdıkları-1. Kitap*, ed. M. Sunullah Arısoy, (Türk Tarih Kurumu: Ankara 1989), p. 296-297.

Kemal, waiving his all official apparatus, relied on his nation and organized the total resistance movement.⁸⁰¹ Therefore, the narrative in the works of the Society on Turkish National Struggle between 1919-1923 fortified the cult of Atatürk with his decisive role in local congresses of struggle, political and strategic planning, inauguration of the National Assembly, battles in various parts of Anatolia, diplomatic relations and eventual victory. What cemented the cult of Atatürk included the subject of the ceaseless reforms in 1920s and 1930s. Changes in political, legal, religious, educational, fiscal, social and military affairs were associated with the vision and farsightedness of Mustafa Kemal.⁸⁰²

In addition to tribute shown to Atatürk for his saving the nation, he was also highly praised for emancipating the Turkish history and channeling past and present into future. One of the main purposes of Atatürk was to bring Turkish nation its self-respect, and it could be possible by revealing its honorable past.⁸⁰³ For the editors of the proceedings of the First Turkish History Congress, he firstly fought against those who aimed at annihilating the Turks, then after the victory, he wished teaching his people their national history. In this direction, Mustafa Kemal established the Turkish Historical Society to set the bases of Turkish history with objective documents and contributed to formation of *History* textbooks with his profound genius.⁸⁰⁴ Minister Esat Bey also emphasized the guidance of Atatürk for those textbooks and Turkish national history.⁸⁰⁵

⁸⁰¹ *Tarih IV*, p. 36.

⁸⁰² For example, see Sungu, “Tevhidi Tedrisat”, p. 397-431; Özer, “Cumhuriyette Hukuk İnkılabı”, p. 379-396; Afet, “Türk İstiklali ve Lozan Muahedesi”, p. 277-291; Bayur, “Son Yirmi Beş Yıllık Tarihimize Bakışlar”, p. 339-335; *Tarih IV*, Part II, I-IX. Chapters.

⁸⁰³ Akurgal, “Tarih İlmi ve Atatürk”, p. 579.

⁸⁰⁴ *BTTK*, p. xiii.

⁸⁰⁵ “Maarif Vekili Esat Beyefendinin Açma Nutku”, in *BTTK*, p. 12.

According to Reşit Galip, the truth about Turkish national history would one day show up in every respect; and Mustafa Kemal himself was the vivid symbol of the Turkish truth who prompted everyone to walk in line with the aims.⁸⁰⁶ Zeki Velidi asserted that while the historians had been undervalued and not taken seriously two decades ago, Gazi Mustafa Kemal attributed a great importance to history; and all ages of Turkish history -in addition to Ottoman era- became the subject of serious research.⁸⁰⁷ Finally, Yusuf Akçura, head of the Society, closed the congress with the following words: “Oh Great Gazi! You showed us the true path, introduced us our nation and self-respect, taught us ourselves. Turkish nation is grateful to you. [...] You took the historians and their work under your wings. As a senior Turkish historian, I convey the gratitude, respect and eternal love of my colleagues to you.”⁸⁰⁸ Even though there were leaders and commanders who had been interested in history, such as Caesar, Charlemagne, Suleyman the Magnificent and Napoleon, Mustafa Kemal was considered unique for making history, writing history and teaching history for his nation.⁸⁰⁹

Then, it could be argued that the approach of the Society to modern Turkish history was based on achievements of the new Turkey at one side, and on Atatürk at another. Turkish Historical Society treated the period of 1919-1938 as an era which would go down in history, so it aimed at structuring the related timespan according to the prevailing ideas of the rulers of the Society, including Atatürk himself. Power elite of Turkey in 1930s (a significant number of them directly or indirectly attended the labor of Turkish Historical Society) had made serious efforts for transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic of Turkey. They considered the gaining and merit of the new administration, and

⁸⁰⁶ Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 99.

⁸⁰⁷ Zeki Velidi, *BTTK*, p. 176.

⁸⁰⁸ “T.T.T. Cemiyeti Reisi Akçuraoğlu Yusuf Beyefendinin Nutku”, in *BTTK*, p. 618.

⁸⁰⁹ Çambel, “Atatürk ve Tarih”, p. 269-272.

mostly acted with the instinct of protecting those while featuring them for decorating the citizens with sense of pride and belonging. Then, laying stress on the prospering story of new Turkey required narrating the modern history in a practical way. On the other hand, as an indispensable side of the deeds of contemporary Turkish history, Mustafa Kemal turned into a subject of studies within the Society. With those studies, giving the head of the state and Turkish Historical Society prominence and strengthening his legitimacy with a large background and rich history could be possible.

Consequently, two of the claims of the Turkish History Thesis are shaped around the Turkish-Islamic relationship and the modern Turkish Republican history narrative. Yet, this chapter firstly tries to define the description of the Turk and bases of nationalism for Turkish Historical Society. Since the whole of the history thesis envisages a “Turk”, it is important to see who was meant as Turk. Indeed, in the Turkey of the 1920s and 1930s, the definition of the Turkish nation and the content of Turkish nationalism had undergone various changes. In this issue, there were certain political benefits, rather than a rigid ideological approach. Hence, it is understood that the state created a synthesis of different types of nationalism for its own interests, reflecting the approach of state-framed nationalism. The Turkish Historical Society in this period, in line with the direction given to it by the state, tried to create a new understanding of history and a national historiography. It seems that, similarly, more than a rigid ideology, there were various interests and claims behind this thesis, which partly placed emphasis on culture, partly emphasized ethnic and racial characteristics, and relied on fields such as archeology, anthropology, and linguistics. Thus, it can be argued that the Society adopted both an ethnic-based and culture-based approach in dealing with Turkish history and nation, and the appropriate approach was pragmatically chosen according to the subject and person.

After the background of Turkish-ness for the Society is covered, its evaluating Islam, Ottoman and modern Turkish history was dealt. Although the central position of religion in Turkey in the 1930s was shaken, it is understood that it

played an important role in social life with a new interpretation. In this framework, the core position in the new historical narrative was given to the Turkish nation, but the references to religion were not abandoned. Rather, a new perspective and interpretation on Islamic history has been developed. Within that discourse, the contributions of the Turks to the religion and civilization of Islam, individually or institutionally, were emphasized: It was the Turks who contributed to Islam, not vice versa!

Next, in order to increase the legitimacy of the new regime, current developments also had to be polished. From this point of view, after treating Ottoman history (similar to the interpretations of Islamic history) through certain positive (or, not totally negative) sides, the narrative of the decay as of the seventeenth century was formed. So, the bad administration of the that period caused the collapse of the state, and a new and successful Republic was established on it. Thus, within the scope of "history written while living", the history of modern Turkey was explained, and it was aimed to ensure the legitimacy of the regime and the struggle, as well as learning and adoption of this process by new generations.

CHAPTER 5

CLAIMS OF THE TURKISH HISTORY THESIS ON THE TURKS AS ANCIENT AND CIVILIZED NATION

This chapter focuses on four of the claims of Turkish History Thesis which meant to reveal the role of the Turks in establishing and/or transporting civilizations throughout their illustrious history. According to this, Turkish History Thesis tried to exhibit that the Turks were an ancient people of Central Asian origin and then migrated to Anatolia, where they became the first inhabitants. Archaeology and anthropology are used to support this discourse, to establish connections between Central Asia and Anatolia, and between the past and the present. After the ancient identity, Central Asian and Anatolian connections and racial characteristics of the Turks have been proven -or thought to be proven- the contributions of the mentioned Turks to civilization and humanity, and their glory throughout history are tried to be shown. In other words, those claims can be clustered as: Anatolia has been an ancient Turkish land; the Turks have been a civilized nation throughout history; they had a glorious past in pre-Islamic ages; and Turkish language was a primary medium and indicator of Turkish civilization. Then, those historical claims and arguments will be revealed in this chapter through the works of the Society in its type of narration. It is critical to note that this chapter does not aim to confirm or falsify the claims of the Society in its works but reflect it to see and understand the way and project of informing/indoctrinating the citizens in historical matters.

5.1. The Claim on “Anatolia as Ancient Turkish Land Populated with Turks”

Turkish War of Independence was the struggle of the Turks against those who wanted to occupy or claim rights on Anatolia. While the Great Powers, such as

Britain or France, wished to take possession of the most parts of Turkey for political-economic reasons,⁸¹⁰ the minorities in Anatolia, namely the Greeks and Armenians staked out historical claims to Asia Minor.⁸¹¹ On the other hand, a European public opinion to send the Turks back to Central Asia was tried to be raised for a long time in the West.⁸¹² Consequently, emphasizing the Turkish existence over Anatolia was strongly needed.⁸¹³ In this way, ancient rights of the Turks on the region would be demonstrated to the European communities and minorities in Turkey. Moreover, by proving that the first inhabitants of Anatolia, the center of civilization, were Turks, an image of a civilized Turk throughout history could be drawn against the civilized Europe of the period. Furthermore, Turkish citizens would also be convinced of its primeval past. For these aims, referring to history to prove this claim was an inevitable and practical way as it had been applied by many other groups previously.

5.1.1. Antecedents of the Turks in Ancient Anatolia

In the framework of the new understanding of history, Anatolia was portrayed as the ancient Turkish land, though not being the first point of emergence of the Turks. In the narrative, Turkish homeland was Asia. It was clearly pictured in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* that “the Asian highlands near and across Kingan and Altai mountains, Volga basin, Hindu Kush, Pamir, Karakurum, Karanlık

⁸¹⁰ For the approach of the Great Powers against the Ottoman Empire in early twentieth century, see Kemal H. Karpat, “The Entry of the Ottoman Empire into World War I”, *Belleten*, 68/253, (Aralık 2004): p. 687-734.

⁸¹¹ For brief information, see Nesrin Sarıahmetoğlu, “Ermeni Milliyetçiliği ve Toprak İddiaları”, *Türkler ve Ermeniler-Tarih Boyunca Türk Ermeni İlişkileri*, <https://turksandarmenians.marmara.edu.tr/tr/ermeni-milliyetciligi-ve-toprak-iddialari/> accessed on 12.12.2021; Olga Petrunina, “Byzantine Dream of Athenian Politicians”, *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 31, (2017): p. 35-47.

⁸¹² See Kemal Beydilli, “Şark Meselesi”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 38, (2010): p. 352-357.

⁸¹³ Hanioglu, *Atatürk*, p. 163-164.

mountains and the Yellow River” constituted the homeland of the Turks.⁸¹⁴ It is stated that despite the current steppes, deserts and marshes there, the region had been covered by seas, rivers and fertile lands thousands of years ago.⁸¹⁵ Accordingly, the Turks could have easily lived, risen in number and developed there in economic and cultural terms starting from the ninth millennia BC.⁸¹⁶ However, worsening of the climate and drought had led the Turks to immigrate to other parts of the world. China and India were among the new destination of the Turks. They were considered to have moved also to Anatolia via two routes. First one was the northern route that passes through the Caspian Sea and northern Black Sea. Second route was the southern one over the Himalayas. Therefore, the Turks had come to Anatolia from different ways and as masses in various millennia.⁸¹⁷

It is highly obvious that this view dated the arrival of the Turks to Anatolia much before than the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, which is usually referred as the first time the Turks entered Anatolia. Afet made the following statement on this issue: “Above all, I would like to say that Anatolia had not firstly been Turkified in the eleventh century as many asserted. But Anatolia only freshened itself with new branches of the same old roots. The year 1071 pointed the union of the Muslim Turks with their Anatolian brothers.”⁸¹⁸ According to this view, the Turks had arrived in Anatolia -and northern Mesopotamia- at least seven millennia ago. Indeed, Esat Bey, Minister of Education, claimed in the inauguration of the First Turkish History Congress (in the presence of Mustafa Kemal and other masterminds of the Turkish History Thesis) that the Turks had

⁸¹⁴ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 33.

⁸¹⁵ *Tarih I*, p. 26.

⁸¹⁶ Afet, “Tarihten Evvel ve Tarih Fecrinde”, *BTTK*, p. 30.

⁸¹⁷ *Tarih I*, p. 29.

⁸¹⁸ Afet, “Türk-Osmanlı Tarihinin Karakteristik Noktalarına Bir Bakış”, *İTTK*, p. 124.

started to move to Anatolia, Mesopotamia and other parts of the world seven millennia BC.⁸¹⁹ Yet, it leaps to the eye that there was not a unity of discourse among the members and in the works of the Society on the starting point of Turkish history. Usually emergence of the Turks in historical scene was dated to seven millennia BC. However, various expressions within the works of the Society could offer different points. For example, *History* textbook suggested a “ten thousand-year Turkish history” in the chapter of Turkish language. This kind of statements did not necessarily provide its tangible evidences but came to mean a way of persuading readers about their “long and ancient” pasts.

Still, claiming thousands of years of Turkish existence in Anatolia would have to be accompanied with attributing a Turkish identity to various groups that had lived there. Hence, the Sumerians (or members of Sumerian-Elam civilization) were thought as the proto-Turkish groups that had firstly populated southern parts of Anatolia in ancient ages. They were claimed to have immigrated from the Altai region. Those groups became the autochthonous people of Anatolia in the seventh-sixth millennia BC and opened the historical ages for the humanity.⁸²⁰

With references to certain European works on ancient history, the Sumerians were depicted as a prosperous and developed community composed of farmers, merchants and craftsmen. For example, Reşit Galip referred to *Human Origins* of Samuel Laing, British writer, who asserted a Turkish root to the Sumerians.⁸²¹ Reşit Galip even tried to settle the term as “Sumerian Turks” in his conference during the congress. The Sumerians were accredited for their excellence in agriculture, art and architecture, education, belief system and science, and literature. Indeed, the Sumerian *cuneiform* (which they were believed to have

⁸¹⁹ “Maarif Vekili Esat Beyefendinin Açma Nutku”, in *BTTK*, p. 6.

⁸²⁰ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 119.

⁸²¹ Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 142.

brought from Central Asia) and its “Turkish language” could shed light on the ancient history of Anatolia and Mesopotamia. Even the Code of Hammurabi should have been related to the Sumerians since the Babylonians were output of the Sumerian civilization.⁸²² After several years from the First Turkish History Congress, the theme on Sumerians went on in the second congress in 1937. This time, European researchers joined the issue, too. Although they did not explicitly call the Sumerians as Turks, they emphasized the Central Asian roots of them, which was also received favorably by the Turks.⁸²³ In addition to them, the Akkadians, Met and Elam people from southern Anatolia and Mesopotamia were also accepted as Turks with Central Asian origin. They were considered different from and more developed than the Semitic groups of Mesopotamia.⁸²⁴

The Hittites were another allegedly Turkish community in Anatolia. Quoting from *Les Civilisations Anciennes de l'Asie Mineure* of Felix Sartiaux, the word “Asia” (*Asya*) was claimed to have derived from “Assuwa” in the Hittite language.⁸²⁵ It was put forward that they had migrated from Central Asia, moved to Anatolia and Thrace and been the relatives of the Sumerians. Their language

⁸²² *Tarih I*, p. 98.

⁸²³ Landsberger, “Ön Asya Kadim Tarihinin Esas Meseleleri”, *İTTK*; Andrae, “Sumerlerin Monumental Sanatları”, *İTTK*, p. 98-109.

⁸²⁴ Members of Turkish Historical Society usually felt need to separate the Turks (Alpine/Turanid race) from the Semitic and Arian race. Most probably it emerged from the assumption of many that those two races were autochthonous communities of Mesopotamia and created the civilization there. It was asserted by Reşit Galip that in contrast to previous general consent, Mesopotamia civilization had been established by a race that did not belong to Semitic group; they were Turanid/Turkish people of Central Asia. Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 117. Moreover, Yusuf Ziya claimed that Egyptian gods and their titles were related to Turkish through the Sumerian connection. Yusuf Ziya, “Mısır Din ve İlahlarının Türklükle Alakası”, *BTTK*, p. 243. An imperceived debate during the First Turkish History Congress was related to this issue. Probably due to his Jewish-Semitic origin, Avram Galanti opposed to the claims that displaced the Semitic race in the narrative of new Turkish history and tried to prove his counter-views with linguistic explanations. In return for this, Samih Rifat severely responded to him on behalf of the Society and confirmed the arguments on the superiority of the Turanid race/Turks over Semitic and other races. Samih Rifat, discussions in *BTTK*, p. 452-480.

⁸²⁵ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 163.

was not Semitic or Indo-European but Turkish. These skilled people had begun to live in Anatolia since the third millennium BC⁸²⁶ and mastered in trade. They had the knowledge of ironsmith and used horse. Hattusa was their capital city. Various other Turkish groups established semi-autonomous rules under the control of the Hittites, which could be considered as a sort of federation at that period.⁸²⁷ Şevket Aziz, Hasan Cemil, Samih Rifat and Reşit Galip stressed in the First Turkish History Congress that the Hittites showed the characteristics of the Turks and Central Asia in biological and cultural ways.

The Phrygians were thought to have been another Turkish group and come to Anatolia with the Hittites having passed through the Dardanelles and Bosphorus and built the monumental city of Troy. They increased their influence in Anatolia in 1255 BC as the Hittites began to fall simultaneously. Gordion in Central Anatolia became their iconic capital. The Phrygians mostly relied upon the villagers and farmers. Their belief system was related with that as their understanding of God was shaped with agricultural tradition. Ruins of their cities and temples in various parts of Anatolia could give idea on their social life and art. The threat of the Lydians weakened the Phrygians and they disappeared in the sixth century BC.⁸²⁸

Actually, the Lydians were also believed to be among the Turkic groups reaching to western Anatolia in the seventh century BC. Gediz Valley near Meander constituted their core point. It was claimed in *History* textbook that a dynasty named “Atalar” (ancestors) firstly ruled the Lydians and they were from the Turkish tribes moving to Anatolia. Previously, they lived in the city of

⁸²⁶ Actually, emergence of the Hittites is dated to 1600 BC. However, probably in order to link them to Sumerians, Turkish History Thesis suggests third millennium BC for appearance of the Hittites. For example, it is stated in *History* textbook that settlement of the Hittites in Anatolia was not later than the Sumerians. The former group was one of the Turkish masses proceeding to Anatolia. *Tarih I*, p. 129.

⁸²⁷ *Tarih I*, p. 127-134.

⁸²⁸ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 176-178.

Assuwa which was later called Sardes. Then, several other Turkish dynasties ruled them and the Lydians established a trade route between east and west. It ended up with the emergence of the Lydians as a significant merchant community. Issuing the coin money showed the importance of them in trade and their wealth. However, as it is argued, appointing soldiers from mixed groups resulted in the loosening of the patriotic feelings and the Lydians vanished in the sixth century BC.⁸²⁹

It is possible to multiply the examples for various groups' presentation as the Turks in Anatolia in ancient ages, in the works of the Society. To illustrate, the Phoenicians, Thracians and Trojans also were mentioned as Turkic groups to some extent and with some reservations. However, since satisfying research and concrete-material findings were not available in 1930s, the claims for the Turkish-ness of the aforementioned groups (actually except the Hittites) could not be taken further and remained mostly in discourse. However, increasing archaeological excavations and anthropological results for the Hittite period in 1930s paved way for putting strong emphasis for suggesting the Hittites as Turks.

5.1.2. Archaeological-Anthropological Ties of the Turks with their Central Asian and Anatolian Ancestors

The approach of Turkish Historical Society toward archaeology and anthropology was seen above, which is considered as producing concrete scientific facts in world standards. Then, as it is known, excavations in Alacahöyük marked an era in research on the Hittite period. Turkish Historical Society directly played role in these studies and did not refrain from using the materials and results of those operations. Remzi Oğuz Arık was one of the directors of the excavations in Alacahöyük. Therefore, his reports and findings - with his comments- were usually published in the journal of the Society,

⁸²⁹ *Tarih I*, p. 142-146.

Belleten. For Arık, the findings in Alacahöyük signaled the existence of a high culture in Anatolia at the dawn of the Bronze Age, which also could be called as the Hittite Age. Owners of the found materials, namely the Hittites, were actually the owners of Anatolia and they had established a cultural unity in Anatolia. On the other hand, those findings showed similarities to the ones found in other places, such as the Caucasus and Central Asia, where Turks had also resided. For instance, the famous Hittite Sun Disk (*Güneş Kursu*) was a combination of symbols from Asia.⁸³⁰ Then, offering Central Asian (namely Turkish) roots to the Hittites could be connected with the tangible materials.

Hamit Zübeyr Koşay was the co-director of the excavation in Alacahöyük and often shared his findings through various media. For him, the pots and other materials obtained in the site showed similarities with the ones in the Ural region. The author also examines the cult of deer to support his ideas. Just like the role of deer in Turkish culture and written-oral literature,⁸³¹ it is argued, deer and its symbols had been adopted by the ancient Anatolians, too. It would reflect the influence of a strong Central Asian culture on the Anatolian Hittite culture. It also came to mean that in addition to the known Mesopotamia and Egypt culture, new cultural centers equal to them had been discovered with these excavations. The new civilization was the product of the Anatolians coming from Asia. They even had spread that culture from China to Scandinavia. According to Koşay, it was the Turks who produced their high culture and carried it to other parts of the world.⁸³² He proudly concludes that the Turks were known to affect the world from the Huns to the contemporary Turks; but the excavations in Alacahöyük

⁸³⁰ Arık, “Alaca-Höyük Hafriyatının İlk Neticeleri”, p. 217-221.

⁸³¹ For example, see Gıyasettin Aytas, “Türk Kültür ve Edebiyatında Geyik Motifi ve Haza Destan-ı Geyik”, *Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Dergisi*, 11, (1999): p. 161-170; Nilgün Dalkesen, “Orta Asya’dan Anadolu’ya Türk Kültüründe Geyik Kültü”, *Milli Folklor*, 106, (2015): p. 58-69.

⁸³² Koşay, “Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alaca Höyükte 1936 Yazında Yaptırılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeler”, p. 530-531.

and other places would prove that they had started to shape the world since the pre-historical ages.⁸³³

The ceramics uncovered in the archaeological sites were also utilized for Central Asian-Anatolian and modern Turkish connections. The dyed ceramics found in northern Mesopotamia and dated to the Sumerians and later periods were just reflections of the ones in other places from Persia to Central Asia. Those ceramics marked the existence of a high culture in its point of origin, namely Asia, and in following ages, they had been transferred to southern and western Anatolia by the immigrant communities, who were considered as the Turks.⁸³⁴

Archaeological findings constituted the base for physical anthropological studies, too. Actually, archaeology revealed materials in Anatolia; and it made possible to compare them to similar ones in other parts of the world, mostly Central Asia. However, in addition to those material findings, ancient people of Anatolia and Central Asia; and contemporary Turks in current Anatolia-Turkey should have been related. At this point, anthropology was the reference point. Turkish Anthropology Institute (*Türk Antropoloji Enstitüsü*) established in mid-1920s within *Darülfünun* had commenced institutional studies on anthropology with certain research and its journal named *Türk Antropoloji Mecmuası* as 22 issues between 1925-1939.⁸³⁵ Moving of the Institute from Istanbul to Ankara in 1935 was a direct reflection of the importance attached to it by Atatürk. Similar to the transferring of strategic organizations to Ankara, such as of *Harbiye* and *Mülkiye*, Anthropology Institute would be carried to capital city to closely work

⁸³³ Koşay, “Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alaca Höyükte 1936 Yazında Yaptırılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeler”, p. 532-533.

⁸³⁴ Mansel, “Preistorik Boyalı Keramik Kültürleri”, p. 669-671.

