

Armand Sag (1984, Utrecht - the Netherlands) earned his undergraduate and graduate degrees at Utrecht University and is currently the chairman of Institute for Turkish Studies where he also works as a senior researcher. In addition to his work on nation-building and historiography in Turkey, his research also covers the history of Central Asia and its linguistic heritage. He is the author of *History and More: Reflections of a Historian* (2011) and *Learning Grammar of Turkey-Turkish: Answers* (2013), as well as the co-author of *Revolutions in the Middle East: Perception and Consequences* (2012), among many other titles.



# **Nation-building and historiography in modern Turkey:**

*Anatolia, the Balkan and geographical emphasis*

By

Armand Sag

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*Front cover image: The photograph is of the battlefield of Edirne during the Balkan Wars (1912-1913) with the statue of Şükrü Paşa prominently on the right side. This picture was taken on July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010.*

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Laan van Chartroise 174

3552 EZ Utrecht

The Netherlands

Tel.: +31 30 8200540

Fax.: +31 30 8200541

[info@turksestudies.org](mailto:info@turksestudies.org)

[www.turksestudies.org](http://www.turksestudies.org)

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# International Praise<sup>1</sup>

(In alphabetical order by surname:)

*"This book is a very serious study, written from a unique perspective by a talented, young and promising scholar. (Bu kitap, gelecek vadeden, genç ve yetenekli bir akademisyen tarafından özgün bir bakış açısıyla yapılmış ciddi bir çalışmadır.)"*

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*"A groundbreaking and extremely well researched work on Turkish history in the Balkans and its stunning neglect in Turkish historiography."*

- Michael van der Galiën, Managing Editor of The Daily Standard

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<sup>1</sup> Also see the back cover.



# Table of Contents

*Table of Contents*.....7

*List of Tables*.....10

*List of Graphs*.....11

*List of Maps*.....12

*List of Images*.....13

*Timeline*.....14

*Foreword*.....19

  

Chapter 1: The process of nation-building, historiography and nation-building in modern Turkey.....23

**1.1.Introduction**

        1.1.1 *Construction of the past*

        1.1.2 *Neglect and emphasize*

**1.2 Nation-building and historiography**

**1.3 Nation-building in Turkey**

        1.3.1 *The case of Turkey*

        1.3.2 *Features of the nation*

        1.3.3 *Context of Turkey*

**1.4 Overview of the chapters**

**1.5 Works cited in chapter one**

  

Chapter 2: All eyes on Anatolia, looking for geographical emphases in Turkish historiography.....49

**2.1 Introduction**

**2.2 Geography in Turkish historiography**

**2.3 Review of literature**

**2.4 The relevance of geography**

**2.5 History in the educational system**

        2.5.1 *Primary Education*

        2.5.2 *Secondary Education*

        2.5.3 *University admission exams*

**2.6 Geography and the Image of the Nation**

**2.7 Summary and conclusion**

**2.8 Works cited in chapter two**

  

