

Charles T. Riggs

The College Club, January 3, 1953

The story of the capture of Constantinople, or Byzantium, by the Turks has been told by many, including several contemporaneous writers, such as Chalcocondylas, Dukas, Phrantzes, Giorgio Dolfino, Nicolo Barbaro, and others; but no other contemporary except Kritovoulos, as far as I know, has written what pretends to be a Life of Mehmed the Conqueror, who was born in 1430. The work under consideration tonight does not go farther than the first seventeen years of his thirty years' reign, or from 1451 till 1468, whereas the Sultan lived on till 1481, and died at Gebze, on the Gulf of Izmid. This history by Kritovoulos is believed by such able scholars as the late Sir Edwin Pears and Professor Van Millingen to be more reliable than any of the others mentioned; so it is well worth our attention. As far as is known, the only manuscript of this book that exists, is the one in the Top Kapou Library on Seraglio Point. It was discovered there in 1865 by Dr. Philip A. Bethier, who transcribed the text and had it printed; but this text was suppressed. Dr. Karl Müller also transcribed and published the text; and it has since been translated and published in French, Hungarian, and Turkish, besides the original Greek text; and will shortly appear in English also.

Very little is known about Kritovoulos himself, in fact, practically nothing aside from what he himself tells us in this book, which seems to be his only writing. He was a native of the Island of Imbros, just outside the Dardanelles. He was a contemporary of Sultan Mehmed II, who, somewhat later than the time of the capture of the city, received him and still later made him Governor of his native island of Imbros. Kritovoulos states explicitly in this book his intention of writing the story of the rest of Mehmed's life, and also of writing a History of the Turkish people. No such works have ever been brought to light, which raises the suspicion that he may have died soon after completing this work, which is the only one known to have come from his hand.

It exhibits the usual characteristics of mediaeval or Byzantine Greek, but has also marked peculiarities of its own. The author is clearly an imitator of the ancient Greek historians of the fifth century B.C., Thucydides and Herodotus. He frequently uses the vocabulary of these men, bringing in words which by his date must have already become archaic. He also inserts long discourses, supposably by Mehmed II, but which Kritovoulos could not possibly have heard, nor could anyone have taken them down; he simply puts into the mouth of his hero what he imagines ought to have been said by him under such circumstances. Another peculiarity which betrays his pride in his Greek ancestry is his use of the old Greek names of cities, towns, countries, and other geographical features. The Albanians are the "Illyrians;" the Serbians are the "Triballi;" the Danube River is the "Ister;" and each section of Asia Minor is given its Byzantine name, regardless of the names used by the Turks even before his time. Further, his chronology follows the Byzantine system, which reckoned 5,508 years from the creation of the world to the time of Christ; so that he sets the first year of Mehmed's reign--1451--as 6,959, "counting from the beginning." He never uses the Christian era, as the Christians of his time usually did. He gives the dates of the various years of Mehmed's reign all in the 6,900's.

+Mr. Riggs uses the spelling "Kritovoulos" as he considers this a better transcription from the original Greek than "Critoboulos"; he also uses the spelling "Mehmed," for the Conqueror, which is the correct Turkish, rather than "Mahomet."

Another fact worth mentioning is his method of referring to the Turks. He never calls them by the name "Turks." Once in the early part of his first section, he calls them "Atoumani," whereas the modern Greek equivalent of "Ottomans" is "Othomanoi." A recent Greek writer (Lambros, Athens, 1932) states that a Greek work dated 1535 calls them "Otoutmanidas;" but where Kritovoulos got his "Atoumanoi" is not easy to understand. Elsewhere he nearly always calls them "Arabs and Persians." I imagine his reason for avoiding the word "Turks" may have been the same feeling that prevailed among the Turks themselves until the times of the Republic--namely, that from the days previous to the Conquest, they had preferred to be called "Osmanli," from the name of "Osman," or "Othman," the founder of the dynasty; while at least in comparatively modern times, the appellation of "Turk" was avoided as belittling the nation, for the epithet was even considered by them as an insult when hurled at each other, since it sounded to them like "uncivilized barbarian," or "boor." On the other hand, "Arabs and Persians" stands for the fact that the official and literary language used by the Ottomans until the reforms of Atatürk was crammed full of Arabic and Persian words and constructions--and the more so, the better. Kritovoulos also gives a Greek form to the Turkish proper names, calling the Conqueror "Mehemetis," and his father "Moratis" (Murad). On the other hand, he always and everywhere calls the Byzantine Greeks, "Romans"; for was not this the Eastern Roman Empire, and all its citizens Romans? And today the Turks call the Greeks, "Rum"; and the Greeks themselves, in ordinary conversation, use the term "Romyi" of themselves. Kritovoulos refers to the Pope of Rome as the High Priest of Rome, though he gives Gennadius the honorable title of Patriarch, placing him naturally above the Pope, although the term Pope was well known at that time.

The fact that a Greek should write a complimentary life of so fierce and powerful an enemy of the Greeks, has led the Greeks of today to belittle the work of Kritovoulos, since they deprecate his praising of the strong character of the man. But the work has stood the test of impartial scholarship, and is evidently a fair estimate of the personality and ability of Mehmed II.

The manuscript in the Seraglio Point Library has evidently been worked over by a later hand; for the headings of the various sections and paragraphs are clearly in another handwriting and different ink, and by one who is less experienced in the Greek language, and shows signs of Italian influence. It has been supposed that this person was a certain Kyriakos, of Ancona, Italy, a well-known traveler and a constant friend and companion of the Conqueror.