⁸³⁵ It was re-organized under the Faculty of Science of Istanbul University after the transformation of *Darülfünun* in 1933. With the establishment of the Faculty of Letters in Ankara in 1935, the Institute moved to the capital. It has undergone certain organizational changes within the university and eventually evolved to a department in the faculty. <http://antropoloji.humanity.ankara.edu.tr/tarihce/>, access on 25.10.2021.

with the ruling elite. Indeed, Mustafa Kemal often visited the laboratory of the Institute.⁸³⁶ In order to meet the expectations, Turkish Anthropological Institute and Turkish Historical Society could be considered to have acted in unison in broadcasting the anthropological findings.

Şevket Aziz Kansu, medic and anthropologist in *Darülfünun*, Istanbul University and Faculty of Letters in Ankara respectively, brought about certain research about the anthropological analysis of the bones found in Alacahöyük and other excavations. Accordingly, as it was common at that time, investigations on the brain pans were carried out on the remnants found in the sites. Kansu uttered that the works of Eugene Pittard and Erich Schmidt before 1930 had included extensive research on brain pans in Anatolia, which showed the dominance of brachycephalic communities there. He added that he also made craniological research on living human beings. In the First Turkish History Congress, he shared the results on the numerical angle information on the skulls of the New Caledonians, black African people, Neolithic people and contemporary French and Turks. Kansu laid stress upon the fact that he used objective and scientific methods in these measuring operations and research. He also brought with him certain actual skulls to the platform to claim that the Turks belonged to “Alpine group” of the brachycephalic people with thin nose, average height and brown hair, and with specific size of the parts of head. The skulls in the cemeteries in Anatolia had been mentioned to demonstrate that claim.⁸³⁷ He continued to present his analysis with examples of the living people. For him, contemporary Turks had same size of certain parts of the body with the Alpine Europeans. However, rather than associating the Turks to those Europeans; connecting the latter to the Turks and Central Asia would be the truth. At the end of his conference, Kansu took the issue further and invited a family from Bağlum, a village in Ankara, presenting them as such: “Here you see the man and his family who were described in anthropology books. They are the Alpine and

⁸³⁶ Toprak, *Atatürk*, p. 344.

⁸³⁷ Kansu, “Türklerin Antropolojisi”, *BTTK*, p. 276.

Turkish type of men. See their un-dark eyes, light skin and white color. Their child with golden color of hair belongs to Turkish race. This family is in Alpine, Central Asian type and connected to our ancestors!”⁸³⁸

Kansu developed his studies in Turkish Anthropology Institute. A number of brain pans from the archaeological excavations -mostly from Alacahöyük- was taken to the Institute for research.⁸³⁹ Şevket Aziz kept publishing the results of the surveys. For example, in his article in the first issue of *Belleten* in 1937, the author gave data about the size of the head, face, sub maxilla, arm bone, femur, knucklebone and heelbone from the analyzed bodies. For him, those remains meant great importance to understand the racial history of Anatolia, since they showed the brachycephalic type of human from the Hittite period. Thus, Turkish identity of Anatolia would be proven thanks to these findings.⁸⁴⁰

After 1934, archaeological excavations in Kumtepe began. Similar to the ones from other sites, the obtained material was sent to the Anthropology Institute, too. Kansu carried out extensive research on those remains. More than twenty different parts of a brain pan had been measured according to the prevailing technique. For the author, the skulls from Kumtepe belonged mostly to women, but still they supported the existence of brachycephalic Alpine race in western Anatolia for the pre-historical age.⁸⁴¹

In addition to his research on ancient history, Şevket Aziz also exercised studies on Oghuz-Seldjukid Turks of the Middle Ages. With an attractive presentation in

⁸³⁸ Kansu, “Türklerin Antropolojisi”, *BTTK*, p. 277-278.

⁸³⁹ It is obvious that this process reached to extreme examples. According to newspaper *Cumhuriyet*, dated to 05.08.1935, the brain pan of Mimar Sinan was extracted from his tomb and subjected to research. It was declared that “the great architect was not only culturally, but also racially Turk.”

⁸⁴⁰ Kansu, “Alacahöyük’te Bulunan İskeletlerin Antropolojik Tetkiki”, p. 191.

⁸⁴¹ Kansu, “Kumtepe Kemikleri Üzerinde Antropolojik Tetkik”, p. 569.

the Second Turkish History Congress, he firstly shared numerical information about the remainings from the Seldjukid period. Then, he announced his conclusion that the Seldjukids had been brachycephalic Alpine people; that they had followed the same route with the “proto-Turks” from Central Asia to Anatolia; and that they had not changed the racial characteristic of Anatolia -as it was usually alleged- but Anatolia had long been populated with brachycephalic people from east to Aegean coast since the pre-historical ages and they were relatives with the Seldjukids.⁸⁴² This approach was relatively a new one at that time and it is crucial to extend the bridge between the pre-historical “proto-Turks” and contemporary Turks by placing the middle columns (the Seldjukids). Şevket Aziz was not the only representative of the Society in physical anthropology, since other members such as Afet İnan and Reşit Galip also dealt with that subject. For Afet, Central Asia had been populated with brachycephalic groups and they also had moved to Anatolia and Europe and affected those regions. Accordingly, ancient Hittites were considered as ancestors of the Turks who had come and owned Anatolia.⁸⁴³ Although it was published in 1948 in Turkish, Afet made a gigantic work in 1930s with Prof. Eugene Pittard for her dissertation (doubtlessly with the incentive of Atatürk) and that work included anthropological research on almost 60.000 people in Turkey. The analysis for the brain pans of the people of the previous ages would mean a lot, but at the same time could remain insufficient to connect it to current era. Thus, scrutiny of Afet focused on a checkover on living people and she arrogantly announced that Turkish men and women showed the feature of the brachycephalies. Then, she concluded that the survey on the modern Turkish people had a critical place in connecting them to ancient communities in Anatolia and Europe in biological aspect. That would reflect the rooted and glorious history of the Turks, and their

⁸⁴² Kansu, “Selçuk Türkleri Hakkında Antropolojik İlk Bir Tetkik ve Neticeleri”, *İTTK*, p. 455-456. Kansu explains that he -with the help of Turkish Historical Society- got brain pans and bones of the Seldjukids from the Yediler Graveyard in Ankara.

⁸⁴³ Afet, “Tarihten Evvel ve Tarih Fecrinde”, *BTTK*, p. 41.

historical rights in Anatolia. For the author, the work accomplished a purpose of Turkish Historical Society announced during its foundation.⁸⁴⁴

Reşit Galip was one of those who intended defending the rights of the Turks with references to physical anthropology. He mentioned the importance of anthropology for two centuries in Europe and introduced the generally accepted classifications for the races. Then, he opposed to long-standing views in western world about the “secondary role” of the Turks in racial and cultural terms. Certain studies implemented on living people or brain pans found in excavations in Anatolia and even in Central Asia were presented as sign of the existence of the brachycephalies. Citing certain European researchers, such as Prof. Roland B. Dixon, William Ripley and Thomas A. Joyce, Reşit Galip claimed that even the Europeans began to confess the fact that the Alpine brachycephalic people had moved to Anatolia and even Europe and populated those places, and that the Turks belonged to that group of people. Members of the Turkish race were portrayed as the founders of civilization in the world with a rich culture as well as having eye-pleasing appearance.⁸⁴⁵

An influential figure for physical anthropology and even one of the initiators of the Turkish History Thesis was Eugene Pittard. As the supervisor of Afet in the University of Geneve, he made great contributions to the new historiography in young Turkey. Moreover, his European identity also provided support to the promotion of the thesis in domestic and international scientific areas. In his article about the relations between Anatolia and Europe in Neolithic Age, Pittard points the domination of a certain group over Europe in biological and cultural terms.⁸⁴⁶ R. R. Schmidt had discovered a group of brachycephalic brain pans

⁸⁴⁴ Afet İnan, *Türkiye Halkının Antropolojik Karakterleri ve Türkiye Tarihi-Türk Irkının Vatanı Anadolu*, (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1948), p. 181-189.

⁸⁴⁵ Reşit Galip, “Türk Irk ve Medeniyet Tarihine Umumi Bir Bakış”, *BTTK*, p. 158-160.

⁸⁴⁶ Pittard, “Neolitik Devirde Küçük Asya ile Avrupa Arasında Antropolojik Münasebetler”, p. 19-38.

near today's Bavaria, and the question about their identities had arisen. Pittard moved from this point and shaped his research. According to his work, he stated, those brachycephalies had been the ancestors of the proto-Hittites/proto-Turks in Anatolia, Turkomans in Central Asia and Persians in Iran. Due to the political reasons, they might have adopted different languages, but brachycephalies would not turn into dolichocephalies, but remain as same type. Then, they must have moved to Europe with their culture and materials in Neolithic Age. In this respect, proto-Turks are described as the precursor of both the contemporary Turks and the Europeans.⁸⁴⁷ It is also remarkable for showing the approach that while the elements of a nation include common language, the description of race could unite larger groups with different languages by accrediting them with same physical features. In this way, new Turkish historiography would claim a brachycephalic (namely Turkish) roots to European or certain other communities, which was believed to show the precedence of the Turks. As a manifestation of that view, an attendant of the Second Turkish History Congress from Switzerland, Marguerite Dellenbach, analyzed the brain pans of certain races including the Turks. Giving references to Prof. Pittard, she named the Turks as brachycephalic people who should have been considered as a European community and claimed that many residents of Europe had descended from a Turkic origin.⁸⁴⁸

Indeed, with its large attendance, the aforementioned congress resulted in the circulation of the thesis in international academic area and support to historical claims of the Turks inside and outside of Turkey. In addition to Pittard and Dellenbach, also J. Garstang, O. Menghin, H. Vallois and C. Blegen made presentations which championed archaeological-anthropological discourse of the Turks. That discourse could be summarized as such: a group of people had moved from Central Asia and arrived in Anatolia and even in Europe in pre-

⁸⁴⁷ Pittard, "Neolitik Devirde Küçük Asya ile Avrupa Arasında Antropolojik Münasebetler", p. 34.

⁸⁴⁸ Dellenbach, "Türklerin Antropolojik Tarihlerine Dair Vesikalar", *İTTK*, p. 380.

historical ages. That group, constituting the earliest residents of Anatolia, had established solid administrations and rich culture there. While archaeology uncovered this “historical truth”, anthropology helped associating that group with a contemporary community. According to “tangible and objective” facts, it was the Turks who had appeared in Central Asia, moved to west, resided in Anatolia, governed there and influenced other parts of the world. The contemporary Turks were their direct descendants with same physical features and similar numbers found in measurements in the laboratories.

As it could be caught in the reader’s eyes, claims and discourse of Turkish Historical Society about the ancient residents of Anatolia and emergence of the Turks in Central Asia went to extremes at some points. Suggesting Turkish roots to the Europeans, Persians, and even to the Greeks and Armenians could be encountered between the lines although not voiced loudly. On the other hand, adopting the primeval communities in Anatolia as the ancestors of the Turks such as the Sumerians and the Hittites, and seeking for connections between Central Asia and Anatolia aimed at creating an awareness in the minds of the citizens about the seniority of the Turkish people. For instance, naming two state banks as *Sümerbank* (established in 1933) and *Etibank* (established in 1935) was a prolongation of the aim of creating historical awareness even in economic sphere. The examples targeting the daily life routines of the citizens could be multiplied. But it is important to show that the activities of the Society were not random efforts but they were important parts of a policy and campaign of the state. On the other hand, the Society applied to contemporary world historiography, archaeology and anthropology to support its claims, which in a kind of way contributed to Turkish history writing.

5.2. The Claim on “Turks as a Civilized Nation throughout History”

One of the main arguments of Turkish History Thesis was that the Turks were a civilized nation and contributed to world civilization with their activities in various fields. It is a known fact that a biased approach toward the Turks by a

number of communities and nations as being “uncivilized” and “barbarian” prevailed for a long time, and it brought about a new Turkish historical narrative with strong references to civilization. The narrative on the “civilized” history of the Turks aimed to reach two group of audience. One of them was the members of Turkish nation who should have been filled with national pride. Second group involved anti-Turkish communities or Western world. In addition to other products of Turkish Historical Society, series of drafts on *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* -which have not been adequately applied so far to investigate Turkish History Thesis- were the main equipment of Turkish claims. As the process of preparation was revealed in the third chapter, they had been substantially programmed to put forward the role of the Turks in world civilization. Three important bases of the program can be epitomized as such: throughout the history, the Turks made contributions to world science; they were highly skilled in artistic-intellectual fields; and, they were improved in economic sphere.

Of course, this effort had certain deficits: the drafts could not turn into a comprehensive book; and, a number of exaggerations about Turkish history were made by some authors. But it does not mean that this endeavor was totally insignificant. Above all, the program involved a wide range of subjects (for example, sports or music) which had not been adequately studied before within the Turkish History Thesis. Next, the authors were attentive to use sources for their claims, and they often made references to works of foreign researchers. In this respect, the claims on being civilized must have contributed to enhancing of Turkish historiography. Then, although there are not convenient tools to measure the effects, the role of the Turks in world civilization was put into words at home and abroad in a relatively systematic way.

5.2.1. Going a Long Way toward World Science

In the narrative, the Turks with their civilized character are regarded to have added to universal fields and sciences such as writing, geography-cartography, arithmetic and medicine.

Writing and alphabet: History of writing had been somehow related to the Sumerians in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*. First, it was put forward that the Sumerians were not among the Semitic group of people, and they spoke a Turkish-like language. Then, it was taken further that they invented writing. In this direction, archaeological and anthropological findings of orientalist of last two centuries were regarded as the base of the argument. It was emphasized through tablets and various other material that the Sumerians had used their own cuneiform and spread it to other parts of the world until the first century. Prevalence and influence of that style of writing was equal to Latin of the West and Arabic of the East in contemporary era.⁸⁴⁹ Then, invention of alphabet constitutes another point of discussion. At the beginning, various arguments on the origins of alphabet (such as Egyptian and Phoenician) are drawn up. Then, the author asserts his own claim that the alphabet must have emerged from the Sumerian writing.⁸⁵⁰ Certain linguistic assertions are suggested to prove the claim, and English, German and French books on ancient ages are regarded as the base of the thesis. Consequently, as it was repeatedly stressed in *History* textbooks, the Turks are given a high place as a nation who had created writing and alphabet in remote past and contributed to world civilization.

Geography and cartography: Geography and cartography occupy a crucial place in social sciences. Actually, cartography is regarded as one of the most important components of geography. They could show and explain many geographical phenomena better than any other means. Moreover, Turkish cartography is also among the respected schools of this science. Then, Turkish History Thesis gave primacy to these fields in the narrative.⁸⁵¹ It was argued that

⁸⁴⁹ Ahmet Cevat, *Türklerin Yazıyı İcat Etmekle Medeniyete Hizmetleri*, TTKA, TTAH, 2/32, p. 8-9.

⁸⁵⁰ Ahmet Cevat, *Türklerin Yazıyı İcat Etmekle Medeniyete Hizmetleri*, p. 12-14.

⁸⁵¹ The importance attached to geography by new Turkish Republic and Atatürk could be seen in his naming the faculty in Ankara as *Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi* (Faculty of Language, History and Geography) in 1935. He even ordered the establishment of a Turkish Geographical Society. It was reported that Atatürk saw history and geography as inseparable fields and

the Turks, who migrated to other parts of the world, and even to America via Bering Strait, had the largest geographical horizons.⁸⁵² The Sumerians were considered to have known the shape and features of the earth to an extent. They must have known that it was covered by seas and had a round shape. Moreover, due to agricultural operations, the Sumerians discovered and developed geographical knowledge. Thus, other ancient civilizations learnt from them on geography.⁸⁵³ Next, claims were put forward that the oldest traces of cartography belong to Eastern Asia and Asia Minor. According to Hamit Sadi, both the Asian and Anatolian examples of cartography were the products of the Turks. Among them, Anatolian-Sumerian tradition rose to the peak. The bricks found in Euphrates and Tigre basin and dated to the Sumerian time revealed the maps of the cities and known world of the period. Unlike the ancient Chinese maps which depicted the world as quadrangular, the Sumerian maps pictured it in a round form. With their experience on the field, the Sumerians also influenced the Phoenician and Persian mapping system.⁸⁵⁴

Although it was not handled in a coherent continuity, Turkish contributions to cartography and geography marked a crucial place in Turkish History Thesis. Accordingly, Piri Reis was repeatedly highlighted by the members of the Society. In a conference given by Afet in Geneva Geographical Society in 1937, she revealed the picture of the stone world map of the Sumerians and brought the subject to Turkish cartography. After she introduced certain Turkish navigators and mentioned the Ottoman seafaring in early modern era, Afet made a fruitful presentation to demonstrate Piri Reis and his works. His foreign language skills, books on maritime and monumental world maps brought him to top of

believed that historiography without geographical bases would be of no use. Afet İnan, *Atatürk Hakkında Hatıralar ve Belgeler* (İstanbul: İş Bankası, 1968), p. 309-320.

⁸⁵² Hamit Sadi, *Türklerin Coğrafya İlmine Hizmetleri*, TTK, TTAH, 4/13, p. 5.

⁸⁵³ Hamit Sadi, *Türklerin Coğrafya İlmine Hizmetleri*, p. 6-7.

⁸⁵⁴ Hamit Sadi, *Türklerde Haritacılık ve Coğrafya*, (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934), p. 28.

geography for his age, and even for the following ages. Particularly, his world map had enlightened the seafarers and even Christopher Columbus benefitted from that in his discoveries. For Afet, with his various works, Piri Reis had greatly contributed to world culture, civilizations and science.⁸⁵⁵

According to Hamit Sadi, Piri Reis had referred to all related sources to generate his map, and it was prepared in compliance with scientific methods. It was even appropriate to the requirements of the twentieth century science.⁸⁵⁶ Moreover, except the proceedings of the First Turkish History Congress, a book on Piri Reis and his map in 1935 was the first work of Turkish Historical Society, which shows the significance attributed to Piri Reis by the Society. In this volume, Piri Reis and his book and maps are presented as Turkish contribution to world science in the sixteenth century. It was also added that Kemal Atatürk, who attached priority to national history, instructed for publication and dissemination of the work as a valuable piece of Turkish national history.⁸⁵⁷

For Hamit Sadi, whereas book of Piri Reis was a great atlas of coastal regions, there was also a land atlas of another Turkish intellectual, Nasuh Silahi (Matrakçı Nasuh). In his underrated work, *Beyan-ı Menazil-i Sefer-i Irakeyn* (*Chronicle of Stages of Campaign of Iraq and Persia*), Nasuh introduced the cities, roads, mountains and rivers of Iraq and Persia picturesquely. It was argued that any nation or community could not vividly depict its lands in the sixteenth century as Nasuh did. At an age, when photograph did not exist, such an extensive and lively book could show the high culture and aesthetic side of the Turks in addition to its special place for geography and cartography.⁸⁵⁸

⁸⁵⁵ Afet, “Bir Türk Amiralî”, p. 531.

⁸⁵⁶ Selen, “Piri Reisin Şimalî Amerika Haritası”, p. 518.

⁸⁵⁷ *Piri Reis Haritası Hakkında İzahname*, ed. Yusuf Akçura, (İstanbul: Devlet Matbaası, Türk Tarihi Araştırma Kurumu Yayınları, 1935), p. 1-4.

⁸⁵⁸ Selen, “16ncı Asırda Yapılmış Anadolu Atlası-Nasuh Silahi’nin ‘Menazil’i”, p. 813-817.

Arithmetic: As one of the ancient methods of universal science, mention of arithmetic was made within Turkish History Thesis. Unsurprisingly, the first nucleus of arithmetic was associated with Central Asia, with references to the mathematician M. Cantor. Then, it was argued that Sumerian arithmetic paved the way of the field. More than 25.000 Sumerian tablets dated to 3000 BC were portrayed to prove the existence and development of Sumerian arithmetic. It could have been used for several purposes and fields: counting the material, calculating the accounts, fractions, engineering and measurement. On the other hand, different schools with the claim of inventing-developing arithmetic were tried to be refuted. According to this view, Sumerian arithmetic was older than the Egyptian one. Next, when the Greek and Phoenician civilization was established, they must have benefitted from previous developments of older civilizations, like the Sumerians. Then, Indian and Chinese arithmetic did not belong to the Indians and Chinese, but it had been enhanced by the Turks of those regions.⁸⁵⁹ Ord. Prof. Kerim Erim, the first Turkish mathematician with doctoral degree, put forward in the Second Turkish History Congress that Sumerian arithmetic was a sophisticated field and it also influenced Turkish-Islamic arithmetic through Khwarizmi,⁸⁶⁰ which gave way to formation of Turkish school in arithmetic and mathematics.⁸⁶¹ In this way, the Turks were recorded with their ability in mathematics and their role in presenting such a crucial service to world civilization.

Medical science: The claim of Herodotus that propounds the non-existence of physicians in Mesopotamia, and accordingly settled belief was objected in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*. It was exerted that recent archaeological excavations revealed the sources that set forth the existence of the physicians in the Sumerians. Though it was mixed with superstition and surely different from

⁸⁵⁹ Aliyar, Fatin, Hüsnü Hamit, Kerim, *Türklerin Riyaziyatın Terakkisine Hizmetleri*, typewritten in TTKA, TTAH, 4/18.

⁸⁶⁰ Erim, “Sumer Riyaziyesinin Esas ve Mahiyetine Dair”, p.269.

⁸⁶¹ Sayman, “Riyaziye Tarihinde Türk Okulu”, p. 625.

contemporary medicine, various ways of treatment were available, and cuneiform tablets could show it.⁸⁶² There is no doubt that Sumerian medicine is regarded as Turkish medicine in the narrative. Then, though it is not possible to mention a historical continuity, Avicenna was promoted as a great Turkish physician who contributed to medicine at a universal manner. Compared to Hippocrates and Aristotle whom the Greeks have been pride of in medicine and philosophy, Avicenna himself was both a superior physician and thinker;⁸⁶³ and had served to Turkish-Islamic, and even world civilization with his methods.

Then, Uludağ claims that the Ottoman Turks also helped world with their operations in medical sciences. According to him, among many other discoveries of the Turks in the field, three of them were more remarkable: first, smallpox vaccine had been sent to Europe by the Turks; second, the oldest examples of centrally governed hospitals and treatment centers were in Turkey; finally, the Europeans had learnt to cure the mental disorders from the Turks.⁸⁶⁴ These came to mean that the Turks contributed to medicine not only in remote past; but also, in modern times.

5.2.2. Mastery in Artistic and Intellectual Activities

Since a “civilization” requires precedence in artistic and intellectual activities, the role of the Turks in related fields should have been emphasized. Fine arts (with sub-branches) and sports could constitute appropriate examples to this end.

Drawing and illuminated manuscripts (*tezhib*): Reputed lettered of Turkey, Dr. Süheyl Ünver contributed to *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* with his views on the role of the Turks in art history through the subject of drawing and *tezhib*.

⁸⁶² Galip Ataç, *Sümerlerde Hekimlik, Eski Mısırda Hekimlik, İskitlerde Hekimlik*, TTKA, TTAH, 9/2, p. 3-6.

⁸⁶³ Ünver, “İslam Tababetinde Türk Hekimlerinin Mevkii ve İbni Sina’nın Türklüğü”, p. 273.

⁸⁶⁴ Uludağ, “Tıp İlmi ve Osmanlı Türkleri”, p. 705.