Chapter 3: The Balkans in Turkish history.....87

**3.1 Introduction**

**3.2 Review of literature**

        3.2.1 *Osmanlı history of the Balkans*

        3.2.2 *The Balkans in Turkish historiography*

**3.3 Migrating to Europe and settling in the Balkans**

        3.4.1 *Creating lasting empires*

        3.4.2 *The Turco-Mongol hordes*

3.4.3 <i>The Osmanlı Balkans</i>	
3.5 Summary and conclusion	
3.6 Works cited in chapter three	
Chapter 4: A response to losing the Balkans.....	129
4.1 Introduction	
4.2 Contemporary literature on the Young Turks	
4.3 Background of the Young Turk movement	
4.4 The Rise of the Young Turks	
4.5 The Young Turk Revolution	
4.6 Faced with ensuing wars	
4.7 Coup or not?	
4.8 Summary and conclusion	
4.9 Works cited in chapter four	
Chapter 5: Historiographical neglect and its impact, a case study surrounding the Armenian issue in Turkish history .....	157
5.1 Introduction	
5.2 Review of literature	
5.3 Absence in Turkish historiography	
5.4 Debates and disputes among historians	
5.4.1 <i>Victims of both sides</i>	
5.4.2 <i>Authentic proof</i>	
5.4.3 <i>Number of casualties</i>	
5.5 The transnational aspect	
5.6 <i>A short overview of 1885-1916</i>	
5.6.1 <i>A list of important events</i>	
5.6.2 <i>Sasus (1894)</i>	
5.6.3 <i>Zeytun (1895)</i>	
5.6.4 <i>The Osmanlı Bank (1896)</i>	
5.6.5 <i>Khanasor (1897)</i>	
5.6.6 <i>Sasun (1904)</i>	
5.6.7 <i>The Yıldız Assassination (1905)</i>	
5.6.8 <i>Adana (1909)</i>	
5.6.9 <i>Tehcir (1915-1916)</i>	
5.7 The relocation (1915)	
5.8 Primary sources	
5.8.1 <i>Osmanlı archives</i>	
5.8.2 <i>German archives</i>	
5.8.3 <i>American archives</i>	
5.9 Aftermath	
5.10 Summary and conclusion	
5.11 Works cited in chapter five	
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	191
6.1 Introduction	
6.2 Military glorification as the criterion	
6.3 Concluding remarks	
6.4 Additional thoughts	
6.5 Works cited in chapter six	



*Bibliography*.....205

*Appendices*.....227

    Appendix 1: Turkish history textbooks

    Appendix 2: Details and copyrights

    Appendix 3: The literature about the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)

*Index*.....235

# List of Tables

Table 1: The table of content of a standardized Turkish history textbook.....57

Table 2: Turkish University Admission Exams between 1985 and 2010.....71

Table 3: The second stage of Turkish University Admission Exams which was only implemented in the years between 1985 and 1998.....74-75

Table 4: Waves of migrating Turkish tribes to the Balkans.....116

Table 5: Grand viziers of the Osmanlı Empire during the Young Turk era.....145

# List of Graphs

Graph 1: The most frequently asked chapters in Turkish University Admission Exams in the years 1985 and 2010.....76

# List of Maps

Map 1: The depiction of Central Asia as a paradise and the migration routes of the Central Asian Turks.....58

Map 2: The migration and empire of the Selçuklu Turks.....61

Map 3: The decline of the Osmanlı Empire and its lost provinces.....62

Map 4: The migration and empire of the Scythians, Sarmatians and Alans.....90-91

Map 5: The migration and empire of the Huns.....94-95

Map 6: The migration and empire of the Bulgars.....100-101

Map 7: The migration and empire of the Avars and Macars.....104-105

Map 8: The migration and empire of the Peçeneks and Selçuklu’s.....108-109

Map 9: The migration and empire of the Kıpçaks.....112-113

Map 10: The early Osmanlı advance in the Balkans .....119

Map 11: The Osmanlı Empire (1830-1922) with the cities Manastır, Edirne, Selanik and İstanbul.....134-135

# List of Images

Image 1: The class of 1928-1929 of an Armenian Primary School in İstanbul.....140

Image 2: A celebration card of the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 from 1911.....141

Image 3: A pamphlet of the Osmanlı provinces from 1911.....143

# Timeline

11.000 B.C.	Settlement of Çatalhöyük in Anatolia (sometimes written as 'Çatalcahöyük')
1400 B.C.	Hittites establish an Anatolian civilization
1296-1280 B.C.	Battle of Kadeş
1280 B.C.	Treaty of Kadeş
1st Millennium	Turkish tribes invade the Balkans
1000-800 B.C.	Scythians migrate to the Balkans
800 B.C.	First Wave of Turkish migration to the Balkans
700-300 B.C.	Peaceful co-existence Sarmatians and Scythians
220 B.C.	Great Hunnic Empire
0	Anno Domini (A.D.)
300	Second Wave of Turkish migration to the Balkans
4th Century	Huns migrate to Europe (Great Migration)
6th Century	Hunno-Bulgars enter the Balkans
516	Sibir Turks enter Anatolia
7th Century	Crimean Volga-Bulgars emerge
681	Turkic Bulgars defeat the Byzantine Empire
8th Century	Second Wave of Turkish migration
9th Century	Peçenek take refuge in Pannonia
11th Century	Founding of the Selçuklu Empire
11th Century	Great Plague in the Balkans
1015	Çağrı Bey explores Anatolia
1074	el-Kâşgarî finishes his book
1071	Battle of Manzikert
1091	Peçenek siege of Constantinople
1155	Battle of Andria
1200	Third Wave of Turkish migration to the Balkans
13th Century	Fall of the Selçuklu Empire
1241	Mongol invasion of Hungary
1260	Selçuklu's flee to Moldavia
1299	Founding of the Osmanlı Empire
14th Century	Osmanlı conquest of the Balkans

