Archaeological travellers and Foreign Schools

Professor Ömür Bakirer, Middle East Technical University

Topkapı Palace as Seen and Drawn by Western Travellers in the Ottoman Empire from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century.

The varied works published by diplomats, historians, artists, and others who visited the Ottoman Empire are for us today valuable written and visual documents carrying information on the daily life, habits, customs, social institutions, and the physical environment of the Ottoman Empire, both in the capital and in the provinces. This paper examines in particular western travellers who recorded Topkapı Palace and its environs. Topkapı, constructed during the late fifteenth century, changed greatly during the centuries that followed through restoration and additions. The paper will focus especially on those travellers who may help us understand these changes such as Grelot, Gilles, Dallaway, D’Ohsson, Pardoe, Allom, Amicis, and others, whose descriptions and sketches make it possible to visualize the condition of the Palace after the fires and restorations of the seventeenth century and later.

Professor Malcolm Wagstaff

Colonel Leake’s View of the Turks

Lieutenant-Colonel William Martin Leake (1777-1860) (Colonel Leake) is probably best known today for his work on the topography of ancient Greece. He was also recognised as an active Philhellene, publishing the first history of the Greek Revolution in English (1825, 1826), and writing letters in support of uprisings in Crete (1840s). This paper will deal with the converse of Leake’s Philhellenism, namely his attitude to the Turks. During a decade of travel and residence in the Ottoman Empire (1800-10) he met many Ottoman officials and had a passing acquaintance with numerous ‘Turkish’ peasants and artisans. These encounters coloured his generally unfavourable views. He did not publish them as a systematic critical account but this paper will synthesise the available information from his various publications and, to a lesser extent, from his official dispatches to the Foreign Office.

Professor Tom Winnifrith, St Antony’s College

‘The Life of S.S. Clarke: a remarkable near-contemporary of F.W. Hasluck in Athens’

S.S. Clarke travelled extensively in Northern Greece and Southern Albania during 1923 and 1924 before being tragically drowned in the Aegean. He was based at the British School of Athens and his diaries are deposited there. They mention both Haslucks, and his interests in Greek history and topography and Albanian customs would have made him a worthy colleague or successor to either. The diaries have not been published and are insufficiently known, although Hammond uses Clarke for the archaeology of the classical period in Epirus (Oxford 1966). Clarke made notes as he went along his difficult and often dangerous journeys and, whilst these notes were not intended for publication, I have the permission of the British School to give a résumé of them in my forthcoming book on Northern Epirus. This paper presents this résumé and further details of Clarke’s remarkable life gleaned from Balliol and Exeter Colleges, Oxford.

Professor Richard Clogg, St Antony’s College Oxford

Academics at War: the British School at Athens, 1912-1922

In the run up to the 1981 elections in Greece, Melina Mercouri, the actress who subsequently became minister of culture in Andreas Papandreou’s PASOK government, called for the closure of the foreign archaeological institutes in Athens on the grounds that they were training schools for spies. This is an inherently improbable proposition. On the other hand, it is an undeniable fact that many alumni of these archaeological institutes were involved in intelligence activities in both world wars, where their knowledge of the country and its language was to prove a useful and at that time a relatively rare asset. During the First World War the euphemistically named Passport Control Office was actually housed in the British School, while at the end of the 1930s Nazi organisation among the German community in Greece was co-ordinated by a member of the German Archaeological Institute. This paper will look at the activities during the First World War of F.W. Hasluck’s contemporaries at the British School at Athens.
Dr Matthew Elliot, British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara

European Archaeological and Historical Institutes in Turkey: An Italian Ambassador’s view in 1925

This talk is based on a detailed memorandum from the Italian Ambassador in Constantinople to the Royal Ministry of Foreign Affairs proposing the foundation of an Italian Institute in Turkey. The memorandum discusses not only the cultural but more especially the political objectives of such an institute, the work of other foreign institutes in Turkey, and the attitude of the Republican Turkish authorities during this difficult period.

Mr David Barchard, Former member of Council, BIAA

‘Archaeology in Anatolia at a time of social transition: the British Institute at Ankara in the 1950’s

Michael Gough presided over the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara during a decade of British decolonisation and the beginnings of an urban industrial society in Turkey. His tenure of office as director was a time of difficult choices including some forced by the so-called Dorak affair. In retrospect it appears to have been one of the creative high points of British archaeology in Turkey with a level of accomplishment not equalled for several decades after him. He also pioneered Christian archaeology in the Turkish Republic, anticipating changes in taste in the 1990s.

Professor Elizabeth Özdalga, Middle East Technical University, Ankara


During the spring of 2001, the Swedish government decided to add a Centre for Swedish-Turkish cooperation to the Swedish official representation in Istanbul. This organization, which is supported by the Swedish aid agency, SIDA, will have the objective of strengthening the process of democracy in Turkey and promoting the country’s entrance into the EU. In itself this may seem a praiseworthy initiative, but there already exists an independent research institute, organized as an NGO, and loosely connected to the Consulate General in Istanbul. This puts the whole project in a different light. The aim of the present paper is to analyse the consequences for an association like the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul of establishing a policy oriented dialogue centre in its close vicinity. The SRI is the result, as well as the promoter, of liberal values concerning academia, much in line with the ideals of a scholar like F.W. Hasluck. Now, it is challenged by a governmental agency, economically much stronger than itself and equipped with a certain political agenda.