History of Turkish drawing and *tezhib* was coeval with Turkish history. Rocks, stones, caves and other material in Central Asia were indicators of this fact. Then, as time went on and paper was invented, illustrious Turkish art was drawn on paper; and it was ornamented with gold. Indeed, it was the Turks who invented tissue paper and created art on it. Despite adoption of Islam shaped the way of art of the Turks (evolution of miniature for instance), it did not make away with their artistic skills. However, although Turkish aesthetics and inventions had formed the highest level of arts, the Western world has associated them with China or Persia for a long time. Nonetheless, recent research of the orientalist in East began to confute it by recognizing the Turkish existence behind those masterworks. According to author, drawing and *tezhib* were born in Central Asia which had been a Turkish land and ruled by the Turks in history. Even the cradle of fine arts was this region thanks to the Turks and Turkish leaders who always patronized and promoted the artists.⁸⁶⁵ Then, it was possible to see the traces of this endeavor in India, Timurids, Safavids in following centuries, and Europe must have benefitted and learnt from this experience.

Music and musical instruments: One of the emphasized aesthetic and artistic activities was music. Similar to many other points, Central Asia was described as the starting point of musical culture in history. For Mesut Cemil, contemporary music of the world had been created and shaped by the Turks who invented the pan flute and taught it to other communities. This instrument was adopted by the Chinese in 2255 BC, and later by the Greeks who re-named it as *syrinx*. On the other hand, its use in Europe and Egypt was afterwards.⁸⁶⁶ Thus, roots of musical instruments had to be sought in Central Asia before Europe and Americans.⁸⁶⁷ It was also argued that music had a place in the Sumerians and Hittites, too.

⁸⁶⁵ A. Süheyl, *Türklerde Resim, Tezhip ve Minyatür Tarihi (Orta Asya Kısım)*, TTKA, TTAH, 9/4, p. 3-8.

⁸⁶⁶ Mesut Cemil, *Medeniyet Tarihinde Musiki Aletleri ve Türkler*, (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934), p. 2-4.

⁸⁶⁷ Mesut Cemil, *Medeniyet Tarihinde Musiki Aletleri*, typewritten in TTKA, TTAH, 8/11.

Musical melodies had accompanied the Sumerian spiritual ceremonies as the clergymen played flute and cymbals, while women were singing gently. Next, archaeological findings for the Hittite era proved the existence of certain flutes and they must have carried the traces of Central Asian flutes.⁸⁶⁸ Kösemihal Zade Mahmut Ragıp evaluated the subject with references to the works of foreign researchers. For him, although historical sources were limited, Sumerian-Hittite music existed and it must have been performed by the instruments brought from Asia. Turkish music was also common in Chinese palaces and in Turkestan BC and AD. After Islam, the Turks continued to play and carry their music to various parts of the world from inner Asia, to the Caucasus, Mesopotamia and Anatolia.⁸⁶⁹

Theatre: As a part of fine arts, theater and its relations with the Turks are incorporated into the narrative. According to the view, development of the performing arts started in China. However, it was the Turks of China who shaped and publicized it, as the Turks also had developed the eulogy show. Then, shadow play must have been the first version of the performing arts and it was realized through the paper on the windows of houses.⁸⁷⁰ References to Middle Ages' historical sources such as of Al-Juwayni and Ghazali were used as the proof of Turkish style of shadow play. Moreover, the Ottomans should have taken over this tradition and it was apparent in the famous *Karagöz* and *Hacivad* plays.

Sports: Physical activities were among the decisive features of the Turks who gave priority to well-being of body. As they also have been related with martial actions throughout history, physical education was an inseparable part of this

⁸⁶⁸ Ali Rifat, *Musiki*, (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934), p. 5-7.

⁸⁶⁹ Kösemihal Zade Mahmut Ragıp, *Türk Musikisi Tarihi*, in TTKA, TTAH, 4/16.

⁸⁷⁰ Selim Nüzhet, *Türklerde Tiyatro*, typewritten in TTKA, TTAH, 5/16.

endeavor. A contributor of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, Kamil Bey from the Prime Ministry, allocated his work on behalf of the sports and physical activities for the Turks. Since they had lived in tough conditions of Central Asia and engaged in incessant wars, the Turks should have been able-bodied. Therefore, their daily life routine could not be indifferent to this situation. *Türk*, son of Yafes and grandson of Noah, had used bow and arrow and hunted at the dawn of history.⁸⁷¹ In addition to it, the Turks had interested in almost all kind of sports and education, and even become the inventor of some. To illustrate, as the primary object of wars, the sword must have been the invention of the Turks. Since they were the first nation to have tamed horse, they also mastered in riding. Accordingly, riding sports such as *çöğen* (polo) and *cirit* (jereed) were performed by the Turks for centuries as the sources mention. Other activities referred in historical records include wrestling, box, hunting, climbing, rock-throwing, winter sports, swimming, running, even an archaic version of football, and other various actions. It was implied that the Turks played and performed those for centuries both as a requirement of environmental conditions and war preparations and as leisure. To provide the past and present connection, the author also adds that the new Turkish Republic did not ignore sports and promoted it with its policies.⁸⁷²

5.2.3. Proficiency in Economic Fields

There is no doubt that civilization and well-being of a community would require abilities in economy and craft production. Thus, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* tried to show the skills and welfare of the Turks in various occupations.

⁸⁷¹ Kamil, *Türklerde Spor* (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934), p. 4. The author even puts forward in Second Turkish History Congress that the word “sport” must have been a Turkish word and there were Turkish tribes in Anatolia with “spor” in their names. Kepecioğlu, “Türklerde Spor”, p 939.

⁸⁷² Kemal, *Türklerde Spor*, p. 8.

Agriculture and husbandry: It is a known fact that the Turks had intensely employed themselves in animal husbandry as an old (and nomad, for a time) Central Asian and Anatolian nation.⁸⁷³ In Turkish History Thesis, it was argued that the Turks had been the first nation that invented and developed the agriculture and husbandry as they were also first in establishing civilization. In Neolithic Age, Homo-alpinus (Alpine type of men, namely ancestors of the Turks in Turkish History Thesis) had tamed horse, sheep, cattle, hawk, falcon and eagle, which was the first service of the Turks to humanity. And they had cultivated barley, wheat, corn and linen.⁸⁷⁴ During the migration of the Turks from Central Asia to West, they took along various plants and animals,⁸⁷⁵ which means the transition of know-how of agriculture to Europe. Even it was regarded as one of the biggest contributions of the Turks to humanity, since this occupation doubtlessly turned human to master of lands, history maker and servant of civilization.⁸⁷⁶ Moreover, even before the Europeans' dealing with chemistry and understanding the mold of soil, the Turks had analyzed it with their everlasting experience and familiarity with *terra*.⁸⁷⁷ This strong tradition of the Turks in agriculture allowed the Ottomans in ruling the state according to land divisions, as well as obtaining significant amount of product from farming.

⁸⁷³ See Salim Koca, "Eski Türklerde Sosyal ve Ekonomik Hayat", in *Türkler*, vol. III, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2002), p. 15-37.

⁸⁷⁴ İhsan Abidin, Ali Rıza, Hamdi, Cevat Rüştü, *Ziraat ve Hayvancılık*, TTKA, TTAH, 7/9, p. 3. The authors mention the husbandry and names importance of various animals for different Turkic groups throughout history. Next, they elaborate the development of agriculture in East with special credit to Turks.

⁸⁷⁵ See *Türk Ziraat Tarihine Bir Bakış*, (İstanbul: Birinci Köy ve Ziraat Kalkınma Kongresi Yayını, 1938).

⁸⁷⁶ İbrahim Hakkı, *Türklerin Ziraat ve Hayvancılık Sahasındaki Tesirleri ve Hizmetleri*, TTKA, TTAH, 7/6. In his work, the author tries to set forth agricultural activities of the brachycephalies (Turks) in pre-historical eras with references to nearly 15 European researchers.

⁸⁷⁷ Cevat Rüştü, *Türklerin Ziraate Hizmetleri-Osmanlı Devri*, (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1936), p. 10.

Industry: Besides agriculture and husbandry, the Turks were developed in industry. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* allocates a large chapter for the industrial history of the Turks. However, the chapter begins with an explanation that the Turks' dealing with industry did not arise from their material desires, but they felt a strong motive for power. That motive required activism, dynamism and technical knowledge.⁸⁷⁸ By this way, a virtue and spiritual character is ascribed to industrial and economic activities of the Turks. In this narrative, industrial history is dated back to Paleolithic, Archeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages respectively with various specialties of each. The main theme in the narrative was that the Turks lived those ages earlier than any other people. To prove the claim, results of chemical analysis of various material (ring, bell, bracelet, knife, dagger and statue etc.) found in archaeological research were presented.⁸⁷⁹ That could mean that the Turks had experienced those ages and they had been occupied in industrial activities.

Dyeing: Though it is partly related to fine arts and aesthetics, dyeing was shown as one of the industrial and commercial activities of the Turks. According to Hasan Sabri, even the ancient people of the Stone Age colored the petroglyphs, which depicts the use of color as an old tradition. Thus, the Turks could not have ignored the painting for their material. Turkish carpets and tiles constituted the best examples of this activity.⁸⁸⁰ The author gives frequent references to the works of Raphael Pumpelly and Aurel Stein who had carried out detailed research in Turkestan, which was believed as the scientific evidence of Turkish existence and civilization in Asia. With applying to physical anthropological facts, the skeletons found in those research were presented as Alpine type of man, but not Chinese or Mongoloid. Although many examples of dyeing were seen in China, the Turkish residents of the region must have been the makers.

⁸⁷⁸ Nizamettin Ali, *Türklerde Sanayi*, (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1934), p. 12.

⁸⁷⁹ Nizamettin Ali, *Türklerde Sanayi*, p. 37-39.

⁸⁸⁰ Hasan Sabri, *Boyacılık Tarihinde Türkler*, typewritten in TTKA, TTAH, 6/3.

Therefore, it could be understood that the Turks had produced dresses, made pottery, set up tent and knitted carpets centuries ago. In all of these, they colored the material with an artistic sense. It is claimed that Marco Polo had witnessed the best carpets of the world in his travel to the soil of the Seldjukid Empire. It was reasonable that the Seldjukids and Ottomans continued this tradition in material culture. On the other hand, the most elegant color in dyeing was *Türk Kırmızısı* (Turkish Red) produced by the Turks.⁸⁸¹ Hasan Sabri puts forward that Turkish Red was appreciated by foreign researchers and it was transferred to France and then to Europe after the second half of the eighteenth century.⁸⁸²

Carpet weaving: Despite the degeneration caused by the mechanic industry, art of weaving carpets had been the symbol of Turkish civilization. And a Turkish carpet could be the best example of the Turks, a civilized community.⁸⁸³ As a part of grand Turkish national history narrative, Reşat Bey, director of carpet factory in Hereke, introduced the history of Turkish carpet business. For him, Central Asia was the homeland of the carpets in history. But the carpets found in archaeological excavations in Crimea must have pointed that it was the Turks who developed the field and took it to other regions where they moved. Accordingly, it was possible to find carpets in Central Asia, China, India, Egypt, Northern Africa, Iraq, Anatolia, Caucasus, Aegean and Black Sea coast, Balkans, and even Spain and Scandinavia, where the Turks ruled or moved. On the other hand, one could not see traces of carpets in places where Turks did not live or cross. Moreover, the activity of the Turks in that field was not limited to ancient ages or remote past, since the Seldjukids and Ottomans were believed to have cherished the tradition of their ancestors. Even the role of the Turkish carpets in

⁸⁸¹ Atayolu, “Türk Kırmızısı”, p. 698.

⁸⁸² Hasan Sabri, *Boyacılık Tarihinde Türkler*, p. 1-6.

⁸⁸³ Reşat, *Halıcılık*, TTKA, TTAH, 9/6, p. 25.

Venetian and Holland painting in the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries would not be underestimated.⁸⁸⁴

Leatherworking: Leatherworking was another field the Turks engaged in. Dr. Nuri, engineer in Beykoz Leather Factory, contributed to *TTAH* with his work on the contributions of the Turks to processing and development of leather. According to his reasoning, this activity had been the oldest part of trade; and the Turks -who had mastered in animal husbandry for ages- must have been the first community for leatherworking. Despite Central Asia and Anatolia provided the excellent examples of the field, the Turks became versed between the fourteenth and eighteenth centuries. The material in the museums of Foundations, Topkapı Palace and Military could show the level of the Turks in working the leather. Especially leather book covers were regarded as masterpieces with their visual and artistic magnificence. In this way, the Turks enhanced the Turkish-Islamic tangible culture as well as enriching European market through North Africa.⁸⁸⁵

It is known that the *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, which was published as a book, is frequently used in the examinations of the Turkish History Thesis. However, the drafts of *TTAH* that is preserved in the archive of the Society has not been adequately applied before. Hence, the claims of the Society to prove the role of the Turks played in civilization could be seen clearer in these records. These drafts are of great importance in terms of seeing the reflections and claims of the Turkish history thesis, for example, in the field of sports or music, which is valuable in terms of showing the breadth of the Turkish History Thesis and envisagement of the Turks' contribution to civilization.

⁸⁸⁴ Reşat, *Türklerde Halıcılık*, p. 8-9.

⁸⁸⁵ Dr. Nuri, *Türklerin Deri Sanayiine Yaptıkları Hizmetler*, (İstanbul: Akşam Matbaası, 1936), p. 3-10.

5.3. The Claim on “Turks Having a Glorious Past in Pre-Islamic Ages”

As it was seen above, Turkish History Thesis did not completely ignore the history of Islam. On the contrary, it was combined under the narrative of Turkish history. Yet, the approach was pragmatic and practical: accomplishments in history of Islam were mostly based on the talent of the Turks; and, failure of the Turks was usually resulted from the deficits arisen from interpretation or misinterpretation of Islam. This view tacitly implied that history of Turks was superior to history of Islam; and Turks had high civilization and culture before Islam, too.⁸⁸⁶ Turkish History Thesis accentuated the position of the Turks in pre and post-Islamic eras in many occasions. It is known that historical understandings of people in Ottoman (to some extent, Republican) period had been shaped by chronicles and history books from the thirteenth to early twentieth centuries. Formation and content of those materials usually had a religious character and featured Islam. On the other hand, due to the character of Islam which necessitated sweeping the national differences under the carpet,⁸⁸⁷ - and also due to the *zeitgeist*- national identity and history of the Turks could not have adequately taken place within those sources. Moving from this point, members of Turkish Historical Society paid particular attention on the history of Turks before Islam while constructing the new history thesis. As we know it, the thesis dated the starting of Turkish history to several millennia ago to reach pre-historical ages.⁸⁸⁸ Accordingly, pre-historical (somehow built) and ancient-

⁸⁸⁶ The phrase of “Turks were honored by Islam” has long been expressed both in academic and popular spheres in Turkey. Creators of Turkish History Thesis opposed to that view and strived for showing the high level of the Turks in many fields before their conversion to Islam.

⁸⁸⁷ See Babanzade Ahmed Naim, *İslamda Kavmiyetçilik Yoktur*, (İstanbul: Bedir Yayınları, 2021) to see the approach of Islam toward nationalism and bringing national claims into the forefront.

⁸⁸⁸ During the first Turkish History Congress, Köprülüzade Fuat Bey stated that objective material could not be found to date the Turkish history to pre-historical ages, and Turkish states had been within historical ages, “Türk Tarihi Hakkında Bazı Umumi Meseleler”, *BTTK*, p. 42. Then, Afet criticized Fuat Bey by claiming that ancientness of Turkish history could not be refuted with references to the Chinese sources, *BTTK*, p. 50-51. Then, Hasan Cemil joined Afet in opposing Fuat Bey. Consequently, Fuat Bey gave up his arguments and had to admit that he obeyed the basic principles of Turkish History Thesis, *BTTK*, p. 79-83. It is known that Zeki

Medieval (mostly actual) past of the Turks were portrayed as two phases of Turkish history before Islam. Both ages were stressed within the thesis as illustrious ages. The basic idea of this endeavor was to prove that the Turks had been advanced people and had a glorious history even from the first day of their emergence, and their fame and success had almost nothing to do with (adoption of) Islam.

5.3.1. Advanced Turks in Pre-Historical Ages

Mostly accepted periodization of pre-historical ages included the Paleolithic, Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages. The Turks were claimed to have learnt agriculture and taming animals in Neolithic Age; and forging in Iron Ages. Moreover, they were portrayed to have started an intellectual life with mental concepts and a certain language.⁸⁸⁹ Thus, high level of development of the Turks in various fields were suggested for the earliest period of history, in order to prove that such a developed community would not need Islam to rise.⁸⁹⁰ Then, that “enlightened” history of the Turks in pre-historical ages were classified under several fields.

First, the Turks had spread to many parts of the world in pre-historical ages. After rooting in and moving from Central Asia; China, India, Persia, Chaldea-Assyria, Egypt, Anatolia and Aegean Basin were the destination of the Turks. Thus, Chinese dynasties, Indian world of thought, first civilizations in Anatolia and even the improvements in Europe in archaic ages were associated with the

Velidi had brought some criticisms to the arguments of the new history thesis and he was exposed to “lynch” in the congress, which resulted in his flight from Turkey. Witnessing this issue, Fuat Bey seems to have conceded the thesis; or at least hold back.

⁸⁸⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, chapter I.

⁸⁹⁰ As shown above, some nationalisms in Europe also avoided from referring to Medieval as the religious oppression was thought to have degraded the national identity and tended to concentrate on the period before the oppression.

mobility of the Turks. From that viewpoint, Turks had been the flag carrier of civilization in many parts of the globe.

Second, they had established a high degree of civilization. According to Esat Bey, Minister of Education, while other people were living in tree hollows, the Turks had started mining and husbandry in Central Asia. They had discovered gold, copper, tin and iron 7000 years BC and carried them to places where they immigrated. Hence, they contributed to emancipation of the Europeans from troglodytism with their skills.⁸⁹¹ Persson alluded to Central Asian (Turkish) impact over the Greek civilization after the migrations.⁸⁹² Przeworski dealt with the issue of mining in Anatolia in Bronze Age and asserted the level of development of the Turks in technical terms.⁸⁹³ The same age in Anatolia was praised by Carl Blegen for technical production through the research in Troy.⁸⁹⁴ Similarly, Şevket Aziz, Kurt Bittel and Remzi Oğuz referred to a sophisticated community (Turks) in pre-historical ages with materials found in excavations. In addition to conferences and articles, prepared (but unpublished) pieces of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* contributed to the acceptance of the Turks' advancement in pre-historical era. In this sense, Nizamettin Ali mentioned the existence of industry of Turks in pre-history.⁸⁹⁵ This kind of data or comments could reveal why Afet İnan mentioned the Turks as the most developed community of the

⁸⁹¹ "Maarif Vekili Esat Beyefendinin Açma Nutku", *BTTK*, p. 6.

⁸⁹² Persson, "Prehistoryada Yunanistanla Küçük Asya Arasındaki Münasebetler", *İTTK*, p. 224-228.

⁸⁹³ Przeworski, "Anadolu Bronz Buluntularının Ehemmiyeti", *İTTK*, p. 608.

⁸⁹⁴ Blegen, "Turova Hafriyatı", *İTTK*, p. 769.

⁸⁹⁵ TTKA, Nizamettin Ali, "Türklerde Sanayi, Tarihden Evvel ve Tarihten Sonra", unpublished draft of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*.

pre-historical ages and they influenced other parts of the world in biological, cultural and social ways.⁸⁹⁶

Then, the Turks also had political-military successes according to this narrative. For example, the Dravidian people of India were ascribed as a Turkish community that dominated India in pre-history. Those people whose culture and language resembled to other Eurasian communities doubtlessly had been part of the Central Asian Turkish civilization.⁸⁹⁷ Moreover, as cited from Eugene Pittard and Jacques de Morgan, an Asian community (the Turks are implied) had reached to Egypt in Neolithic Age -roughly 5000 years BC-. Names of God-Kings in Egypt came to mean ironsmith, which is also asserted as their Central Asian and Turkish origin. Though the pharaohs tried hard to delete the traces of previous civilizations, Turks/Turkish-origin people had been the ruler of Egypt.⁸⁹⁸ The Turks had been active in southeastern Europe and Aegean Islands, too. After moving from Central Asia, they had arrived in western Anatolia and eastern Europe and had built the political unity before 3000 BC.⁸⁹⁹

Actually, there was a scarcity of sources related to pre-historical ages for 1930s in Turkey. Probably, rulers and members of the Society were aware of it, since chapters on pre-historical ages were briefly prepared when compared to detailed narration of historical ages. However, available material and sources from archaeological excavations and second-hand history books were pressed into service to shape a discourse. Hence, the meaning of this discourse was clear. Thereafter it was implied that when Islam emerged in the seventh century, the Turks had lived thousands of years and established a high degree of political,

⁸⁹⁶ Afet, “Tarihten Evvel ve Tarih Fecrinde”, *BTTK*.

⁸⁹⁷ *Tarih I*, p. 75.

⁸⁹⁸ *Tarih I*, p. 105-110.

⁸⁹⁹ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 195.

social and economic culture. Moreover, Islam could not be instrument of the rise of the Turks, since they had already mastered in various aspects of civilization. Additionally, almost 1400 years of Turkish-Islamic history was only a small part of large and old Turkish history. Thus, Turkish History Thesis placed the Turkish history on an extensive level in chronology; and replenished it with formulated or actual glories. Now, the catchword of “Turks were honored and risen by Islam” could be prevented, opposed or corrected in comply with references to remote past.

5.3.2. Increasing Fame of the Turks in Historical Ages

As it is known, invention of writing is generally recognized as the beginning of the historical ages.⁹⁰⁰ Thanks to this development, survival of more historical materials of any kind and better chance of deeper studies for historical ages resulted in clearer portrayal of the Turks in the narrative of Turkish Historical Society. Therefore, building a Turkish history in historical ages until the conversion of the Turks to Islam included the period from the Sumerians to the Samanids⁹⁰¹ of the ninth-tenth centuries, which approximately accounted for a 4000-year process.

The Sumerians who were accepted to have started the historical ages with their invention of writing were pictured as the first Turkish group of that age. Therefore, foregrounding of the Sumerians would mean the shining of Turkish history. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* portrayed the Sumerians as a group of people that had the national feeling and felt pride of it. They were skilled in

⁹⁰⁰ Denise Schmandt-Besserat, “The Evolution of Writing”, in *International Encyclopedia of the Social&Behavioral Sciences*, ed. James Wright, in <https://sites.utexas.edu/dsb/tokens/the-evolution-of-writing/>, accessed on 30.12.2021.

⁹⁰¹ Two views are suggested on the origin of the Samanids. Whereas one view argues their Persian roots, the other attributes a Turkish origin for them. Aydın Usta, “Samaniler”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 36, (2009), p. 64-68. However, it is claimed in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* that the Samanids were the first Turkish-Muslim state in Central Asia, p. 641. Therefore, making mention of pre-Islamic Turkish history means the period before the ninth century in activities of Turkish Historical Society.

agriculture, industry and education.⁹⁰² Prof. Andrae claimed that the Sumerians - in addition to their ability in other fields- had built enormous and great temples with their architectural and intellectual level.⁹⁰³ That level could be seen in their success in mathematics, which means that Sumerian-Turkish mathematics had been ahead of the knowledge of later Greek or Turkish-Muslim mathematicians.⁹⁰⁴ Indeed, Western philosophy had owed much to the Sumerian intellectual capacity that was transferred by the Ionians. That means, the Sumerians had founded the bases of modern philosophy.⁹⁰⁵ Moreover, as shown above, works of Galip Ata⁹⁰⁶ and Ahmet Cevat⁹⁰⁷ on the medicine and writing in Sumerians were added to the drafts of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* in 1932 for this cause.