1353	İskan strategy in Rumeli by Orhan Gazi
1363-1453	Edirne becomes the Osmanlı capital
1402	Battle of Ankara
1444	Battle of Varna
1453	Osmanlı conquest of Constantinople
1789	The French Revolution
1804-1813	First Serbian Uprising
1815-1817	Second Serbian Uprising
1821-1832	Greek Rebellion
1867	Osmanlı forces retreat from Serbia
1870-1871	Franco-Prussian War
1876	Bulgarian Rebellion
1876	Reign of Abdülhamit the Second
1876	First Osmanlı Constitution
1877	Romanian Revolt
1877-1878	Turko-Russian War
1878	Suspension of the Osmanlı Constitution
1878	Treaty of Berlin
1881	Establishment of the Kingdom of Romania
1882	Establishment of the Kingdom of Serbia
1885	Bulgarian annexation of the Osmanlı province of Rumeli
1889	Founding of İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti
1895	Renaming İttihad-i Osmani Cemiyeti as İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti
1896	Armenian assault on the National Osmanlı Bank
1897	Greek Uprising on Crete
1908	Meşrutiyet: the Young Turks take control of the Osmanlı Empire
1909	31 Mart Vakası
1910	Albanian Revolt
1910	Establishment of the Kingdom of Montenegro
1911	Trablusgarp War
1911	Continuing Albanian Revolt
1911-1912	Genç Kalemler journal was published
1912	Another Albanian Revolt

1912	First Balkan War
1912	Selanik (Thessaloniki) was lost
1913	Bab-ı Ali Assault
1913	Edirne fell in Bulgarian hands
1913	Second Balkan War
1913	Edirne was recaptured by Osmanlı troops
1914-1918	First World War
1915	Battle of Gallipoli
1915	Armenian Rebellion in Anatolia
1919-1922	Turkish War of Independence
1922	Fall of the Osmanlı Empire
1923	Founding of the Republic of Turkey
1938	Death of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk
1939-1945	Second World War
1960	First Turkish coup d'état
1971	Second Turkish coup d'état
1980	Third Turkish coup d'état
1994	Russian Ossetians adopt 'Alania'
2012	Turkey implements the new '4+4+4'-school model







# Foreword

Writing this book was a long and tiresome journey in which I received support and help from many different people over the past couple of years. Some of the advice I received dates back to my years as a Bachelor and Master student at Utrecht University, others were given to me during my years as a Ph.D.-student. Additionally, I have received advice, encouragement and support from colleagues, old and new friends, advisors and many people whom I met in the course of my research in Turkey and the Netherlands. Without their help, this book would have been impossible to write.

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# Chapter 1: The process of nation-building

## Historiography and nation-building in modern Turkey

*“Türk nereye gitse asıl yurdunu unutmazdı. Çünkü, atalarının mezarı oradaydı.”*

Ziya Gökalp (Ankara, 1923: 133)

### Introduction

Since the emergence of the phenomenon of ‘nation’, entire states have adopted an understanding of people living within a geographical region as belonging to one common origin. In realizing this unifying concept of ‘nation’, historiography plays an important factor in finding a common history for people within a given geography. Sometimes, historiography is used to emphasize or neglect parts of the national history in order to establish a new ‘nation’.