Compared to the Sumerians, stronger references and sources were associated with the Hittites as an enhanced of part of Turkish history. In addition to their “objective” features (such as language and skull pans), they represented the Turks with their political, military and social properties. Their empire had covered the whole of Asia minor and been constituted with distinct military-administrative units. Above all, *Kaan-Eti*⁹⁰⁸ (Hittite King) had lived in Hattusa and ruled the empire; and the Hittites had benefited from its sub-administrations

⁹⁰² *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 128-131.

⁹⁰³ Andrae, “Sumerlerin Monumantal Sanatları”, *İTTK*, p. 110-112.

⁹⁰⁴ Erim, “Sumer Riyaziyesinin Esas ve Mahiyetine Dair”, *İTTK*, p. 270.

⁹⁰⁵ Fon Aster, “Felsefe Tarihinde Türkler”, p. 90.

⁹⁰⁶ TTKA, Galip Ata, “Sümerlerde Hekimlik, Eski Mısır’da Hekimlik, İskitlerde Hekimlik”, draft of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*.

⁹⁰⁷ TTKA, Ahmet Cevat, “I. Türklerin Yazıyı İcat Etmekle Medeniyete Hizmetleri – II. Alfabenin de Menşei Sümer Türklerinin Yazısıdır”, draft of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*.

⁹⁰⁸ A Turkish ruler title, *kaan*, was attributed to the Hittites as a part of campaign of calling them as Turks.

(principalities) in the Battle of Kadesh. Their legal system and family law was also portrayed as an advanced structure for that time. Architecture and art of the Hittites formed another division which could show their degree of development when compared to its contemporary and subsequent entities. It is argued that Hittite art influenced Syrian, Western Anatolian and a number of western cultures; and even the Greek music instruments had been borrowed from the Hittites.⁹⁰⁹ They were advanced even in historiography when considering the possibilities of the period.⁹¹⁰ Similar to the Hittites, certain Anatolian states/communities such as the Phrygians, Lydians and Phoenicians were dealt as the representatives of Turkish civilization.

As coming closer to Common Era, the states that are unanimously accepted as being Turkish were inserted to the narrative of Turkish history. Though vaguely mentioning the Scythians as a highly placed and developed community,⁹¹¹ any concrete material or date for their actions were not provided. Then, matter of the Huns was evaluated as a critical part of Turkish history. According to the thesis, aside from many Turkish groups immigrating from Central Asia, some of them had stayed there. Asian Huns were among them; and historical sources had placed them in the third century BC. Teoman and Mete were their illustrious leaders who achieved great political and military successes. Their neighbors, mostly the Chinese, had learnt calendar and military system from the sophisticated civilization of the Huns. On the other hand, a part of the Huns had moved to west and established the European Hun State in the fourth century AD. The majestic ruler of the state, Attila, was portrayed as a successful Turkish leader that terrified the Europeans, and even threatened Rome with his martial

⁹⁰⁹ *Tarih I*, p. 133-138.

⁹¹⁰ Güterbock, “Etilerde Tarih Yazıcılığı”, *İTTK*, p. 177.

⁹¹¹ *Tarih I*, p. 69.

accomplishments.⁹¹² Moreover, their development in material culture could be seen through the findings of excavations in contemporary Hungary.⁹¹³ Consequently, Central Asian and European Huns were reflected as shining page of Turkish history before Islam.

Eventually, issue of Middle Ages' Turkish states took part in the narrative. As continuation of the Huns, the Avars in Europe and the Akhuns in southern Asia were slightly dealt. They had controlled their regions with military and administrative strength. Then, establishment of Turkish (Göktürk) Empire in the sixth century, and of the Kutluk State in the seventh century was the seal of the Turks (and of the name of "Türk") in most parts of Asia. Their capable and wise leaders, military power, culture, social structure and desire for freedom placed them among the puissant constitutions of the Turks. On the other hand, world famous Orkhon Inscriptions -in addition to its function as historical source of that era- could reveal the high degree of Turkish culture; and the importance of the fatherland and nation for the Turks.⁹¹⁴ Those inscriptions erected when many nations even did not exist or could not produce a monument were glorified within Turkish History Thesis as a solid, senior and objective sign of Turkish existence and degree of civilization.⁹¹⁵ Subsequently, the Oghuz, Uighur, Kyrgyz, Khazar and Bulgar communities from inner Asia to eastern Europe were handled as the branches of Turkish tree with peculiar features and accomplishments mostly in political and social spheres.⁹¹⁶ It would be a vain attempt to look at the evaluations on them in detail, since the critical point here is

⁹¹² *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 322-328.

⁹¹³ Fettich, "Hunlar Zamanına Ait Olup Szeged-Nagyszekszas'ta Bulunan Prens Mezarı Hafriyatında Bulunan Eşya", *İTTK*, p. 320.

⁹¹⁴ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 330-333.

⁹¹⁵ Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk İslam Sentezine*, p. 125.

⁹¹⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 333-340.

that the narrative of the Society on Turkish history marked the ancientness and richness of Turkish history with numerous accomplishments in various fields and in large areas.

All in all, the long-term hegemony of Islam on historical understanding and concept of nation for the Turks was tried to be ended with a new approach to past. Turkish Historical Society was the institution to re-shape and re-build that memory. Therefore, though partially fabricated, a new Turkish history that reached much beyond the Islamic history was uncovered by the Society. The discourse was so strong that the Turks had been a developed nation not only in the Common Era, but also in pre-historical ages, even at the dawn of humanity. According to this approach, ancestors of the Turks had begun to progress from the Paleolithic Age and improved through the following ages in pre-history. Then, historical ages had provided abundance of sources for the uptrend of the Turks.⁹¹⁷ From the time of Sumerians to Samanids (when conversion of the Turks to Islam arose), a high Turkish civilization had gradually been constituted by various Turkish communities on a broad area. For instance, Köprülü points that when the Turks converted to Islam, they had already established an ancient and strong legal culture.⁹¹⁸ Therefore, Turkish History Thesis, which was in charge of pronouncing a long and glorious Turkish history at home and abroad, could not stand for the argument that Turkish history could not go further from Islamic history or the Turks were honored by Islam. A narrative for gorgeous Turkish history in pre-historical and historical ages was a response against that kind of arguments and stimulant for the citizens.

⁹¹⁷ Hamit Zübeyr Koşay argued that the limits of contemporary knowledge on Turkish history began from the Huns and reached to the Ottomans for historical ages. However, deeper studies on the subject and archaeological excavations would definitely uncover the organizational skills of the “Turkish fathers” of pre-history. “Türk Tarih Kurumu Tarafından Alaca Hüyükte 1936 Yazında Yapıtılan Hafriyatta Elde Edilen Neticeler”, p. 533.

⁹¹⁸ Köprülü, “Ortazaman Türk Hukuki Müesseseleri”, *İTTK*, p. 51.

5.4. The Claim on “Turkish Language as Indicator of Turkish Civilization”

“The connection between national feeling and language is so strong. A national and rich language is the main factor in development of national feeling. Turkish is among the richest languages as long as it is handled with this consciousness. Turkish nation that accomplished to protect its state and independence has to emancipate its nation from the chain of foreign languages.”⁹¹⁹ These sentences have been written by Mustafa Kemal himself in 1930 for a book of Sadri Maksudi on Turkish language. It has long been appreciated by many that language has been inseparable part of nation building for centuries. In addition to its role in communication within a culture, it fosters a group consciousness by carrying emotional, political, national and certain various feelings. Moreover, it is also an instrument of differentiating from other communities and showing up as a peculiar group. Therefore, numerous nations all over the world promoted their national languages to strengthen national identity.⁹²⁰

Actually, the studies on Turkish and suggestion for revisions and reforms in the language had begun especially during the nineteenth century within the Ottoman Empire.⁹²¹ Discussions on Turkish went on with the Republican Government, too. This time Mustafa Kemal, head of the state, had a direct interest in the language issue and saw it as a part of national consciousness. He often objected to the prevailing view that Turkish was formed of Arabic and Persian; and it would fall behind without them. He used to ask “could it be possible that the Turks had not produced words for the concept of honor, virtue, fairness and

⁹¹⁹ Foreword by Mustafa Kemal, in Sadri Maksudi, *Türk Dili İçin*, (İstanbul: Türk Ocakları İlim ve Sanat Heyeti, 1930).

⁹²⁰ For example, see *Language and Nationalism in Europe*, ed. Stephen Barbour & Cathie Carmichael, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Tomasz D. I. Kamusella, “Language as an Instrument of Nationalism in Central Europe”, *Nations and Nationalism* 7, no. 2, (2001): p. 235-251.

⁹²¹ For a brief narrative see Güliden Sağol, “Osmanlı Döneminde Dilde Sadeleşme”, in *Osmanlı Kültür ve Sanat*, vol. 9, ed. Hasan Celal Güzel & Güler Eren, (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayınları, 2014), p. 504-517.

conscience⁹²² before encountering with the Arabs?”⁹²³ Abolition of the Arabic scripts and adoption of “Turkish Latin” alphabet in 1928 was considered as a great step for improving Turkish language.⁹²⁴ It was claimed that Turkish -a language that is highly rich in vocal and sounds, lucid, and one of the best languages of the world- could not be well written and spoken with Arabic alphabet.⁹²⁵ Mustafa Kemal Pasha addressed to the public in 1928 as such: “Our rich and harmonious language will manifest itself with the new Turkish alphabet. We have to emancipate ourselves from the signs that we have not understood for ages and that has locked our heads.”⁹²⁶ Then, Turkish Historical Society proudly announced that the best alphabet in the world -that was Turkish alphabet and different from the French, English, Italian, German or any other Latin alphabets- was quickly embraced with the reform and learnt by the Turks who had been

⁹²² In contemporary Turkish, these words mean *şeref*, *namus*, *insaf* and *vicdan* respectively. As they are Arabic-origin, Mustafa Kemal meant that the Turks must have had Turkish synonyms before meeting the Arabs, which could be considered as the evidence of power of Turkish against other languages.

⁹²³ Mehmet Ali Ağakay, *Atatürk'ten 20 Anı*, (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları, 2013), p. 14; Süheyl Ünver also gave a paper to Second Turkish History Congress which claims that despite the use of Arabic and Persian in writing during the Medieval, most people used to speak Turkish and give importance to know this language. He cited from *Divan-ı Lütâgi't-Türk* to argue that there was a hadith (saying of Prophet Mohammad) to promote speaking Turkish. “Ortaçağda Türkçe Takrir”, p. 743-745.

⁹²⁴ *Tarih IV*, p. 250.

⁹²⁵ Actually, a reform in the alphabet was not a new plan in 1920's. To illustrate, İbrahim Temo, a famous member of the *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, had proposed a program for education during the Ottoman era and called for adoption of the Latin alphabet. *İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyetinin Teşekkülü ve Hidemat-ı Vataniye ve İnkılap-ı Milliyeye Dair Hatıratım* (Mecidiye, 1939), p. 158-159. Numerous examples from the politicians and men of pen on alphabet reform during the Ottoman and early Republican periods could be revealed. See Metin Kale, “Harf Devrimi”, in *Erdem* 33, (1999): p. 811-831. On the other hand, Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları proudly declared that it was the Turks who wrote Arabic in its best and most aesthetical style, see İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal, *Türklerin Arap Harflerini Tanzim ve İhya Etmek Suretile İlme ve Medeniyete Hizmetleri*, TTKA, TTAH, 4/5, p. 4-5.

⁹²⁶ In *Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri II*, p. 272.

illiterate for centuries due to existence of a foreign alphabet.⁹²⁷ After completing the transition in alphabet,⁹²⁸ a commission entitled for that reform was also appointed for language affairs and worked until 1931.⁹²⁹

Establishing a language institution in Turkey was outcome of this framework. Following the foundation of an association on the field of history, President Mustafa Kemal and his comrades took the initiative for an institutional body for language studies. As a result, with the instructions of Atatürk, Turkish Language Research Society (*Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti*) was established by Samih Rifat, Ruşen Eşref, Celal Sahir and Yakup Kadri on 12 July 1932. According to regulation, Mustafa Kemal was the Protector Head of the Society. The main aim of the Society was “to uncover the core beauty and richness of Turkish language, and to uprise it in comply with its value among other world languages.” To fulfill the aim, researching Turkish language and publishing the outcomes would be sought. In this journey, gathering for scientific discussions, determining and compiling Turkish according to its development and needs, making efforts to obtain all kind of materials related to study of Turkish, preparing collection works of the old books and vernaculars from all parts of Turkey, and disseminating the works of the Society in all possible ways would be utilized.⁹³⁰

⁹²⁷ *Tarih IV*, p. 258.

⁹²⁸ Suggesting foreign examples to reinforce the legitimacy of the reforms in Turkey was not unusual. For instance, China was shown as not having a language unity, which made communication between two people from different regions in China impossible. In order to overcome that problem, the best way was offered in *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*: it was leaving old Chinese alphabet and adopting the Latin scripts, p. 67-68. Accuracy of transformation in language and alphabet in Turkey would be ensured with those examples, too.

⁹²⁹ A council had started its activities for alphabet reform and kept working after 1928 as *Dil Encümeni* (Language Council). For details, see Fahri Kılıç, *Yeni Türk Alfabesinin Kabulü ve Öğretiminde Kullanılan Yöntemler-Araçlar*, Ph.D. Dissertation, (Ankara Üniversitesi Türk İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü) 2012.

⁹³⁰ “Tarihçe”, Türk Dil Kurumu, <https://www.tdk.gov.tr/tdk/kurumsal/tarihce-2/>, accessed on 01.12.2021.

In order to evaluate the possible options and determine the methodology of the studies in Turkish, First Turkish Language Congress (*Birinci Türk Dil Kurultayı*) was convened on 26 September 1932, in Dolmabahçe Palace in İstanbul. In addition to linguistic scientists, famous authors, poets and journalists -such as Abdülhak Hamid, Samipaşazade Sezai, Halit Ziya, Hüseyin Cahit, Hüseyin Rahmi, Mehmed Emin, Falih Rıfkı and Yunus Nadi- were present at the event. What was decided in the Congress included carrying out studies on Turkish and its relations/comparisons to Sumerian-Hittite, Indo-European and Semitic languages, creating dictionaries on Turkish, dialects and terminology, forming new words from Turkish word stems, suggesting pure Turkish words instead of foreign ones, and creating academic and popular interest toward Turkish language.⁹³¹ Following the First Congress, the Society announced a radical reform in Turkish language. It mainly meant a purification movement in Turkish.⁹³²

The aim to create a Turkish language which would completely be formed by pure Turkish words required omitting the non-Turkish words from dictionaries, and oral and written culture. So, an extensive dictionary prepared according to written sources and Turkish dialects and vernaculars had to be compiled. Turkish grammar and lexicology, and terms for a scientific language should also have been revealed. A circular of the Council of Ministers dated to 1933 is highly crucial in showing the efforts to purify Turkish. Turkish Language Society had published a survey to find Turkish equivalent to non-Turkish words and asked for support of the government. Then, Council of Ministers sent the survey to official institutions demanding the dissemination of the survey in various media.

⁹³¹ Şükrü Haluk Akalın, “Türk Dil Kurumu”, *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 42, İstanbul 2012, p. 536-537.

⁹³² This movement could be seen in the adventure of the official name of the Society in 1930’s. Similar to the changes in name of Turkish Historical Society, Turkish Language Research Society underwent shifts in its names, too. In the second congress in 1934, it became *Türk Dilini Araştırma Kurumu* (still Turkish Language Research Society in meaning, but Turkish “araştırma” was adopted instead of Arabic “tetkik”) and eventually turned to *Türk Dil Kurumu* (Turkish Language Society) in the third congress in 1936.

Everyday 10-20 non-Turkish words chosen from *Kamus-ı Türki* of Şemseddin Sami would be announced by radio or agencies; and their Turkish synonyms would be offered by the citizens.⁹³³ The government was determined to shift the life into Turkish. Especially, Arabic-Persian words were targeted for renewal. A radical step of this attempt was the decision for reciting *ezan* (call to prayer) in Turkish instead of Arabic in 1932.⁹³⁴ Next, Mustafa Kemal himself found Turkish words for geometrical and mathematical figures and terminology.⁹³⁵ In 1935, even one of the names of Atatürk -*Kemal*- was transformed to *Kamal* which was claimed to have been with Turkish origin and meant army and castle. When Atatürk passed away in 1938, his name was still Kamal in his identity card.⁹³⁶

Accordingly, the Society started to make research on historical sources, vocabulary of Turkish groups outside of Turkey, and to produce new words from Turkish roots. As a result, thousands of new words appeared in short time.⁹³⁷

⁹³³ BCA., 30-10-0/144-32-15, 09.03.1933.

⁹³⁴ It also had been expressed previously. Ziya Gökalp had started his poem *Vatan* in following meaning: “A country whose mosques recite Turkish adhan / Peasants understand the meaning of prayer / A country whose schools teach Turkish Quran / The young and adult know the command of the God / Oh Turkish son, that is your fatherland!” in *Ziya Gökalp Külliyyatı I*, p. 100. (*Bir ülke ki camiinde Türkçe ezan okunur / Köylü anlar manasını namazdaki duânın. / Bir ülke ki mektebinde Türkçe Kur’ân okunur. / Küçük büyük herkes bilir buyruğunu Hüda’nın. / Ey Türkoğlu, işte senin orasıdır vatanın!*)

⁹³⁵ Gazi Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, *Geometri* (Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu, 2020).

⁹³⁶ Mehmet Ö. Alkan, “En Çok Doğru Bildiğimizden Kuşulanmak-2 Mustafa’dan Kamal’a Atatürk’ün İsimleri”, *Toplumsal Tarih*, (Aralık 2010): p. 23-31.

⁹³⁷ A sample category was prepared by Doğan Aksan about new words of the language reform. First group consists of the words that could not be adopted instead of the Arabic or Persian ones: *akımsar* for *nikbin* (optimistic), *bakman* for *müfettiş* (inspector), *savga* for *müdafaa* (defence), *tecim* for *ticaret* (trade), *üren* for *nesil* (generation), *ucar* for *haber* (news), *uzuğ* for *ihtisas* (expertise), *üsnomal* for *fevkalade* (extraordinary). Next group involves the new words that replaced the older and non-Turkish ones: *antlaşma* for *muahede* (treaty), *çağırışım* for *tedai* (connotation), *dönüş* for *avdet* (return), *nitelik* for *keyfiyet* (quality), *önerge* for *takrir* (resolution), *subay* for *zabit* (officer), *yakıt* for *mahrakat* (fuel), *ayrıntı* for *teferruat* (detail), *dayanışma* for *tesanüt* (solidarity), *üretim* for *istihsal* (production), *azınlık* for *ekalliyet* (minority), *emekli* for *mütekait* (retired), *yürürlük* for *meriyet* (validity). There are also examples

However, many of them could not be commonly adopted and used by the public. It means that despite the appearance of great numbers of new words, most of them was hardly spoken and understood. Furthermore, when a number of synonyms for a non-Turkish word was created, making a selection among them was not easy. Therefore, literally a chaos in language emerged.⁹³⁸ As Falih Rıfkı cited, Mustafa Kemal admitted that the Turkish language reached a dead end after the complexity of omitting non-Turkish (but commonly used for ages) words and creating unfamiliar ones.⁹³⁹ He also reports a dialogue between Mustafa Kemal and İsmet Pashas including their confession that they could not make conversation due to the chaos in language.⁹⁴⁰ When the matter got complicated, the word *şey* -a common word in Turkish with Arabic root, meaning “thing”- was decided to be abolished. At this point, Falih Rıfkı argued that he objected to that decision claiming that even if the dead Turkish people had resuscitated, their first word would have been *şey*.⁹⁴¹

To put it simply, it could be claimed that the reform to purify Turkish resulted in the confusion of the language and minds. A shift of paradigm to end the chaos occurred in 1935 when an Austrian philologist, Dr. Hermann Kvergic, sent his study to Mustafa Kemal about the ancientness and originality of Turkish language, which led to the acceptance of Turkish language’s being the primary one in the world, in other words, the Sun-Language Theory.

of co-existence of new and old words in use: *bellek* and *hafıza* (memory), *çaba* and *gayret* (effort), *kurul* and *heyet* (committee), *bilim* and *ilim* (science), *güvenlik* and *emniyet* (security), *yasa* and *kanun* (law), *ilgi* and *alaka* (interest), *sözcük* and *kelime* (word). Yusuf Can Tıraş&Halil İbrahim Ertürk, “Türk Dili Devrimiyle Birlikte Türkçenin Kazanımları”, *Journal of Turkish Language and Literature* 2, (Autumn 2015): p. 218-219, as cited from Doğan Aksan, *Türkçenin Bağımsızlık Savaşını-Son 75 Yılda Türkiye Türkçesi*, (Ankara: Bilgi, 2007).

⁹³⁸ Akalın, “Türk Dil Kurumu”, p. 537.

⁹³⁹ Falih Rıfkı Atay, *Çankaya*, (İstanbul: Pozitif, 2011), p. 600.

⁹⁴⁰ Atay, *Çankaya*, p. 603.

⁹⁴¹ Atay, *Çankaya*, p. 599.

5.4.1. The Sun-Language Theory

Dr. Hermann Kvergic put forward in his etude that formation of all the words - and languages- spoken in the world had been as old as the sun and based on Turkish. From this point of view, Turkish had allegedly been the most ancient language from which other languages have evolved. Atatürk has welcome this suggestion warmly and instructed the officials of the Turkish Language Society to examine the issue.⁹⁴² Shortly after, a pamphlet⁹⁴³ was published to theorize the argument of Dr. Kvergic. Although Mustafa Kemal preferred invisibility of his name, he was the creator of the document.⁹⁴⁴ Hence, the Sun-Language Theory was introduced to public. According to the theory, primitive man firstly saw and felt the sun. Observing the sun resulted in the emergence of sounds and words for material and intellectual concepts. As a consequence of this, the language was formed. It was the reason of naming the theory with Sun and Language.⁹⁴⁵

For the theory, the first name attributed to sun was “ağ / aaa”, and it turned to “ay, ag, ak, ah” as the human voice developed. Then, other vowels and consonants emerged and formed new word stems. Turkish word stems had been constituted with a vowel and a consonant; but throughout the time, the words could have changed phonetically.⁹⁴⁶ To illustrate, first formation of Ankara was shown as ağ+an+ak+ar+ağ; and it had taken the shape of Ankara in time. With

⁹⁴² İdris Karakuş, “Güneş Dil Teorisi”, in *Atatürk Ansiklopedisi*, <https://ataturkansiklopedisi.gov.tr/bilgi/gunes-dil-teorisi/>, accessed on 09.12.2021.

⁹⁴³ *Etimoloji, Morfoloji ve Fonetik Bakımından Türk Dili Analiz Yolları*, (Ulus Basımevi, 1935).

⁹⁴⁴ Akalın, “Türk Dil Kurumu”, p. 537.

⁹⁴⁵ *Etimoloji, Morfoloji ve Fonetik Bakımından Türk Dili Analiz Yolları*, p. 4-5.

⁹⁴⁶ *Etimoloji, Morfoloji ve Fonetik Bakımından Türk Dili Analiz Yolları*, p. 6-13.

respect to the theory, Turkish root of Ankara was a doubtless fact.⁹⁴⁷ Then, various words from different fields, say, *kuvvet* (force), *hamur* (dough), *filozof* (philosopher) were tried to be proven as Turkish with the help of the theory in various publications. As it could be known, those examples were non-Turkish words with either Western or Eastern roots. So, a new phase began in the efforts of Turkish Language Society in language reform, and omitting non-Turkish words was replaced by claiming Turkish roots to them.

Turkish Language Society presented the theory in the congress in 1936 with a report:

It was necessary to research the existence of the primitive Turkish cultural language, which scatter seeds everywhere with the Turkish migrations. Staying ahead of this requirement and inspired by the supreme genius of the Turkish nation, the Turkish Language Society entered the field of academic language studies towards the end of last year with a new invention that will honor its and its nation's history. We call this new invention the Sun-Language Theory. The theses, which fill this year's program of the honorable congress, will explain the nature of this theory and the new and unique method it has created on the foundations of world languages. The New Turkish Language Thesis finds the language of our ancient ancestors, the Turks, who spread this culture to the world in all the languages that carry culture in the world. As a result of this, not only the languages in the Ural-Altaic language family, but also the language groups called Indo-European and Semitic become dialects of the main Turkish language. [...] The Sun-Language Theory has given great breadth and convenience to our language studies in the practical field by proving that the beings in languages that were thought to be foreign to our language come from a Turkish source. With this theory, the necessity of sacrificing the words that the public knows and understands, assuming that they come from a foreign language, has disappeared.⁹⁴⁸

Two points could be inferred from the quotation above. First, the theory could have been adopted thanks to its scientific value. Second, it could have been used as a practical instrument to clean up that language reform which fell in complexity. Any or both of them could be true to some extent. But Geoffrey

⁹⁴⁷ Dilmen, "Türk Tarih Tezinde Güneş-Dil Teorisinin Yeri ve Değeri", *İTTK*, p. 96. It was also claimed that Ankara was a known name of place in Central Asia in form of Angora. Thus, in addition to linguistic base, a geographic base was also found for Turkishness of Ankara.

⁹⁴⁸ Karakuş, "Güneş Dil Teorisi".

Lewis stated that timing of the emergence and use of the theory was perfect against the barrenness of the language reform.⁹⁴⁹ He also summarized the discussions among contemporary or later researchers about the real motivation of adoption of the Sun-Language Theory. Understandably, according to the publications of the Turkish Language Society in the second half of the 1930s, the theory was a great light that enlightened the Turkish linguistics.⁹⁵⁰ Similarly, Konur Ertop implied that Atatürk embraced the theory for its benefits to Turkish language. He (Atatürk) would not use the theory as a tool to turn back in language issue as some claimed. Ağakay also cites a memory that Atatürk sent representatives to Anthropology Congress in 1937 in Bucharest to introduce the Sun-Language Thesis. In this regard, if he was not sure of the value of the thesis, he would not have appointed officials to attend in an international event.⁹⁵¹ On the other hand, certain people approached to the matter with some suspicions. To illustrate, Yakup Kadri saw the initiative as suggesting a middle way for language reform. For Nihad Sami Banarlı, use of the theory still showed the genius of Mustafa Kemal. Yet, the reason of using it was not its objective worth, but possibility of stopping the purification efforts in Turkish, which started to go too far. In the same vein, Ahmet Bican Ercilasun propounded that the adoption of theory was somehow a way of abandoning the excessive purification efforts, which required omitting many non-Turkish rooted but critical and significant words for Turkish culture for centuries, such as *millet* (nation), *devir* (age), *hadise* (event), *mühim* (important), *hatıra* (memory), *ümit* (hope), *kuvvet* (force) etc.⁹⁵²

⁹⁴⁹ Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform-A Catastrophic Success*, (United States: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 57.

⁹⁵⁰ The theory took place in syllabus of the courses in Ankara University starting from 1936. Hanioglu, *Atatürk*, p. 179.

⁹⁵¹ Ağakay, *Atatürk'ten 20 Anı*, p. 34.

⁹⁵² Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, p. 63-65.

Thus, the real function of the theory could be understood. The reform in the language and efforts for purification of Turkish congested; and the Sun-Language Theory -with its argument that the Turkish was the primary and oldest language- stood in the breach. In this way, instead of omitting non-Turkish words which caused chaos, attributing a Turkish root to foreign languages and vocabulary would be preferred. Furthermore, meaning of such a theory to strengthen national consciousness should not be underrated. It could be considered as a prolongation of the efforts to provide historical and national pride to citizens against the perception of superior-Western culture. That the Turks contributed to world civilization and cultures could be revealed with linguistics, too.

5.4.2. Linguistics in Supporting Historical Claims

Hasan Reşit Tankut, founding member of Turkish Language Society and historian at the Faculty of Letters in Ankara (between 1936-1940), reviewed the connection of thesis of language and history in Turkey. For him, language and race had inseparable ties; and logic, semantic and morphological specialties of a language were directly related to racial features. Despite the modern approach that saw language and race as irrelevant bodies, Tankut argued that they merged into one when looked at pre-historical times. This opportunity was provided by the Sun-Language Theory which rendered associating most languages to proto-Turkish possible. It was similar and linked to history thesis that allegedly uncovered the Turkish origin of a number of contemporary races in ancient times.⁹⁵³ Therefore, it was explicit in this statement that linguistics would be applied to verify historical-national claims.

⁹⁵³ Tankut, “Dil ve Irk Münasebetleri Hakkında”, *İTTK*, p. 222-223.

Prof. İbrahim Necmi Dilmen,⁹⁵⁴ Secretary-General of Turkish Language Society (after 1933) and Member of Parliament (after 1935), attended the Second Turkish History Congress in 1937 to introduce the Sun-Language theory, and to make a speech on the relations between history and linguistics. For him, language and linguistics had a crucial role in researching pre-historical and ancient ages. In geological, archaeological and anthropological surveys, one needs to dig up the earth crust to reach the secret of the past; however, the same truth could be found with linguistic studies. Possessions of a contemporary language could also shed light on its ancient formation. This approach highlights the vocals and voices as the first step toward the oldest culture and its way of spread over the world. Dilmen claims that tightly coupled efforts of history and language thesis of Turkey could provide an excellent example of this adventure. Light of the history thesis was considered as the source of inspiration for the language thesis. On the other hand, the latter is adduced as evidence of the former.⁹⁵⁵ It is a noteworthy statement of a competent member of the cultural affairs in Turkey in 1930's on articulation of the language reform in Turkish History Thesis. In other words, that would not be wrong to argue that language reform in Turkey was promoted to support the historical claims of Turkey in its national discourse. In this regard, language and linguistics should have been treated as "objective and scientific way" of obtaining historical information as archaeology and anthropology. Accordingly, Turkish Historical Society gave wide coverage to linguistic studies in its operations.

In *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, a short introduction is involved on language and Turkish. As the Sun-Language Theory appeared in mid 1930s, *TTAH* -work of 1930- does not regard Turkish as the first language of humanity. Still, great influence of Turkish on Hungarian, Finnish, Mongolian and other Eurasian and

⁹⁵⁴ He was a researcher of Turkish linguistics, and follower of Mustafa Kemal and his language reforms. Consequently, his surname was determined by Atatürk for his contributions to Turkish language. Mustafa Özkan, "İbrahim Necmi Dilmen", *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9, (1994), p. 302-303.

⁹⁵⁵ Dilmen, "Türk Tarih Tezinde Güneş-Dil Teorisinin Yeri ve Değeri", *İTTK*, p. 85.

Central Asian dialects is emphasized. Moreover, Indian-European, Semitic and Mongolic language groups are introduced, too.⁹⁵⁶ As it will be seen below, the paradigm shifted with the advancement of the Sun-Language Theory, and those language families were also associated with Turkish origin. *History* textbook also deals with the subject as attaching importance to language as an inseparable part of the race. Thus, Turkish language is portrayed as integral piece of Turkish race for numerous millennia.⁹⁵⁷ First Turkish History Congress was a stage where studies and discussions on linguistics increased. Samih Rifat made a speech to object to the idea of the orientalist that the name of the Turks emerged in the seventh century with the Göktürks. For him, the word “Turk” was referred in different styles by ancient authors. Herodotus’s handling the Scythians was reflected as a sign of this argument. Even the name of Togarmah -son of Japheth- was demonstrated as related with the Turks.⁹⁵⁸ From this point of view, Samih Rifat claimed a primary status to Turkish and asserted its effect on the Indo-European and Semitic languages. After choosing certain European or Arabic-Persian rooted words, he examined them to find and show Turkish traces that remained hidden. Hence, it could be counted that certain ideas similar to the Sun-Language Theory existed in 1932. The real argument behind those suggestions was the dominance of the Turks and Turkish culture over other communities from Middle East to Europe since pre-historical ages.

From its first issue in 1937, journal of *Belleten* concentrated on linguistic studies, too. Even the name of the journal was an outcome of the relation between history and language. As shown above, first issue of *Belleten* starts with a preface explaining the naming of the journal. “Bulletine”, “bulletino”, and “bulla” were common in European languages for scholarly reviews for centuries. Moving from this point, but by attributing it a Turkish root, Turkish Historical Society

⁹⁵⁶ *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, p. 25-26.

⁹⁵⁷ *Tarih I*, p. 19-20.

⁹⁵⁸ Samih Rifat, “Türkçe ve Diğer Lisanlar Arasında İrtibatlar”, *BTTK*, p. 78.

turned the word to *Belleten*. It was formulated as *eğ+eb+eğ+el+et+eğ* which seems coherent with Turkish word formation with a vowel and consonant in a syllable according to The Sun-Language Theory.⁹⁵⁹ Consequently, it was considered to mean *belleten* (the one that teaches) evolved from Turkish *bel*, *bellemek* and *belletmek*. The attitude in this preface could be detected in other articles on the linguistics published in the journal in 1930s.

Under the chapter of “Dil Yolu ile Tarih” (History via Linguistics), Hasan Reşit wrote on the word of “Alp” and the homeland of the Alpine type of human. He started his essay by claiming the importance of coexistence of language and history as distinct but close fields. Then, as a critical approach, he elucidates the methods used by Turkish Historical Society through various fields of science. According to this method, for instance, history mentions the Alpine type of human and his life. Then, anthropology describes the physical features of that type. Next, geography determines its living area; and archaeology uncovers the culture that had been developed. Eventually, linguistics ensures those other fields of science to suggest the true judgement related to the subject.⁹⁶⁰ Therefore, it is obvious that Turkish Historical Society used linguistics as an instrument to support the arguments of the new history view already shaped by archaeological and anthropological findings.

As seen above, Turkish people were claimed as the Alpine type of the brachycephalic group of people. Thus, Tankut intended to provide a linguistic mainstay for the argument. The word *alp* was thought to mean mountain; highland; bravery and heroism; light and whiteness; dream; and nightmare in Turkish and certain European languages. Then, with reference to the Sun-Language Theory, *alp* was analyzed and formulated as *ağ+al+ap* in comply with the theory. Next, *alp* and its various forms in other Turkish dialects were revealed to connect all to the same root. *Alp* in a number of Turkish dialects,

⁹⁵⁹ “Ön Söz”, *Belleten* I/1, p. 5.

⁹⁶⁰ Tankut, “Alp Kelimesi ve Alpin Irkın Yurdu”, p. 26-27.

alav in Chaghatai, *elip* in Yakut, *Elif* in Anatolia, *Albastı* in Kyrgyz, Cumans, Crimea and Kazan were considered as the same word.⁹⁶¹ Moreover, Elbistan in Anatolia was dealt as *Alpistan* and a significant point of the Alpine people. Consequently, existence of Alpine type of human over a large area throughout the history is claimed; and Alpine culture was counted as the first civilization of the world with its associations of words from numerous languages and dialects. Doubtlessly, this kind of approach and evaluation seems as highly strained interpretation for the matter. Lack of credible sources in this research also results in question marks about the solidity of the work. Yet, what seems certain is that the rulers and members of the Society needed to ground the arguments on “objective” fields including linguistics.

Findings of the Austrian researcher Wilhelm Brandenstein were given place in *Belleten* and Second Turkish History Congress. History of the Etruscans-Tyrrhens was dealt by Brandenstein in light of linguistic concerns. He expressed his aim and method by saying “here my task is to use available linguistic information as historical source”.⁹⁶² The author states that the Etruscans were not autochthonous people of Italy, and their language was not similar to any languages in Italy. Thus, origin of the Etruscans was accredited to Anatolia with help of linguistics. Actually, the Etruscans and Tyrrhens were same people. Then, city of Tyrrha was considered to have been in western Anatolian coast; and -similar to the relation between Rome and Romans- the Etruscans (Tyrrhens) were believed to have moved from Tyrrha.⁹⁶³ Moreover, multiple words in Etruscans were analyzed and their association with Turkish was elaborated by Brandenstein. He deepened his investigation in History Congress and spoke of an epitaph found in Lemnos island. The language used in that epitaph was not related with other European languages and it should have been regarded as the

⁹⁶¹ Tankut, “Alp Kelimesi ve Alpin Irkın Yurdu”, p. 32-35.

⁹⁶² Brandenstein, “Etrüsklerin ve Tyrrhenlerin En Eski Tarihine Ait Dil Tetkikleri”, p. 679.

⁹⁶³ Brandenstein, “Etrüsklerin ve Tyrrhenlerin En Eski Tarihine Ait Dil Tetkikleri”, p. 684-685.

influence of Anatolia, too.⁹⁶⁴ Therefore, a highly debated argument of the Society -that is the Turkishness of the Etruscans- was endorsed to linguistic surveys.

Toponymic studies should also be counted as part of the linguistic studies to support the historical claims. In this respect, work of Rasonyi helped the development of the discourse of Turkish existence in Europe in Medieval. So, name of various cities, plains, mountains and rivers in Transylvania were depicted as Turkish, which carries the traces of the Turks. Rivers of *Krasso*, *Küküllö*, and *Csik*; plain of *Csigla Mezö*; mountain of *Nemere*; *Ojtoz* and *Uzi szoros* passes; village of *Tortillou*; and places such as *Brasso*, *Töröcsvar* and *Nagy-Szeben* were connected to Turkish roots with similar names and meanings in Turkish. Rasonyi asserts that those names came from different Turkish groups that had moved around the Carpathians in the Medieval. Similar to toponymy, the author also assumes a Turkish origin to the Szekelys due to their style of writings and personal names.⁹⁶⁵ Therefore, it is clear that linguistics was put to use to seal the Turkishness of the regions outside of Turkey.

Consequently, language-linguistics have been part of historical and national discourse of various communities for long time. Similarly, the studies on Turkish language and linguistics were regarded as critical element of Turkish historical claims. Actually, it is not possible to talk about one and only way of studying linguistics during the early Republican era. Omitting non-Turkish words for a purified Turkish language and attributing a Turkish root to non-Turkish languages and words could seem conflicting approaches; indeed, they were. However, their goal was same: to introduce the richness of Turkish at home and abroad, as well as manifesting the historical claims. Therefore, it could be induced that Turkish Historical Society approached to language issue to support

⁹⁶⁴ Brandenstein, “Limni’de Bulunan Kitabe-Etrüsklerin Anadolu’dan Neşet Ettiklerine Dair Dil Bakımından En Ehemmiyetli Delil”, *İTTK*, p. 1044-1045.

⁹⁶⁵ Rasonyi, “Ortaçağda Erdelde Türklüğün İzleri”, p. 109.

the view of Turkish History Thesis. Surely, there was a concern to maintain the scientific-ness in applying to linguistics, like archaeology and anthropology. But that concern looks like to have remained mostly in appearance rather than being fundamental.

As a result, while the two claims of the Turkish History Thesis focused on relations between the Turks and Islam, and on the narrative of modern Turkish history -and mostly based on written sources- as it is seen in the previous chapter, other four claims aimed to show the “civilized” character of the Turks who established, transported and contributed to civilizations. In this journey, besides the written sources (maybe more than them) archaeological, anthropological and linguistic studies have been carried out to shed light on relatively dark and remote parts of history. As an outcome of this initiative, Turks were pictured as real and first owners of Anatolia after they migrated from Central Asia. For the Society, the “concrete sciences” of the modern age was supporting this view. Then, under the major project of *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, most of the intellectuals of the country joined the campaign to show the contributions of the Turks to numerous fields of civilization. The studies came to mean that even the Turkish language itself could reveal the high development of the Turks throughout the history. In other words, history of the Turks dated back much before to history of Islam and Ottomans. It is understood that these claimes were reflected in the activities (published or unpublished documents, conferences etc.) of the Society between 1931-1938. Of course, the previously mentioned motives for the formation of the thesis should not be overlooked: by proving the Turkish-ness of Anatolia, the claims of the “enemies” would be prevented; by emphasizing the civilized aspect of the Turks throughout history, an advantage would be gained over the western civilization; and the glorious pages of this great history of thousands of years would reinforce the pride and belonging of the citizens who were now expected to become a nation.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the narrative of Turkish Historical Society to create a national awareness and identity in Turkey during 1930s. However, before beginning with the activities of the Society, the background of development of national historiography and using history and historical institutions in making of the nations and identities was tried to be displayed both in theoretical and practical ways. It is stressed that the case of Turkey and Turkish Historical Society with regard to applying nationalist historiography for political-cultural aims could not be considered independent from two centuries of heritage which had previously come into being in Europe and Turkey.

Actually, Turkish History Thesis -the national historiography program of Turkish Historical Society- in 1930s could be considered as a ring of chain. It was continuation of nationalist historiography that developed during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire. On the other hand, that development in the Ottoman Empire was not unconnected to the process that had previously begun in Europe. Similar to interactions among the European countries in giving references to history for the making of identities, the Turks and other nations of the central and peripheral world drew advantage from the existing sample cases. It is known that the technique of writing and disseminating historical research (archive-based studies, seminars, quantitative and qualitative methods) was transferred from the Western world to an extent. This mobility of experience was seen in use of history and activities of historical associations in generating a national discourse, too.

Activities of Turkish Historical Society in the given era included publication of sources of national history, releasing a journal to disseminate the thesis,

organizing its library and archive to extract sources from an appropriate past, supporting its claims with excessive references to linguistic, archaeological and anthropological surveys, and holding scholarly conferences to announce its claims to external world, all of which could be considered as a national campaign of historiography. As it is revealed in this study, the European research institutions had also applied to this kind of activities with similar methods to promote their national histories.⁹⁶⁶ For example, compiling the *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* reflects the influence of *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* that aims to diffuse the documents of nation's history. Publishing scholarly journals in Europe was a tradition of a century at least. Late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries saw the increase in stressing the anthropological and archaeological science for national history, etc. Although the reference point chosen from the past could vary among countries, using history as a base of claims remained unchanged.

From this perspective, it can be argued that this cultural and intellectual heritage from the world and Turkey was gathered up with the current needs of Turkey; and Turkish Historical Society was brought into being. In order to connect individuals in Turkey with a common consciousness, identity and ideal; and to prevent the threats toward the Republic of Turkey, which may have come from inside and outside of Turkey, history has been applied through a cultural and scientific discourse, as in many other places. Thus, although it officially was an independent association, Turkish Historical Society was established with affiliation to the state. It is known that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk played a direct role in this process, and since it was understood that there was a change in the philosophy of the institution after his death, the activities of the 1931-1938 period, which seemed consistent in itself, were examined in this work.

⁹⁶⁶ *Setting the Standards-Institutions, Networks and Communities of National Historiography* reveals how European historical associations enhanced the writing of national historiography. It seems that Turkish Historical Society was aware of that methodology and applied it in its own narrative.

So far, Turkish History Thesis was tried to be described by various researchers, since it was not officially described in detail by the Society. Then, in almost all of the related research, a formula was attempted to be created to define the thesis. In this work, by analyzing them and making some revisions, and after most of the published and numerous unpublished sources of the Society is considered, it could be suggested that the claims of Turkish History Thesis emphasized that Turks who migrated from Central Asia to Anatolia in pre-historic times are the autochthonous people of Anatolia and its real owners; the Turks are members of a nation that belongs not to the uncivilized yellow race, but to the civilization-building white race, and they established civilization in Turkestan, Anatolia and in many places and in different branches, and even carried it to Europe; Turkish is the mother of all languages, and linguistic studies will show the ancientness and development of both Turkish language and the Turkish nation; although Turkish history and Turkish historiography had been mentioned together with Islamic history for years, Turks are a nation that had a glorious past long before Islam, even in pre-historic times and in the following historical periods; while the contribution of Islam to Turks was limited, Turks have provided great services to Islam, Islamic states and the world of Islamic philosophy, art and thought; and, the short history of the Republic of Turkey is an example of success and miracle, and has taken its place in the most valuable pages of Turkish history.

In addition to fundamental project of decorating Turkish citizens with a sense of national pride originated from the ancient ages to modern history, it is thought that these discourse and claims may have emerged as a result of different purposes and concerns. For instance, the claims of “Turks as the real owners of Anatolia” targeted the concrete or assumed demands of the European powers or Anatolian minorities for rights over Turkey. Assertions on the civilized character of the Turks were directed to Western world, to which new Turkey aspired to get involved. The stress on “glorious history” of the Turks in pre- and post-Islamic periods and heroism of new Turkish Republic should have been firstly told to Turkish people to teach them that their illustrious history was not derived from

Islam and not limited to the Ottoman era. Thus, within the framework of a national program, a discourse with political-cultural-pedagogical dimensions has been created for the country and abroad. In fact, this is a situation in which certain associations (*Türk Ocakları*, *Türkiye Muallimler Birliği*, *Talebe Birlikleri* etc.) that were operating independently or semi-independently in political / cultural / educational fields were dissolved and joined to the state, and the project was controlled and executed by the state itself. Accordingly, it is clear that there was a political will to pursue the issue from a single center and within the scope of a certain policy, without leaving it to distinct movements. Turkish Historical Society stood at that center.

Through examining of the activities and claims of Turkish Historical Society, suggesting certain explanations to the questions that arose in Introduction could be possible. Therefore, it can be comprehended that there was not a radical disengagement from Islamic and Ottoman part of Turkish history, unlike many studies alleging that. On the contrary, it was impropriated with a new interpretation to some extent, especially when there was any possibility of taking pride in accomplishments of Islamic-Ottoman past on behalf of Turkish history. Nevertheless, that past was also held responsible for most of the problems faced in the last millennium of the Turks. Hence, instead of excluding religion completely, the state and Turkish Historical Society thought to shape the minds of citizens by placing Islam under their control and with their own interpretations in the national history narrative. Next, in order to establish concrete connections between Central Asian (homeland of the Turks) and Anatolian (ancient Turkish land) origins of the Turks, intensive analysis and research from linguistic, archaeological and anthropological fields have been put to use. Indeed, it does not seem absolutely accurate that these studies should be considered as traces of acute racism of Turkish Historical Society, since those sciences were accepted as the methods of contemporary research, and they were used with the intention of withstanding European discourse against the Turks that had used the same methods.

When considered from this point of view, it could appear that, although the Society pursued a national matter, it did not refrain from trying to base its narrative with scientific methods, which eventually contributed to progress of Turkish historiography. For example, *Belleten*, the country's longest-running academic journal in the field of history, is one of the rare Turkish journals indexed in internationally respected index systems, such as Arts & Humanities Citation Index (AHCI). Then, although the number of foreign participants has decreased in recent years, Turkish History Congresses have become an international platform where important historical studies have been exhibited from the 1930s to the present. Thus, it is clear that the breakthroughs made in the field of history in the early Republican period led to the intellectual gains.