In the nineteenth century, the smaller German states formed one nation, or ‘Kulturnation’ to speak in the terms of Frederick Meinecke (1922), without actually being one unified state (Iordachi, 2006). In the nineteenth century, it was widely believed that the concept of ‘nation’ was interchangeable with that of ‘race’ because it was widely accepted that ‘nation’ was carved out by descent (Hewitson, 2006). In order to forge new ‘nations’, it became important to invent myths, traditions, suitable history, cultural trademarks and linguistic commonality (Smith, 2009; Hobsbawm & Ranger, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990).

After the nineteenth century, most notably the 1920s and 1930s, the concept of ‘nation’ became intermingled with other phrases. Some scholars of that specific time period, such as Carlton Hayes (1931) and Louis Snyder (1954), were emphasizing the concept of ‘nation’ with a modern, secular content and its close relationship to rationalism and liberalism (Smith, 2009). This was a radical change with De Gobineau (1999), who was against modern ideologies like republicanism within a ‘nation’ but was advocating for ‘race’. In both De Gobineau and Hayes’ theory of ‘nation’, historiography played an important role; for example, by linking the British ‘nation’ to the myth of a ‘honest and righteous King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table’ (Higham, 2002; Thorpe, 1966; Loomis, 1956).

### *Construction of the past*

While individual nations might come and go, a ‘nation’ as a historical community was eternal; the historiography to back this was accordingly formulated (Smith, 2009). De Gobineau (1855) stated that there were only ten great civilizations in world history and all of them were derived from the Aryan race, and in doing so, place an emphasis on certain historical events while completely neglecting others (De Gobineau, 1855; Cassirer, 2009; Collins & Gobineau, 2010).

According to Smith (2009), it is typical for a state to formulate the grand narratives of national history and select its heroes and saints. This construction of history was meant to put an emphasis on chosen myths, traditions, suitable history, cultural trademarks and linguistics (Dixon, 2011). Therefore, historiography became an important aspect of the newly established nation state, either as an emphasizing or neglecting factor. The states focused on earlier times in order to depict an ancient 'golden age'. During this process an exemplary of a golden age was defined. In this defining process historiography plays an undoubted role, as it is the main factor used to select or neglect parts of the national history, in order to create a 'nation' in which people felt united and part of the same community.

The construction of the past is directed and maintained by the political elite of a country. By using political socialization, as well as popular socialization, the task of ensuring a common public, within one nation of a mass (homogeneous) culture can be done by government agencies (Smith, 1991; Almond & Pye, 1965). The best example of this is most notably the public system of education and the publication of history books that are used during this education (Dixon, 2011). These history books are to be seen as the official historiography of a nation, where regimes are under the influence of nationalist ideals of cultural authenticity and unity (Smith, 1991; Gellner, 1983). Through these books, the educational system is used to create a mass culture of homogeneous elements in which every citizen is regarded as part of the nation state (Gellner, 1983; Baycroft & Hewitson, 2006; Weber, 1976; Soboul, 1973; Mathiez, 1939).

A well-maintained and effective centralized educational system is the key instrument in forming common cultural traits upon a society (Gellner, 1983). The range will be much wider than art or novels, or in later times, even movies. Other notable examples are not nearly as efficient, as the educational system and the historiography used within it. Mass nationalist education started with the French Revolution in 1789 in which every peasant was regarded a 'national citizen' and, therefore, received the exact same education as the son of a notable (Weber, 1976; Smith, 1991). Prior to this, children of notables did not receive the same education as a peasant, but rather a far more intensive education. The peasant did not receive that kind of education, if any.

#### *Neglect and emphasis*

When one looks at different countries, we can see the aspect of neglect clearly in their educational system. For instance, after the Second World War the Allies deported some twelve million Germans from their homes in Eastern Europe (Clark, 2006). The Allies did this in order to provide Russia with the room to expand, since the Russians had aided the Western Allies against Nazi Germany. The same Germans had negotiated with their Italian and Russian allies during 1939-1941 a possible population exchange themselves. This