Analyzing of national historiography of Turkish Historical Society also required to display the understanding of the “Turkish nation” of the Society. It could be argued that there was not one and official discourse both on the date of emergence of Turkish nation and on the extent of Turkish-ness. The speeches during the Turkish History Congresses and certain articles in *Belleten* suggested different points for the ancientness of Turkish history. 4000, 9000 and 12000 years of Turkish history were offered by various authors. It was related to handling of the subject and ability of the author to support the view. What seemed certain was the belief on a very old Turkish nation with superior position throughout history. From this aspect, it is understood that the Society adopted a primordialist approach to the Turkish nation by attributing a timeless or thousands of years history. Next, who could be accepted as Turk was another uncertain point. Whereas a group insisted on determining the nation with physical features, leading members of the Society emphasized that defining Turkish nation could not be in racist ways. In fact, for them, emphasizing the racial features also did not mean racism, but a scientific approach. And in addition to it, common language, culture and ideals were the key components of Turkish nation, as well as many other nations of the age. Moreover, although it was stated that the Turks of Turkey would care for and respect outland Turks; the activities of new Turkey and Turkish Historical Society would focus on the

territories of Turkey. This also gives idea that the nation to be fostered included the citizens of Turkey with aforementioned commonalities, regardless of their religious and ethnic backgrounds. But it is obvious that a discourse on praising the ethnic-racial roots of the Turks was also used in the national historiography. On that sense, it is obvious that Turkish Historical Society adopted both civic and ethnic form of nation building rather than entirely selecting one. As Brubaker defined it as state-framed nationalism, state-sponsored historiography of new Turkey did not hesitate to use both approaches to its own advantage.

Related to that, stances and views of the members of the Society also matter here. It is obvious what Zeki Velidi and Fuat Köprülü, who seemed critics against history thesis, lived in the First Turkish History Congress. Similarly, it is presumed that the discussion between *Darülfünun*'s professors and the members of the institution was effective in the abolition of the former. From this point of view, it would be unrealistic to expect an overtly different view on historical issues among the members of the institution in the 1930s. However, it is understood that some members were more committed to, developed, and defended the history thesis; while some other members participated in the studies within the framework of a task rather than contributing to the formation of the thesis. Then, it could be argued that -for the first sixteen members of 1930s- Afet İnan, Yusuf Akçura, Sadri Maksudi, Şemsettin Günaltay and Sadri Maksudi became the prominent representatives of the Society and the thesis. They actively took part in its formation and dissemination. On the other hand, the members such as Halil Edhem, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, Ragıp Hulusi and Reşit Safvet contributed to thesis mostly with their publications on a certain field. Therefore, although there were different interpretations on some issues (history of the Turkish nation, definition of the nation and race, etc.), the first group prevented these different views from causing discussion and explained the issue in their conferences and publications and presented the dominant view. Thus, it is understood that even the founding board of the Society was conducted by a narrower team working closely with the rulers.

In this study, the discourse developed within the scope of the nation building project and the main points of the Turkish History Thesis were examined mostly through primary sources most of which have not been adequately used before. Doubtlessly, how effectively these discourse and claims influenced the target groups will require more extensive research.⁹⁶⁷ Still, the correspondence - obtained from the archive- between the Society and other various institutions reveals that the Society was in a strong position toward its interlocutors. There is evidence of obedience to the instructions of the Society. Moreover, there were many questions reaching the institution on historical artifacts. Accordingly, it can be claimed that the institution was seen in the leading position and was taken into account in the national historical mobilization initiated in the relevant period.

It should be noted that Turkish History Thesis impoverished and the activities of Turkish Historical Society gravitated towards another direction immediately after the passing of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. As Copeaux stressed in his work, as opposed to “Kemalist” way of historiography, a new historical narrative that was composed of Turkish-Islamic synthesis and emphasized the Asian-Muslim character of Turkish history was promoted during the 1940s. This discourse did not officially belong to any party or political group, but visible in plenty of books, articles and journals. Though it was not adopted as state policy at that time, it found place within the activities and rhetoric of certain institutions. Projects of Turkish Historical Society could constitute the example of this case. According to this approach, Turkish national culture was combination of Turkish history and Islamic values; and it had to rely on history after the ninth century and cover the territories from Aral to Anatolia.⁹⁶⁸

⁹⁶⁷ One of the ways to measure this effect could be to research the cultural activities produced for the people at that time. Events such as conferences and theater held in People’s Houses or literary articles published in journals, such as *Ülkü*, are important in terms of showing the interaction between the history thesis and the public. On this issue, see İbrahim Erdal, “Türk Tarih Tezi Açısından Halkevlerinin Türk Dili ve Kültürü Üzerine Faaliyetleri: Yozgat Halkevi Örneği”, *Folklor/Edebiyat*, 20/78, (2014): p. 51-59.

⁹⁶⁸ Copeaux, *Türk Tarih Tezinden Türk-İslam Sentezine*, p. 54-56.

When more than 80 books of Turkish Historical Society published between 1940 and 1950, it is obvious that the subjects of the works were diversified to include history of the Seldjukids, Mamluks, Safavids, Baburids (the Mughals), Anatolian Beylicates and Ottomans with various focus points, unlike 1930s, and the studies which aimed at seeking of legitimizing Turkish History Thesis gradually disappeared.

It may have been caused from the fact that although Turkish History Thesis and activities of the Society were tried to be settled in a scientific ground (on the contrary of the critics that it was far from being scientific), its survival was directly related to the existence of a charismatic and dominant leader. Personal stance of Atatürk had paved the way for emergence and evolution of the thesis. His ardent support for the campaign of nationalist historiography helped it to flourish. Yet, his death resulted in the absence of stimulating power to maintain the issue. Those who participated in this national history program, whether they really believed in the Turkish History Thesis or to win the favor of the rulers, lost all motivation with Atatürk's death.

In addition, while the Society had almost a monopoly in the field of history in the 1930s, the number of institutions and channels that formed historical discourse rose. Increasing number of universities and social sciences departments, creation of academic or popular history journals, and rising number of historians brought about a diversity of discourse, which diminished the visibility of the history thesis. From this point of view, while works of the Society once constituted a large part of the general studies, its share in the general began to decrease after the 1940s. In this case, the desire to ardently support the rhetoric also tended to decline. Indeed, the *zeitgeist* of the changing times could be a reason in itself.

While there are numerous studies on the foundation and early periods of the Turkish Historical Society, there is a lack of historical narrative, especially in terms of the institution's history after the 1950s. Of course, a list of the Society's

activities (including books, articles, congress and conferences etc.) could easily be found from open sources and digital sources that are abundantly available today. However, the ideological ground behind the activities, and even whether these activities were carried out within a certain planning require examination. As it is known, although it had close relations with the state, the Society was established as an association and maintained this position for decades, but later was included in the state organization as of the 1980s and was attached to the Atatürk Supreme Council for Culture, Language and History. Accordingly, it would be useful to investigate both the connection between the Turkish Historical Society and the Supreme Council and how this is reflected in the activities, as well as how the Supreme Institution affects historical discourse independently. Moreover, as of 2018, Turkish Historical Society and the Supreme Council were both affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. Accordingly, there is a need for studies that will show the reflection of the administrative organization on the activities of the institution.

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APPENDICES

A. FIGURES



Figure 1. Mustafa Kemal, together with the participants of *Türk Ocağı* after its sixth General Assembly. TTKA, TTK, Uİ-244-2.



Figure 2. Mustafa Kemal in a meeting of Turkish Historical Society. TTKA, Uİ, 244-3.

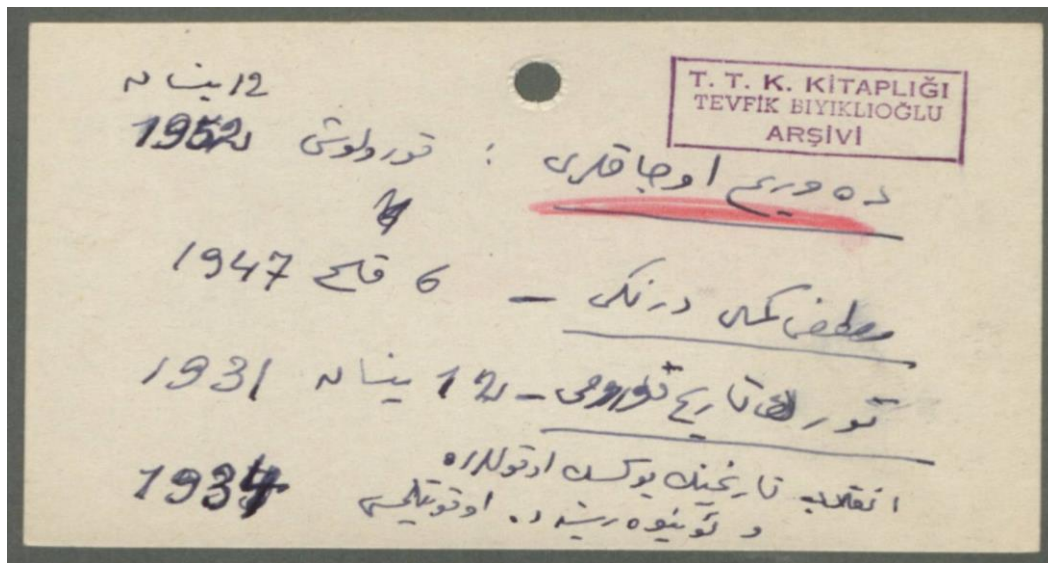


Figure 3. The date of establishment of THS. TTKA, TB., Unclassified document.



Figure 4. Handwriting of Mustafa Kemal for the name of the new journal. TTKA, Unclassified document.

- x Barılan
x Dağıtılan

Ana Hatları Müsveddelerini gönderen Zavat

I inci derece

x x 1- Dr. Süheyl Beyefendi	(Selçuk Tababeti)
x x 2- Dr. Şevket Aziz Beyefendi	
x x 3- Dr. Galip Ata "	(Sumer, Mısır, İskit, tababeti)
x x 4- Halil Ethem "	(Selçuk mimarisi)
x x 5- Sadri Maksudi "	(İskitler, Şark ve Garp Hunlari)
x x 6- Amasya, Mebusu Esat "	(Ermeniler)
x x 7- Dr. Süheyl "	(Resim, Minyatür)
x x 8- Ali Haydar Emir ve Fevzi Beyler	(Deniz Harp Sanatları) (8.2.933)
x x 9- Ağaoğlu Ahmet Beyefendi	(Etrüsk medeniyeti) (8.2.933)
x x 10- Ali Rıza, Hamdi, İhsan Âbidin Cevat Rüştü Beyler.	(Ziraat ve Hayvancılık) (9.2.933)
x x 11- Ahmet Cevat Beyefendi	(Türklerin yazılı icat etmeleri, alfabenin menşei) (10.2.933)
x x 12- İbnülemin Mahmut Kemal Bf.	(Hat) (11.2.1933)
x x 13- Mimar Sedat Beyefendi	(Osmanlı Mimarisi) (11.2.1933)
x x 14- Hüseyin Namık "	(Avarlar, Kumanlar, Peçenekler) (11.3.933)
x x 15- Ali Rifat "	(Musiki 12.2.1933)
x x 16- Yusuf Ziya "	(Mısır 12.2.1933)
x x 17- Reşat "	(Halıcılık 12.2.1933)
x x 18- Selâm Sırrı "	(Beden terbiyesi 12. 2. 1933)
x x 19- Dr. Saim Ali "	(Evrazyada Türkçenin lügistik vazı- yeti 13.2.1933)
x x 20- Muzaffer "	(Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Avrupa ile Ticari münasebetleri. 13.2.1933)
x x 21- İbrahim Hakki "	(Türklerin ziraat ve hayvancılık sa- hasındaki tesirleri ve hizmetleri 13.2.1933)
x x 22- Reşit Galip ve Saffet Bf.ler	(Anadolu 13.2.1933)

Figure 5. First page of the list that includes the assignments to write TTAH. TTKA, TTAH-1-49.

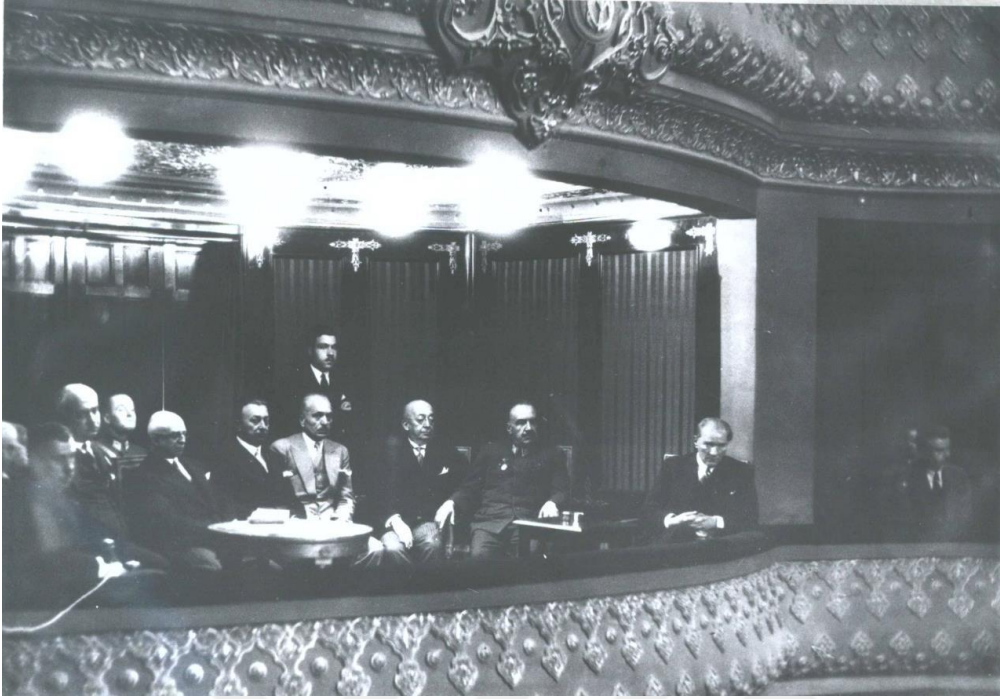


Figure 6. Mustafa Kemal in the First Turkish History Congress. TTKA, TTK-222-1-1.



Figure 7. Mustafa Kemal in Ahlatlıbel Excavation. TTKA, TTK-312-19.

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: İmamoğlu, Uğur Cenk Deniz

Nationality: Turkish (TC)

Date and Place of Birth:

Marital Status:

Phone:

e-mail:

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	Hacettepe University	2014
BS	METU History	2012
Minor	METU Political Sciences and Public Administration	2012
High School	Sivrihisar Anatolian High School	2007

AWARDS

TÜBİTAK BİDEB Undergraduate Scholarship, 2007-2012

METU Department of History, First Ranked Student, 2012 (3.82/4.00 – 96/100)

TÜBİTAK BİDEB Graduate Scholarship, 2012-2014

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2013- Present	Türk Tarih Kurumu	History Specialist

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English (YDS 90)

Intermediate German (TÖMER C1)

Beginner Persian

PUBLICATIONS

- “Chalkokondyles’in Tarih’i (Historia) ve Eserde İstanbul’un Fethine Dair Gözlemler”, *XVIII. Türk Tarih Kongresi Bildirileri*, C. III, Türk Tarih Kurumu, Ankara 2022, s. 1457-1466.
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- “The Gallipoli Battlefield: War and Memory”, World Battlefields Museums Forum, 3-7 September 2018, Gdansk-Poland
- “İmalat-ı Harbiye and its Contributions to Turkish National Struggle”, 42. International Congress of Military History of International Commission of Military History, 4-9 September 2016, Plovdiv, Bulgaria.

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

1. Giriř

Millet, milliyetilik ve bunlardan treyen kavramlar devletler ve toplumlar aısından hem siyasi alanda hem de gndelik hayatta yaklaşık iki yz yıldır nemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, konuya dair ilmi alıřmaların ise grece yeni bir dnemde arttıęı iddia edilebilir. Bazı arařtırmacılara gre, on sekiz ve on dokuzuncu yzyıllar, milliyetilięin oluřtuęu dneme tekabl ettięi iin bu srete konunun bilimsel dzeyde incelenmesini beklemek doęru bir yaklařım deęildir. Bylelikle, ancak Birinci Dnya Savařı ve ulusların kendi kaderlerini tayin etmek konusundaki geliřmelerden sonra milliyetilięe dair incelemeler oęalmıřtır. İkinci Dnya Savařı ve yzyılın sonuna doęru Sovyetler Birlięinin kř gibi hadiseler, nicelik ve niteliksel olarak meseleye dair literatrn zenginleřmesi sonucunu getirmiřtir. Sz konusu sre ierisinde milliyetilik, dnemin řartlarına da baęlı olarak, vatandaşlık, g, feminizm gibi kavramlar muvacehesinde incelemelere konu olmuřtur.

Milliyetilik arařtırmalarında, milletin kkenlerine dair grřler de farklı yaklařımların oluřumuna ortam hazırlamıřtır. rneęin, Latince *primus* ve *ordiri* kelimelerinden treyen ve “ilksel, ilki” anlamlarına gelen primordialist yaklařıma gre milletler ezelden beri var olan kadim topluluklardır. Modernist ya da arasalcı řeklinde dilimize tercme edilebilecek olan dięer bir yaklařımda ise milletlerin muayyen ıkarlar doęrultusunda inřa edilen varlıklar olduęu iddia edilir. Buna gre zellikle devletlerin oluřumundan sonra milletler inřa edilir. Klasik tarif kapsamında ifade edilecek olursa, milletler devletleri yaratmaz, devletler milletleri yaratır. Bu iki yaklařımın kısmen reddedilmesi ve kısmen benimsenmesi ile nc yaklařım meydana gelir ki, buna etno-sembolizm adı verilmektedir. Bu nazariyeye gre de, modernite ncesi ve sonrası topluluklar mitler, hatıralar, gelenekler ve semboller aracılıęıyla birbirine baęlanabilir. Bu

farklı yaklaşımlar, milliyetçilik araştırmalarında olduğu kadar, ulus inşasını inceleyen çalışmalarda da önem arz etmektedir.

Bu noktadan hareketle, ulus inşası konusu da gittikçe artan bir şekilde incelemelere temel oluşturmaya başlamıştır. Elbette bu inşa sürecinin iktisat, sivil toplum, iktidarın temerküzü, kamu hizmetleri, asimilasyon, dış müdahale gibi farklı etkenlerin biri ya da birkaçı üzerinden incelenebileceği muhakkaktır. Bununla birlikte, çalışmamıza uygun olan zaviye ise, meselenin tarih bilimi ve tarih yazıcılığı ile olan ilişkisidir. Belli bir bölgedeki belli bir grup insanı, üyeliğinden gurur duyulan bir milletin fertleri haline getirmek çoğu zaman tarihsel söylemin desteğiyle mümkün olabilmektedir. İnsanlar arasında “geçmişte biz başarmıştık” hissiyatı mazide, halde ve atide bir birliğe işaret edecektir. Bu kapsamda ulus devletler, kuruluşlarından önce ya da sonra, tarihsel söylemin şekillendirilmesini önemsemişlerdir. Bu noktada ifade etmek gerekir ki, başvuru ve fayda sağlaması beklenen tarih, gerçek bir döneme işaret edebileceği gibi, hiç yaşanmadan ya da belli yaşanmışlıkların yeniden yorumlanmasıyla kurgulanmış da olabilir. Böylelikle ulus inşa süreci geçmişin sürekli yeniden yorumlandığı bir süreci de ifade eder. Tarihsel söylemlerle ulusun inşası sürecine dair çalışmalar gittikçe çoğalmaktadır.

On dokuzuncu yüzyılın ikinci yarısı ile yirminci yüzyılın ilk dönemleri arasında Batı medeniyetinin ön plana çıktığı ve diğer milletler tarafından bir şekilde “özenilen” ya da “dahil olmak” istenilen bir sahneye dönüştüğü bilinmektedir. Burada yer almak isteyen diğer milletler ve devletler, şayet bunu mümkün kılacak kadar güncel güce sahip değilseler, tarihe referanslarla kendilerini kanıtlamak istiyorlardı. Buna göre, uzun yüzyılların askeri, siyasi ve ekonomik buhranlarını devralan ve söz konusu alanlarda henüz temayüz edememiş olan genç Türkiye Cumhuriyeti de yoğun tarihsel referanslara temayül gösterecektir. Elbette konunun dışsal ve içsel boyutları vardır. Oluşturulacak tarihsel söylemle, hem dahil olunmak istenen Batı dünyasına bir mesaj verilecek hem de içeride yüzyıllardır ümmet olarak görülen, son dönemlerde de askeri ve siyasi başarısızlıklarla gururu kırılmış olan fertlere bir gurur ve aidiyet hissi

aktarılacaktır. 1930'ların Türkiye'si için düşündüğümüzde, bu sürecin merkezinde Türk Tarih Kurumu yer almaktadır. Bu kapsamda, "Türk Tarih Kurumu ve Türk Ulus İnşası (1931-1938)" başlıklı çalışma planlanmıştır. Türk Tarih Kurumunun Türk Tarih Tezi olarak adlandırılan milli tarih projesi ise bu sürecin anahtarı niteliğindeki bir programdır. Esasen Miroslav Hroch'a göre, Avrupa'daki pek çok millet oluşum süreci belli aşamaları içermektedir: İlk aşama, milletin geleneklerine ve varlığına dair kültürel uyanış sürecidir. Bunu, vatanseverlik söyleminin politik vurgularla gelişmesi takip eder. Son aşama, milli bilincin kitleselleşmesi yoluyla tamamlanacaktır. Türk Tarih Tezi de aslında bu modelin uygulanabileceği bir sürecin ürünüdür. On dokuzuncu yüzyılın ortalarından itibaren Türk diline ve tarihine yönelik kültürel düzeyde bir ilgi uyanmıştır. Mezkûr yüzyılın sonunda, imparatorluğun kötü gidişatının da etkisiyle, Türklüğün politik olarak vurgulandığı bir döneme geçilmiştir. 1930'lar ise Türk milletine ve milliyetçiliğine dair söylemlerin devlet eliyle ve neredeyse bir seferberlik kapsamında geniş kitlelere aşılandığı devredir.

Bu arka planın ve gelişmelerin farkında olan bu çalışma, Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun rolünü devlet destekli bir milli tarih yazıcılığı programı içinde görme ve Türk Tarih Tezi'nin iddialarını, yayımlanmış ve yayımlanmamış kaynakları değerlendirerek tanımlama girişimidir. Bu arada şimdiye kadar cevaplanmayan veya yanlış yorumlanan birtakım sorular, bazıları daha önce kullanılmamış çeşitli materyaller aracılığıyla cevaplanmaya veya yeniden ele alınmaya çalışılmaktadır: Pek çok çalışmada iddia edildiği gibi, Türk Tarih Tezinde İslam ve Osmanlı geçmişinden tam bir kopuş var mıdır? Kurum, faaliyetlerinde, çok sayıda eserde ifade edildiği gibi ırkçı bir yaklaşım benimsemiş midir? Çalışmalar sadece ulusal ihtiyaçları karşılamak için mi yapılmıştır; yoksa çağın evrensel tarihçiliğinin standartları da dikkate alınmış mıdır? Türk Tarih Kurumu, ulusal duyguları uyandıracak tarihsel bir anlatıyı teşvik etmek için Avrupa ve Türkiye'deki önceki örneklerden hangi şekillerde yararlanmış olabilir?

Tarih tezinin temel noktalarının belirlenmesi ve bu soruların yanıtlanması, tarihin milli duyguların artırılması ve kimliklerin inşasında araçsallaştırılması

çalışmalarına yeni bir ivme kazandırabilir. 1930'lu yılların Türkiye'sinde devlet yönetiminin bir izdüşümü olarak Türk ulusunun ve Türk ulusal kimliğinin inşasında tarih bilimine atfedilen önem herkesçe bilinmektedir. Bu doğrultuda Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun bizzat devlet eliyle hayata geçirildiği ve kurumun bir tarih tezi doğrultusunda çalışmaya başladığı birçok çalışmada ortaya konmuştur. Söz konusu süreci daha yakından takip etmek amacıyla başlatılan bu çalışmada, öncelikle dünyadaki ve Türkiye'deki teorik ve pratik arka planın incelenmesi gerekmiştir. Bu nedenle konunun ele alınmasında tematik ve kronolojik bir yaklaşım uygulanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın bazı handikapları olduğuna şüphe yoktur. Bunlardan ilki yeterli karşılaştırmaların yapılamamasıdır. Her ne kadar Türk Tarih Kurumu kurulmadan önce Avrupa ve Türkiye'deki ilgili süreç, etkileşimlerin görülmesini sağlasa da çalışmanın sınırlılıkları, Türk Tarih Kurumu da dâhil olmak üzere Avrupa ve Türkiye'deki tarih kurumları arasında kapsamlı bir karşılaştırma yapılmasına izin vermeyecektir. Kuşkusuz bu, ayrı bir monografi gerektirse bile anlamlı olacaktır. Ancak bunda Türkiye'deki yabancı tarih kurumlarına ilişkin kaynakların yetersizliğinin de rol oynadığını belirtmek gerekir. İkinci olarak, Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun iddialarının Türkiye'deki halk ve kurumlar üzerindeki etkisi ve tepkisi, ölçülmesi zor olsa da ayrı bir araştırma gerektirmektedir. Bu çalışma, Kurum'un Türk vatandaşları arasında ulusal bir farkındalık yaratma söylemine odaklanmaktadır, ancak muhatabın tepkisi de başka bir araştırmanın konusunu oluşturacaktır. Bununla birlikte, arşiv belgelerinde 1930'lu yıllarda Türkiye'deki kurumların TTK'ye büyük saygı duyduğu ve talimatlarına uygun hareket ettiği tespit edilmiştir. Bu durum Kurum'un (ya da devletin) projesinin tek taraflı olmadığı ve karşılıklı olarak anlam kazandığı fikrini verebilir. Yine de, bu handikapları en aza indirmek için, giriş bölümünden sonuç bölümüne kadar çeşitli kaynaklarla tutarlı bir anlatı hedeflenmiştir.

İma edildiği gibi, bu çalışmada çeşitli arşiv kayıtları, birinci el ve ikincil kaynaklar farklı şekillerde kullanılmıştır. On dokuzuncu ve yirminci yüzyıllarda kültürel/siyasi Türk milliyetçiliğini yansıtan ve bizzat etkili isimler tarafından

kaleme alınan eserler, bir ölçüde orijinal kaynaklardan incelenmeye çalışıldı. Türk milli tarihçiliğini teşvik eden kişilerin faaliyetleri ve yayınları ile Türkiye'de tarih anlatısını şekillendiren kurum-derneklerin kuruluş ve projeleri arşiv belgeleriyle desteklendi. Bunların yanı sıra konunun uzmanları tarafından üretilen ikincil kaynaklar (kitaplar, yüksek lisans-doktora tezleri ve makaleler) da konunun analizinde dikkate alınmıştır. Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun kuruluşu, faaliyetleri ve iddiaları ile ilgili bölümlerde, çoğu daha önce kullanılmamış çok sayıda birincil kaynağa yer verilmiştir. Türk Tarih Tezi çalışmalarında sıklıkla kullanılan dört ciltlik Tarih ders kitapları ve *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*'nın yanı sıra, Türk Tarih Kurumu arşivinde muhafaza edilen *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*'nın yayımlanmamış taslakları da anlatıyı desteklemek üzere detaylandırılmıştır. Ayrıca faaliyet raporları, çalışma programları, Kurum üyeleri arasındaki mektuplaşmalar ve projelerinin yürütülmesine ilişkin iş bölümü listeleri de bu bölümde incelenmektedir. Son olarak, *Belleten*'in 8 sayısı ve 1932-1938 yılları arasında yayımlanan 17 kitap da Kurum'un iddialarını tespit etmek amacıyla değerlendirilmiştir. Bunların yanı sıra, Birinci ve İkinci Türk Tarih Kongresi tutanak ve bildirileri ile arkeolojik kazı raporları temel kaynakları oluşturmaktadır.

2. Ulus İnşası, Tarih, ve Avrupa ve Türkiye'de Tarih Kurumlarının Oluşumu

Ulus inşası sürecine ilişkin herhangi bir çalışma, öncelikle ve kaçınılmaz olarak bazı temel terimlerin belirlenmesini gerektirecektir. Kuşkusuz, "ulus" ve "milliyetçilik" ilk başta ilgiyi hak etmektedir. Tarihçilerin, siyaset bilimcilerin ve sosyologların bir asırdır ulusun tanımı üzerinde hala tartışmakta oldukları unutulmamalıdır. Bu alanda tek ve genel kabul görmüş bir terminolojinin kaçınılmaz başarısızlığı dikkat çekicidir. İngilizce, Fransızca, Almanca ve İspanyolca sözlüklerden "ulus" sözcüğünün tarih içerisindeki anlam evrimi takip edilebilmektedir. Başlangıçta bir yerde yaşayan insan topluluğunu ifade eden kelimenin zamanla politik bir mana yüklendiği ve git gide bir devletle birlikte anılmaya başlandığı görülmektedir. Elbette bu sözlük tanımlarının ötesinde,

farklı araştırmacılar tarafından öneriler acıklamalar da mevcuttur. Bu konuda, alanda en geçerli olan tanımlamaların Benedict Anderson ve Ernest Renan tarafından önerildiği düşünülebilir. Takiben milliyetçilik kavramını da tanım ve içerik olarak incelemeye tabi tutmak gerekmektedir. Farklı ideolojilere sahip olan bazı tarihçiler, sosyologlar ve siyaset bilimciler milliyetçiliğin tanımı ve içeriğine dair önermelerde bulunmuşlardır. Söz gelimi Hans Kohn için milliyetçilik, bireyin en yüksek sadakatının ulus-devlete bağlı olduğunun hissedildiği bir ruh halidir. Anthony Smith'e göre ise, milletlerin ve ulus devletlerin oluşum ve devamlılık süreci, bir millete ait olma bilinci ve bir milletin güvenliği ve refahı için özlem ve duygulara sahip olma, milletler ve milli irade için kültürel bir doktrin ve milli hedeflerin ve iradenin gerçekleştirilmesi için formüller içeren bir ideolojidir.

Millet ve milliyetçiliğin karakterini anlamaya ve açıklamaya yönelik tüm bu girişimler resmin bir parçasını oluşturabilir. Dolayısıyla bu tartışmalardan, millet olma temelinin hayal gücüne, etnik köklere ya da ortak geçmiş ve iradeye vurgu yaparak zaman ve mekâna göre farklılaşabileceği sonucunu çıkarmak mümkündür. Milliyetçiliği açıklığa kavuşturmaya yönelik çok sayıda önerinin yanı sıra, farklı milliyetçilik türlerinin belirlenmesi gerektiği de açıktır. İlk olarak, Hans Kohn'un meşhur tipolojisi "Batı" ve "Doğu" ikiliğine atıfta bulunur. Kohn'a göre Batı tipi milliyetçilik rasyonel ve kurumsal iken, Doğu tipi milliyetçilik organik ve mistiktir. Milliyetçilik kimilerine göre "Batı" ve "Doğu" tipleri olarak ikiye ayrılrsa da, Batı tipi içinde de farklılıklar görmek mümkündür. Çok bilinen ayrımlardan biri "Alman" ve "Fransız" tipi milliyetçiliklerdir. Bu çerçevede Rogers Brubaker, Fransız-Alman milliyetçiliklerinin karşılaştırılması üzerine kapsamlı bir çalışma yapmıştır ve onun yaklaşımı, bu karşılaştırma noktalarından yola çıkarak diğer milliyetçilikleri anlamaya da yardımcı olmaktadır. Milliyetçilik Almanya'da etno-kültürel bir unsur iken, Fransa'da siyasi bir boyuta sahipti. Bu husus, literatürde milliyetçiliğin etnik ve sivil biçimleri olarak da sınıflandırılmaktadır. Bir diğer tanınmış tasnif ise Doğu Avrupa milliyetçiliklerine odaklanmakta ve bunları hem kendi içlerinde hem de Batı tipi milliyetçiliklerden ayırmaktadır. Peter Sugar'a göre Doğu Avrupa

milliyetçiliği Batı tipinden farklıdır ve dört grupta değerlendirilebilir: burjuva, aristokratik, bürokratik ve popüler milliyetçilikler. Yazar, farklı ülkelerdeki süreçleri belli gruplara atfederek tarifini yapmaktadır. Fakat herhangi bir yerde tek bir milliyetçilik modeli bulmanın pek mümkün olmadığını vurgulamak gerekir. Bu nokta-i nazarla Brubaker, milliyetçiliğin özelliklerini tanımlamak için "ılımlı" bir kavram önermektedir: bu, devlet çerçeveli (state-framed) millet ve milliyetçilik anlayışıdır. Yazara göre, devlet çerçeveli milliyetçilik söz konusu olduğunda, ulus olmanın dilsel, kültürel ve etnik yönlerini geliştirebilir ve sivil veya etnik yorumlar arasında herhangi bir çelişki olmaz.

Milliyetçilikle ilgili tartışmaları inceledikten sonra ulus inşası sürecini tetkik etmek gerekmektedir. Ulus inşası, belli bir yerde kamu gücünün meşrulaştırılması için kolektif bir kimlik inşa etmeye yönelik bir proje ve çabalar bütünü anlamına gelmektedir. Bu süreç hem geçmişe hem de geleceğe bakar. Toplumu geleceğe hazırlarken geleneklerden, göreneklerden ve kurumlardan beslenir; onları ulusal motivasyonlarla yeniden yorumlar. Ulus inşasının araçları söz konusu olduğunda, yöntemler çeşitlidir. Tarih ve dilin, tek etken olmasalar da kilit rol oynadıklarına dair neredeyse şüphe yoktur. Müzeler, arşivler, zorunlu askerlik hizmeti, okul eğitimi, kamusal alandaki maddi kültür öğeleri vb. ulus inşasının muhtelif araçlarındandır. Hobsbawm'a göre gelenekler ve geleneğin olmadığı durumlarda icat edilen gelenekler de ulus bilincinin oluşmasında önemli rol oynamaktadır.

Tarih, ulusal kimliğin belirlenmesinde en kullanışlı araçlardan biri olmuştur. İnsanların "aynı millettten olmak, aynı yerden gelmek, aynı değerlere sahip olmak" gibi bir dizi "aynılıktan" bahsetmesini sağlar. Tarih, bu aynılığı vererek, insanları bir ulusun üyeleri haline getirmeye hizmet etmiştir. Ortak değerlerin olmadığı zamanlarda bile tarih, ortaklığı oluşturmak için kullanılmıştır. Öte yandan tarih biliminin on dokuzuncu yüzyılla birlikte kurumsallaşırken dönemin hâkim akımlarından olan milliyetçilikle kol kola girmesi de dikkat çekici bir husustur. Böylelikle milliyetçi söylemin teşvikinde ve milletin inşasında tarihe, tarihçilere ve tarih kurumlarına önemli hisseler düşmüştür. Bismarck'ın da itiraf

ettiği gibi, bazı Alman tarihçiler 1871'de Alman İmparatorluğu'nun kurulmasında vazgeçilmez bir rol oynamışlardır. Elbette bireysel katkılar önemli olmakla birlikte, bir noktada yetersiz kalacakları için daha kurumsal oluşumlara da ihtiyaç duyulduğu açıktır. Bu çerçevede, ulusal bir tarihin oluşumuna katkıda bulunmak amacıyla, Avrupa'daki pek çok devlet tarihsel kaynakları toplamak üzere kurumlar oluşturmuş ve ilgili müesseseler (tarih bölümleri, resmi ve yarı resmi dernekler ve ilmi cemiyetler ve müzeler gibi) kurmuş ya da teşvik etmiştir; bunların hepsi sonunda ulusun tarihinin bir bölümünü aydınlatacaktır. Bu kurumlar arşiv araştırmaları, kütüphane faaliyetleri, kaynak neşriyatı, bilimsel dergiler, konferans, sempozyum ve sergilerle ulusun tarihini aydınlatmada etkin rol oynamışlardır. Elbette Türkiye başta olmak üzere, birçok ülke de Avrupa'daki bu süreçten etkilenmiş ve elbette istifade etmiştir.

On dokuzuncu yüzyılda Türk tarihine yönelik erken kültürel ilgi, on dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonlarında ve yirminci yüzyılın başlarında Türk milliyetçiliğinin siyasi manada doğmasına ve gelişmesine vesile olmuştur. Bu eğilim tarih yazımı alanında da etkisini göstermiştir. Buna göre, o dönemde bazı kişi ve kurumlar/cemiyetler Türkiye'de milliyetçi tarih yazımının yerleşmesinin önünü açarken, akademik-bilimsel anlamda tarih yazımının kurallarını ve sistemini de geliştirmiştir. Sonuç olarak, 1920'lerin ve 1930'ların genç Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son yüzyılında gelişen tarih yazımı geleneğini ve önceki Avrupa deneyimlerini miras almaktan geri durmamıştır. Diğer bir deyişle, yeni Türk rejimi yeni önceliklerle yola çıkarken, mevcut uygulama ve bilgi birikiminden de yararlanmışır.

3. Türk Tarih Kurumunun “Kutsal” Amaçlarla Kuruluşu

Yukarıda da belirtildiği gibi, tarih ve dil çalışmaları Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun son yüzyılında başlamıştır. Yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, çoğunlukla Mustafa Kemal'in rehberliğinde, sosyal bilimlerin çeşitli dallarına ve özellikle tarihe önem vermiştir. Bir süre düzensiz bir şekilde yürütülen araştırmalar, 1928'den sonra sistematik bir hale dönüşmüştür. Buna göre, Hanioglu'nun ileri sürdüğü

gibi, yeni Türkiye'nin yeni ideolojisi bilimle desteklenen milliyetçilik ve önceki yılların Türkçülüğü olacaktır. Genç Türkiye'nin 1920'lerden itibaren yurt içindeki bireyleri Türk milletinin birer ferdi haline getirmek için bir ulus inşa sürecine girdiği bilinmektedir. Erken Cumhuriyet döneminde de tarihsel yaklaşım ve çalışmaların planlanması bu zihniyete uygun olarak düzenlenmiştir. Mustafa Kemal'in manevi kızı Afet (İnan) bu süreçte Paşa ile birlikte sürecin merkezinde olacaktır. Esasen bu sürecin somut başlangıç noktasını da yine Afet Hanım, Atatürk'e gösterdiği Fransızca bir kitapla Türkler hakkında kullanılan küçük düşürücü ifadeleri ilmi yollarla tekzip etmek amacıyla başlatılan çalışmalar olarak göstermektedir. Ayrıca Mustafa Kemal'in gençlik yıllarından beri tarihe ilgi duyduğu ve çeşitli vesilelerle vatan ve tarihin önemini vurguladığı bilinmektedir. Bu kapsamda öncelikle Türk Ocaklarına bağlı olarak Türk Tarihi Tetkik Heyeti 1930'un Nisan ayında vücuda getirilmiştir. Cumhurbaşkanına yakın kişilerde oluşan yönetici kadro derhal çalışmalara başlamış ve daha sonradan Türk Tarih Kurumu tarafından devralınan ve takip edilen Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları projesine girişmiştir.

1931'de Türk Ocaklarının lağvını takiben, Heyet üyeleri cemiyet olarak teşkilatlanmak üzere dönemin İçişleri Bakanlığına başvurmuş ve 15 Nisan 1931'de Türk Tarihi Tetkik Cemiyeti olarak tasdik edilmiştir. Dilde sadeleşme çabalarının da etkisiyle cemiyetin adı önce Türk Tarihi Araştırma Kurumu, 1935'te ise güncel şekliyle Türk Tarih Kurumu olarak değiştirilmiştir. Daha önceki heyetin üyeleri büyük oranda yeni cemiyette de yer almış ve Mustafa Kemal'in talimatları doğrultusunda -hatta pek çok kez onun bizzat katıldığı toplantılarda- işe koyulmuştur. Cemiyetin çalışmalarını yakından takip eden Atatürk'ün vefatına ve milli tarih tezinde zayıflamaya işaret eden 1938 yılına kadar, TTK tarafından 20'ye yakın kitap ve 8 sayı *Belleten* dergisi neşredilmiş, iki tarih kongresi düzenlenmiş, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* ve *Tarih* ders kitapları geliştirilmiştir. Elbette yayımlanmamış ve daha önce neredeyse hiç kullanılmamış Kurum arşiv evrakı da söz konusudur. Tüm bunların incelenmesi sonucunda, Türk Tarih Tezi olarak adlandırılan fakat Kurum tarafından hiçbir

zaman ayrıntıları açıkça beyan edilmemiş olan milli tarih programının özellikleri tespit edilmiştir. Buna göre;

- Türkler Anadolu'nun otokton sakinleridir ve Orta Asya'dan göç ettikten sonra en az 7.000 yıldır Anadolu'dadırlar.
- Türkler uygar olmayan "sarı ırka" değil, uygarlığı ilk olarak anavatanları Türkistan-Orta Asya'da kuran ve Yakın Doğu, Anadolu ve Avrupa'ya taşıyan beyaz ve brakisefal ırka dahildir.
- Türk dili en eski ve en zengin dillerden biridir; dilbilimsel çalışmalar Türkçenin ve Türklerin eskiliğini ve gelişmişlik düzeyini göstermektedir.
- Türkler, İslamiyet'ten önce hem tarih öncesi hem de tarihi devirlerde parlak bir geçmişe sahiptir.
- Bununla birlikte Türklerin İslam tarihine, Müslüman devletlere ve İslam medeniyetine de büyük katkıları olmuştur.
- Yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihi, Türk tarihinin şerefli bir safhası olarak bir "Türk Mucizesi"ni teşkil etmektedir.

Bu referans noktalarının bilinçli olarak vurgulandığı muhakkaktır ve bu noktaların anlatısını Kurum'un 1930'lu yıllardaki faaliyetlerinde bulmak mümkündür. Bu programın ardındaki saiklere bakılacak olursa; yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin halkı yüzyıllardır Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun tebaası olarak yaşamıştı ve bir ulus olma bilincine sahip değildi. Ayrıca, siyasi ve askerî açıdan bakıldığında, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu uzun süre boyunca geri kalmıştı ve bu durum Türklerde özgüven kaybına yol açmıştı. Dolayısıyla tarih öncesi, antik ve modern çağlarda kahramanlık ve zafer örnekleri vermiş eski ve medeni bir millet olduklarına dair bir söylemin halka hatırlatılması ya da telkin edilmesi tarihsel referanslarla mümkün olabilirdi. Öte yandan, Rumların, Ermenilerin ve bazı Avrupalı güçlerin Anadolu üzerindeki iddialarına karşı, Türklerin Anadolu

üzerindeki tarihsel hâkimiyetine ve sahipliğine vurgu yapmak önem arz ediyordu. Ayrıca, Türklerin tarihteki medeniyet kurucu rolü ortaya çıkarıldığında, devlet yöneticilerinin, Türklerin ve Türkiye'nin modern dünyada yer almasına yönelik çabaları da kolaylaşacaktı. Bu amaçlar, Türk Tarih Tezi'nin bu referans noktalarının vurgulanmasını gerektirmişti.

Söz konusu iddiaları yansıtan muhtelif faaliyetler söz konusudur. Bunlardan ilki Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları isimli devasa eser girişimidir. 1930'daki bir gazeteye göre, Gazi Mustafa Kemal'in riyasetinde, Türk tarihinin kaynaklarına ilişkin yaklaşık 600 yüz sayfalık bir kitap hazırlanmıştı. Bu eser, dünya ve medeniyetler tarihi içinde bir Türk tarihi belirlemişti. Eser, 600 sayfayı aşan 11 ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Birinci bölümde eserin hazırlanmasındaki girişimler, dünya tarihine giriş, evren, dünya, insan, tarih, ırk, dil ve Türk milleti üzerine teoriler ele alınmaktadır. Ardından Türk tarihinin başlangıcı, Türklerin anayurdu, göçleri ve uygarlıklarını içeren ikinci bölüm gelmektedir. Takip eden dört bölümde Çin, Hindistan, Kalde-Elam-Asur ve Mısır'ın tarihi, kültürü, medeniyeti ve Türklerin bu topraklara katkıları işlenmektedir. Yedinci bölüm Hititlerden Lidyalılara kadar Anadolu uygarlıklarını ve halklarını kapsamaktadır. Bir sonraki bölümde Ege ve Antik Yunan uygarlığına değinilmektedir. Benzer şekilde Antik İtalya ve Etrüskler de dokuzuncu bölümü oluşturmaktadır. Pers tarihi ve bu coğrafya üzerindeki devletler onuncu bölümde tetkik edilmektedir. Eserin son ve en geniş bölümü "Orta Asya" adını taşıyor ve Orta Asya'daki Türk medeniyeti (mimari, madencilik, şehir planlaması, dil ve yazı, hukuk, din vb. dahil) ile Türklerin dünyanın çeşitli yerlerine yaptıkları göçleri kapsamaktadır. Hunlardan Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'ne kadar olan Türk devletleri de bu bölümde ve kronolojik bir sırayla incelenmektedir.

Kısa zaman içerisinde yeterince araştırmadan hazırlanmış olması ve bazı bölümlerin uzman olmayanlar tarafından yazılması gibi sebeplerle, eserin başta Mustafa Kemal olmak üzere dönemin önde gelen isimleri tarafından tenkit edildiği bilinmektedir. Bununla birlikte çalışmanın ana fikri olan dünya tarihi içerisinde Türk tarihinin ve Türk milletinin önemini vurgulamaya yönelik çaba

muhafaza edilmiş, güncellenen eserlerde ve diğer faaliyetlerde savunulmuştur. Bu çerçevede hazırlanan *Tarih* ders kitaplarında ve *Belleten* dergisinde neşredilen makalelerde, Türk Tarih Tezinin yansımaları görülmüştür.

Öte yandan, 1932 ve 1937 yıllarında düzenlenen Türk Tarih Kongreleri de milli tarih tezinin kürsüden dillendirildiği ortamlar olmuştur. Esasen birinci kongre, teze dair muhtelif eleştirileri içermesi bakımından önem arz etmektedir. Neticede, münekkitler Kurum üyeleri tarafından tahkir edilmiş ve hâkim görüşe meydan okunmasına müsaade gösterilmemiştir. Bu çerçevede düzenlenen ikinci kongre ise, uluslararası katılımıyla ve tezin kabul görmesiyle -ya da kabul gördüğü iddiasıyla- Kurum'un ses getiren faaliyetlerinden biri olmuştur. Öte yandan, 1930'larda arkeolojik araştırmalara yoğunluk verildiği, bu kapsamda elde edilen sonuçlardan antropolojik araştırmalara gidildiği ve tarih tezini desteklemek üzere dönemde geçerli olan bu iki bilime yoğun atıflar yapıldığı görülmektedir.

4. Türk Tarih Tezine Göre Türk'ü Tanımlamak, İslam'ı Yorumlamak, Yeni Rejimi Meşru Kılmak

Genç Türkiye Cumhuriyeti, uzun süren yorucu savaşların ardından Anadolu'da kurulmuştu. Yine de askeri zafer, devleti yönetenlerin tek ve nihai hedefi olmadığı gibi istikrarlı bir yönetim için de yeterli değildi. Bu nedenle -yeni Türkiye'nin yönetici elitinin söyleminden de açıkça anlaşılacağı üzere- ekonomik, yasal, sosyal ve kültürel alanlarda sütunlar inşa etmek ve bunları korumak son derece önemliydi. Hükümet tarafından teşvik edilen yeni tarih yazımı, yukarıda bahsedilen sosyal ve kültürel meselelerin temelleri arasında değerlendirilmelidir. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmanın dördüncü ve beşinci bölümleri devlet destekli tarih yazımının köşe taşı iddialarını anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Daha önceden ifade edildiği üzere, Türk Tarih Tezi'nin Türk tarihine ilişkin altı temel iddiası vardır. Çalışmanın dördüncü bölümü bu iddialardan ikisine odaklanmaktadır: Birincisi Türklerin İslam'a katkıları (dine yeni bir yorum getirilmektedir), ikincisi ise modern Türk tarihinin ihtişamı (yeni rejimi

meşrulaştırmanın yollarını aramaktadır) şeklindedir. Dolayısıyla, Türk Tarih Tezi'nin anlatısı içinde İslam'a ve İslam tarihine, Osmanlı tarihine ve ilgili dönem için Türk tarihinin en yeni parçası olan modern Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihine bir bakış sunulmaktadır. Aslında bu anlatılar ya da tarihsel dönemler birbirinden uzak ya da bağımsız gibi görünse de tarih tezinde aralarında bir bağ kurulduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Elbette Türklük vurgusu burada da devreye girmiştir. Gerçekten de hakkında bir tarih tezi oluşturulan Türk'ün özelliklerinin tanımlanması ve ortaya konması büyük önem taşımıştır.

Millî Mücadele döneminde ve Cumhuriyet'in ilk yıllarındaki milliyetçi söylemin büyük oranda dine dayandığı birçok kaynakla sabittir. Aynı şekilde, ülke içerisindeki Müslüman grupların da milliyetçilikle çelişmeden milli söyleme dahil edildiği bilinmektedir. Fakat 1920'lerin sonuna doğru önce dinin etkisinin azaldığı, akabinde etnik olarak da Türklük vurgusunun artarak gayri Türk Müslümanların dışladığı bir politik ortama girilmiştir. Özellikle 1930'larda dinden ve gayri Türk unsurlardan soyutlanmış bir Türk milliyetçiliğinin vurgulanmaya başladığı görülmektedir. Esasen bunu ortaya koyan tecrübeler olmakla birlikte, dinin tamamen dışlanmadığı ve yeniden yorumlandığı, Türklük açısından da, Türk olmayanlara kapının yine de bir şekilde açık tutulduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Konunun Türk Tarih Kurumu açısından ele alınışı da dikkate değer bir husustur.

Tarih ders kitapları ve *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*, Kurum'un rehber kitapları olarak görülmelidir. Dolayısıyla, bu kitaplardaki anlatı milliyetçilik konusuna da ışık tutacaktır. Ders kitabına göre, İslamcılık, Türk milliyetçiliği, Türkçülük ve Turancılık Türkiye'de on dokuzuncu yüzyılın ikinci yarısından itibaren ortaya çıkmış olsa da, tanımları, amaçları ve yöntemleri belirsizdi. Ancak yeni Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ve iktidardaki Cumhuriyet Halk Fırkası, Türk milliyetçiliğini siyasi, ekonomik ve kültürel biçimleriyle devlet sisteminin bir ilkesi olarak kabul etti. Bu milliyetçilik, Türk milletini insanlığın şerefli bir üyesi olarak görür ve Türk haysiyet ve menfaatlerine yönelik bir tehdit olmadıkça hiçbir millete karşı düşmanlık beslemez. Dahası, dünyanın herhangi bir yerinde yaşayan tüm Türkler

için refah istemek ve onları önemsemekle birlikte, bu yeni milliyetçiliğin siyasi odağı modern Türkiye topraklarıyla sınırlı olacak ve Türkiye'de Türkçe konuşabilen, Türk kültürü içinde yetişmiş ve Türk ideallerini benimsemiş her kişi, dini ne olursa olsun Türk olarak kabul edilecektir. Diğer bir deyişle, millet olmanın unsurları ortak dil, ortak kültür ve ortak idealler olarak kabul edilmiş ve bunların hepsi tarihsel anlatı ile güçlendirilebilmiştir. *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*'ndan da çıkarılabileceği gibi, ortak dil ve kültürün olmadığı durumlarda tek başına ırksal kimlikler ulus oluşturmaya yetmemektedir. Bu noktadan hareketle, Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun 1930'lardaki antropolojik çalışmalarına ve ırk temelli söylemlerine rağmen, bunun bir bilim olarak icra edildiği ve ırkçılık gayesi güdülmediği, Kurum üyeleri tarafından sıklıkla dile getirilmiştir. Esasen politik hayatta geçerli olan, milliyetçiliğin ideolojik değil pragmatik saiklerle yorumlanması, Kurum tarafından da benimsenmiş ve hem etnik hem de kültür temelli söylemler milli tarih içerisinde, elde edilecek çıkara göre vurgulanmıştır. Türklüğe dair bu tartışmalardan sonra, İslam'a dair görüşler nakledilerek Türkler ve İslam arasındaki bağlantı ortaya koyulmaktadır. Esasen siyasi alanda, Cumhuriyet yönetimi -pek çok iddianın aksine- dini devlet işlerinden ve buna bağlı olarak din politikalarından tamamen ayıracak bir laiklik anlayışı izlememiştir. Bir yandan din kontrol altına alınmak ve baskı altına alınmak istenirken, diğer yandan devlet kendi eliyle dini yaymayı ve halkın -güncel din yorumu kapsamında- daha dindar olmasını hedeflemiştir. Benzer durum Türk Tarih Kurumunun anlatısında da geçerlidir. Anlatının merkezine -din çıkarıldıktan sonra- Türklük yerleştirilmiş ve vurgular Türklüğe yapılmış olsa da, İslam tamamen dışlanmamış, yeniden yorumlanmıştır. Bu kapsamda Türk Tarih Tezinin önemli bir iddiası olarak, Türklerin İslam'a büyük katkılar yaptığı vurgulanmıştır. Bu katkılar Müslüman Türk devletleri aracılığıyla politik temelde, ve Müslüman-Türk olduğu iddia edilen hezarfenlerin bireysel çabalarıyla kültürel temelde zikredilmiştir. Bu kapsamda Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi'nde Şemsettin Bey şu sözlerle övünmüştü: "İslam medeniyeti denilen bu yüksek medeniyeti doğuran bu hareketleri doğuran şahsiyetlerden ekseriyetinin Türk olduğunu göğsüm kabarak söyleyebilirim." Bu söylem, önceki Türklerin büyük başarılarıyla vatandaşların milli gururunu pekiştirmesi

açısından anlamlıydı. Öte yandan, İslam'ın tamamen göz ardı edilmediğini ya da ihmal edilmediğini; ancak -yukarıda da tartışıldığı üzere- Türk Tarih Tezi'ni güçlendirecek şekilde Türk tarihi anlatısına dahil edildiğini bir kez daha göstermektedir.

Bu bölümde ele alınan, Türk Tarih Tezi'nin diğer bir iddiası ise, modern Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin -kısa tarihine rağmen- Türk tarihinin başarılarla dolu en şanlı sayfalarından olduğu iddiasıydı. Elbette buradaki temel amaçlardan biri, yeni rejime tarihsel söylemler ışığında meşruiyet kaynağı yaratmaktı. Bu kapsamda öncelikle, modern Cumhuriyet'in selefi olan Osmanlılara dair bir anlatı sunulmuştur. Esasen burada da (İslam hakkında olduğu gibi) toptan bir reddetme görülmemiş, bilakis on yedinci yüzyıla kadar Osmanlı devletinin askeri, politik ve ekonomik özellikleri -Türk'ün hanesine yazılmak üzere- başarı olarak kaydedilmiştir. Söz konusu tarihten sonra ise, kötü yönetim ve dini bağnazlıklarla devletin yıkılış sürecine girdiği ve nihayet milli bir mücadele sonrasında yeni Türk devletinin kurulduğu anlatılmaktadır. Yeni devlet tarafından hayata geçirilen reformlar birer kazanım olarak zikredilmiş, ayrıca -gerçek ya da kurgusal olarak- tarihten örneklerle desteklenmiştir. Yine modern devletin ve onun kurucusu ve başı olan Atatürk'ün meşruiyetini sağlamlaştırmak adına, Mustafa Kemal'e dair bir kült oluşturulmuş ve ders kitaplarında, makalelerde ve konferanslarda tarihsel söylemlerle desteklenmiştir.

5. Türk Tarih Tezinde Kadim ve Medeni Bir Millet Olarak Türklerin Tasviri

Bu bölüm, Türk Tarih Tezi'nin Türklerin şanlı tarihleri boyunca medeniyetler kurmada ve/veya taşımadaki rolünü ortaya koymayı amaçlayan iddialarından dördüne odaklanmaktadır. Buna göre Türk Tarih Tezi, Türklerin Orta Asya kökenli kadim bir halk olduğunu ve daha sonra Anadolu'ya göç ederek burada ilk sakinleri olduklarını ortaya koymaya çalışmıştır. Arkeoloji ve antropoloji bu söylemi desteklemek, Orta Asya ile Anadolu, geçmiş ile bugün arasında bağlantılar kurmak için kullanılmıştır. Türklerin kadim kimliği, Orta Asya ve

Anadolu bağlantıları ve ırksal özellikleri kanıtlandıktan -ya da kanıtlandığı düşünüldükten- sonra, söz konusu Türklerin medeniyete ve insanlığa katkıları ve tarih boyunca gösterdikleri ihtişam gösterilmeye çalışılır. Başka bir deyişle, bu iddialar şu şekilde kümelenebilir: Anadolu'nun kadim bir Türk yurdudur; Türkler tarih boyunca medeni bir millet olmuşlardır; Türklerin İslam'la yükseldikleri anlatısına karşı, İslam öncesi çağlarda da şanlı bir geçmişe sahip olmuşlardır; ve Türk dili Türk medeniyetinin başlıca aracı ve göstergesidir. Bu bölümde, söz konusu tarihsel iddia ve savlar, Kurum'un kendi anlatım biçimiyle ortaya koyduğu eserler üzerinden ortaya konulmaktadır.

Öncelikle Anadolu üzerinde Türk hakimiyeti kati bir surette vurgulanmaktadır. Zira belirtildiği üzere Avrupalı güçlerin ya da bölge azınlıklarının Anadolu üzerindeki hak talepleri (ya da kadim halk oldukları iddiaları), buranın ezeli ve ebedi bir Türk yurdu olarak kanıtlanması çabalarını getirmişti. Bu söylem kapsamında Anadolu'nun kadim halkları olan Sümerler ve Hititlerin Türklüğü tarih tezinin önemli bir iddiası olarak ortaya çıkmıştı. Elbette Lidyalılar, Frigler, Fenikeliler ve Troyalılar gibi farklı topluluklara da zımnen ya da açık olarak Türklük atfedildiyse de, takip edilmek istenen bilimsel metotlar o dönem için daha çok Hititlere vurgu yapılmasını gerektiriyordu, zira arkeolojik ve antropolojik çalışmalar daha çok bu meyandaydı. Bu kapsamda Kurum üyeleri başlattıkları kazılarla Hitit merkezlerinden materyal toplamaya başlarken, bir kısım araştırmacılar da bu materyal üzerinden Hititlerin Türklüğünü “nesnel verilere” istinaden kanıtlamaya çalışıyordu. Kurum'un ırkçılıkla ithamına sebep olan kafatası ölçüm çalışmaları da bu döneme rastlamaktadır. Buna karşılık, o dönemde dahi ithamların farkında olan Kurum üyeleri, çalışmaların bilim adına ve bilimsel metotlarla yapıldığını iddia etmekteydi. Zafer Toprak'ın da belirttiği üzere, Batı kaynaklı ve Türkleri (ve Doğu toplumlarını) tezyif eden antropolojik araştırmalar karşısında verilecek cevap yine antropolojik temelli olmalıydı. Dolayısıyla Kurum'un ilgili faaliyetlerini bu kapsamda ele almak yararlı görünmektedir.

İkinci olarak, Türklerin tarih boyunca medeni bir millet olduğu fikri hararetle bir şekilde savunulmuştur. Daha önceden başlatılan fakat akim kalan *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* programı çerçevesinde hazırlanan müsveddelerle, medeniyetin çeşitli alanlarında Türklerin öncü rollerine vurgu yapılmaktaydı. Ticaretten tarıma, askerlikten bilime ve hatta müzik ve spora kadar birçok alanda Türklerin medeni konumları ön plana çıkarılmak isteniyordu. Bu söylemin incelenmesinde, Kurum arşivinden temin edilen ve daha önceden çok kullanılmamış olan *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları* taslak ve müsveddelerine başvurulmuştur. Bu hususu takiben, Türklerin İslam öncesinde de zengin tarihe sahip olan gelişmiş bir millet olduğunu vurgulamak üzere de bir söylem geliştirilmiştir. Buna göre tarih öncesi devirler ve tarih devirleri, Türklerin birçok alandaki üstünlüğüne şahit olmuştu. O halde Türkler tarafından MS. 9. yüzyılda benimsendikten sonra başlayan Türk-İslam tarihi, esasında Türk tarihinin sadece küçük bir kısmını oluşturmaktaydı.

Son iddia ise, Türk dilinin kadimliği ve zenginliği üzerineydi. Esasen dil-dilbilim uzun süre çeşitli toplulukların tarihsel ve ulusal söylemlerinin bir parçası olmuştur. Benzer şekilde, Türk dilbilimi çalışmaları da Türk tarihi iddialarının önemli bir unsuru olarak görülmüştür. Türk Tarih Kurumunun hemen sonrasında, aynı irade tarafından ve benzer amaçlarla Türk Dil Kurumunun tesis edilmesi de bunun göstergesidir. Bu dönemde tarihsel ve linguistik iddialar, aynı amaçlarla -Türk medeniyetini kanıtlamak-, aynı seferberlik içerisinde ve benzer kadrolarla geliştirilmiş ve savunulmuştur. Aslında erken Cumhuriyet döneminde tek bir dilbilim çalışmasından söz etmek mümkün değildir. Arındırılmış bir Türkçe için Türkçe olmayan sözcükleri atmak ve Türkçe olmayan dillere ve sözcüklere Türkçe bir köken atfetmek birbiriyle çelişen yaklaşımlar gibi görünebilir, gerçekten de öyleydi. Ancak amaçları sabitti: Türkçenin zenginliğini yurt içinde ve yurt dışında tanıtmak ve tarihsel iddiaları ortaya koymak. Dolayısıyla Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun dil meselesine Türk Tarih Tezi'nin görüşünü desteklemek için yaklaştığı düşünülebilir. Elbette arkeoloji ve antropoloji gibi, nesnel bilgi üreteceğine dair inanç kapsamında, dilbilime başvururken de bilimselliği koruma kaygısı vardı.

6- Sonuç

Bu çalışma, Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun 1930'lu yıllarda Türkiye'de ulusal bir bilinç ve kimlik yaratmaya yönelik anlatısına odaklanmaktadır. Ancak Kurum'un faaliyetlerine geçmeden önce, milli tarih yazımının gelişimi ve tarihin ve tarihi kurumların millet ve kimlik inşasında kullanılmasının arka planı hem teorik hem de pratik olarak ortaya konulmaya çalışılmıştır. Milliyetçi tarih yazımının siyasi-kültürel amaçlar doğrultusunda uygulanması konusunda Türk Tarih Kurumu örneğinin, Avrupa'da ve Türkiye'de daha önce oluşmuş iki yüzyıllık mirastan bağımsız düşünölemeyeceği vurgulanmıştır.

Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun söz konusu dönemdeki faaliyetleri arasında milli tarih kaynaklarının yayımlanması, tezin yayılması için bir dergi çıkarılması, kütüphane ve arşivin uygun bir geçmişten kaynak çıkarmak üzere düzenlenmesi, iddiaların dilbilimsel, arkeolojik ve antropolojik araştırmalara yapılan yoğun atıflarla desteklenmesi ve iddiaların dış dünyaya duyurulması için bilimsel konferanslar düzenlenmesi gibi ulusal bir tarih yazımı kampanyası olarak değerlendirilebilecek çabalar yer almaktadır. Bu çalışmada ortaya konulduğu üzere, Avrupalı araştırma kurumları da kendi ulusal tarihlerini tanıtmak için benzer yöntemlerle bu tür faaliyetlere başvurmuşlardır. Örneğin, *Türk Tarihinin Ana Hatları*'nın derlenmesi, uulusun tarih belgelerini yaymayı amaçlayan *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*'nın etkisini yansıtmaktadır. Avrupa'da bilimsel dergiler yayınlamak en az bir asırlık bir gelenektir. On dokuzuncu yüzyılın sonları ve yirminci yüzyılın başlarında ulusal tarih vb. için antropoloji ve arkeoloji bilimine vurgu artmıştır. Geçmişten seçilen referans noktası ölkeler arasında farklılık gösterse de tarihin iddiaların temeli olarak kullanılması değişmemiştir.

Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun faaliyetleri ve iddiaları incelenerek, Giriş bölümünde ortaya çıkan sorulara bazı açıklamalar getirmek mümkün olabilir. Dolayısıyla, birçok çalışmanın iddia ettiğinin aksine, Türk tarihinin İslam ve Osmanlı kısmından radikal bir kopuş olmadığı anlaşılabilir. Aksine, özellikle İslam-

Osmanlı geçmişinin başarılarından Türk tarihi adına gurur duyma ihtimali söz konusu olduğunda, bu geçmiş bir ölçüde yeni bir yoruma tabi tutulmuştur. Bununla birlikte, bu geçmiş aynı zamanda Türklerin son bin yılında karşılaştığı sorunların çoğundan da sorumlu tutulmuştur. Dolayısıyla devlet ve Türk Tarih Kurumu, dini tamamen dışlamak yerine, İslam'ı kendi kontrolleri altında ve kendi yorumlarıyla ulusal tarih anlatısına yerleştirerek vatandaşların zihinlerini şekillendirmeyi düşünmüştür. Daha sonra, Türklerin Orta Asya (Türklerin anavatanı) ve Anadolu (kadim Türk yurdu) kökenleri arasında somut bağlantılar kurmak için dilbilim, arkeoloji ve antropoloji alanlarından yoğun analiz ve araştırmalara başvurulmuştur. Aslında bu çalışmaların Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun keskin ırkçılığının izleri olarak değerlendirilmesi pek doğru görünmemektedir, çünkü bu bilimler çağdaş araştırma yöntemleri olarak kabul edilmiş ve Türklere karşı aynı yöntemleri kullanan Avrupa söylemine karşı koymak amacıyla başvurulmuştur.

Kurum üyelerinin tezle ilgili olarak duruşları ve görüşleri de önemlidir. Tarih tezine karşı eleştirel görünen Zeki Velidi ve Fuat Köprülü'nün Birinci Türk Tarih Kongresi'nde yaşadıkları ortadadır. Benzer şekilde Darülfünun müderrisleri ile kurum üyeleri arasında yaşanan tartışmanın da Darülfünun'un kaldırılmasında etkili olduğu tahmin edilmektedir. Bu açıdan bakıldığında, 1930'larda kurum üyeleri arasında tarihsel konularda açık bir şekilde farklı görüşlerin ortaya çıkmasını beklemek gerçekçi olmayacaktır. Ancak bazı üyelerin tarih tezine daha bağlı oldukları, geliştirdikleri ve savundukları; diğer bazı üyelerin ise tezin oluşumuna katkıda bulunmaktan ziyade bir görev çerçevesinde çalışmalara katıldıkları anlaşılmaktadır. O halde denilebilir ki -1930'ların ilk on altı üyesi için- Afet İnan, Yusuf Akçura, Sadri Maksudi, Şemsettin Günaltay ve Sadri Maksudi Kurum'un ve tezin önde gelen temsilcileri olmuşlardır. Öte yandan Halil Edhem, İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, Mükrimin Halil Yinanç, Ragıp Hulusi ve Reşit Safvet gibi üyeler ise daha çok belli bir alanda yaptıkları yayınlarla teze katkıda bulundular. Dolayısıyla bazı konularda (Türk milletinin tarihi, millet ve ırk tanımı vb.) farklı yorumlar olsa da ilk grup bu farklı görüşlerin tartışmaya yol açmasını engellemiş ve konuyu konferans ve yayınlarında açıklayarak hâkim

görüşü ortaya koymuştur. Böylece Kurum'un kurucu heyetinin bile yöneticilerle yakın çalışan daha dar bir ekip tarafından yürütüldüğü anlaşılmaktadır.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk'ün vefatından hemen sonra Türk Tarih Tezi'nin zayıfladığı ve Kurum faaliyetlerinin başka bir yöne doğru kaydığını belirtmek gerekir. Copeaux'nun çalışmasında vurguladığı gibi, 1940'larda "Kemalist" tarih yazımının aksine, Türk-İslam sentezinden oluşan ve Türk tarihinin Asyalı-Müslüman karakterini vurgulayan yeni bir tarih anlatısı teşvik edilmiştir. Bu değişimin muhtemel sebeplerini tartışmak faydalı görünmektedir. Diğer yandan, Türk Tarih Kurumu'nun kuruluşu ve ilk dönemlerine ilişkin önemli miktarda çalışma bulunmakla birlikte, özellikle kurumun 1950'lerden sonraki tarihine ilişkin tarihsel bir anlatı eksikliği söz konusudur. Elbette Kurum'un faaliyetlerinin bir listesi (kitaplar, makaleler, kongre ve konferanslar vb. dahil) günümüzde bolca bulunan açık kaynaklardan ve dijital kaynaklardan kolaylıkla bulunabilir. Ancak faaliyetlerin arkasındaki ideolojik zemin, hatta bu faaliyetlerin belli bir planlama dahilinde yürütülüp yürütülmediği bile irdelenmeyi gerektirmektedir. Bilindiği üzere, devletle yakın ilişkileri olmasına rağmen dernek olarak kurulan ve on yıllar boyunca bu konumunu koruyan Cemiyet, 1980'lerden itibaren devlet teşkilatına dahil edilmiş ve Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu'na bağlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda hem Türk Tarih Kurumu ile Yüksek Kurum arasındaki bağın ve bunun faaliyetlere nasıl yansıdığının hem de Yüksek Kurum'un bağımsız olarak tarih söylemini nasıl etkilediğinin araştırılması faydalı olacaktır. Ayrıca, 2018 yılı itibarıyla Türk Tarih Kurumu ve Yüksek Kurum, Kültür ve Turizm Bakanlığı'na bağlanmıştır. Bu doğrultuda idari teşkilatlanmanın kurum faaliyetlerine yansımaları gösterecek çalışmalara da ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır.

D. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : İMAMOĞLU

Adı / Name : UĞUR CENK DENİZ

Bölümü / Department : Tarih / History

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