Coming now to the book itself: it is in five parts. The very fulsome "epistle," is dedicated to "the supreme Emperor, King of Kings, Mehemetis the fortunate, the victor, the winner of trophies, the triumphant, the invincible, Lord of land and sea, by the will of God..." and so on. Part I of the work gives the events of the first three years of Mehmed's reign, 1451-1454, including the preparations for the conquest of the city, the building of the European castle (under whose shadow I now live) and the capture of the city itself; also the surrender to the Sultan of the islands of Imbros, Thasos, and Lemnos, through the efforts of Kritovoulos, who wanted to save these islands from the fate of any attempt to resist the powerful fleet of Mehmed. The headquarters of that fleet were then, and throughout the reign of Mehmed, at Gallipoli, on the Dardanelles; and the capital of the Sultan, which from 1356 till 1366 had been at Brousa, was now at Adrianople; and the Sultan used that city for some years as his winter residence, even after the capture of Byzantium. Mehmed was in Manisa when he heard of the death of his father, Murad II, in February, 1451, when he was only twenty-one years old, and he hurried to Adrianople and was there proclaimed Sultan.

Part II tells of the efforts of the Sultan to repopulate and rebuild the city; the appointment of Gennadius as Patriarch of the Greeks, and the honors shown him; the expeditions against the Serbians, the Magyars, and the Dacians; and the capture of the town of Eos, at the mouth of the Hebrus or Maritsa River.

Part III contains the story of the first and second invasions of the Peloponnesus by the Sultan; the unsuccessful siege of Corinth; the submission of Athens; and the first expedition against the Illyrians, or Albanians.

Part IV tells of the expedition of the Sultan across Northern Anatolia, resulting in the capture of Sinope and of Trebizond, thus ending the Comnenian Empire of Trebizond, which had lasted more than 250 years; also the revolt of the Wallachian chief, Kazıklı Voda, also called Drakoulis, and his defeat; and of a new expedition against the Bosnians or Dalmatians.

The Fifth and last part recounts the expedition of the Sultan's favorite general, Mahmoud Pasha (after whom the wide street leading up to the Grand Bazaar is named, and whose mosque is on that street). Mehmed II put him in command of an army against the Venetians, who had come across the Adriatic and occupied a large part of the Peloponnesus, and had fortified the Isthmus of Corinth. Part V tells how Mahmoud defeated them and drove them back. Then Kritovoulos writes of the war with Matthias Corvinus, the Hungarian, son of Hunyadi Janos, Voivoda of Transylvania, ending with his defeat; of the completion of the Top Kapou palace on Seraglio Point; and also of a big attack against Iskender Bey, or Skanderbeg, Prince of the Albanians (whose real name was George Kastriotis),—brought to a standstill by a terrible outbreak of bubonic plague which compelled the Sultan to avoid this danger by going back to Byzantium.

I have by no means exhausted or even enumerated all of the contents of this interesting account; but to us here the most fascinating part of it is in the first section of the book, where the author tells about the building of Rumeli Hisar, or the European Castle, and the capture of Byzantium. Let me quote some of these descriptive passages. He writes:

"After most careful examination, he concluded that this was the most suitable place to build the castle. [I might add that while Kritovoulos does not mention the fact, this site was just opposite the older, Anatolian Castle, built by Beyazit the Thunderbolt, grandfather of the Conqueror; that was one of the main reasons for the site--because he wanted to close off the navigation from the Black Sea and prevent grain ships from reaching the city; and his cannon were not strong enough or accurate enough to sink a ship on the other shore of even this narrowest point of the Bosphorus.] He marked out with stakes the location where he wished to build, planning the position and size of the castle, the foundations, the distance between the main towers and the smaller turrets; also the bastions and breastworks and gates, and every other detail as he had carefully worked it out in his own mind. He then portioned it out in detail. [Dukas tells us that the building of the three main towers was assigned to his three great generals—Halil, Zaganos, and Saridja.] He himself was to oversee the portion of the castle along by the sea. He ordered his men to go at the work with the utmost speed, offering splendid prizes to those who accomplished their tasks best and most speedily. He began the work in the middle of the spring, with a large force of men, and at great expenses; and through the zeal and rivalry of all employed, he had walled the entire castle before the summer had passed."

It seems impossible to ascertain just how long the castle took to build; it was about four months, but whether five or not, is uncertain. The only inscription now to be seen on the walls is over the entrance to the tower opposite Kennedy Lodge, placed there at the time; and this states that it was finished in the month of Redjeb, year 856, or the month from the middle of July to the middle of August 1452. It also states that the whole work was under the supervision of the Grand Vizier, Zaganos Pasha; and we learn from other writers that Zaganos had the personal responsibility for the construction of this south tower, while the northern tower was built by Saridja, and the one by the sea by Halil Pasha, who was the first sadrazam, or Grand Vizier, of Mehmed II. Dukas states that the number of men employed was from a thousand to two thousand; while the Turkish writer Saadeddin, gives it as five thousand, which evident-

ly includes the soldier guard sent along to protect the workmen.

Kritovoulos continues: "It was the best fortification, the safest and most renowned of all the castles ever built; he made it with very large stones, carefully selected and fitted together. The joints were strengthened with much iron and lead and many other things; [I might add that so far as I know, no iron or lead has been found there; it may have been used in the foundations] and it was made secure by the great massive towers, safely constructed and raised to a great height, and by the smaller bastions, and by the height and thickness of the wall. The widest part of the wall was twelve cubits wide; its height was four times that; and in its size, the fortification was not like a castle, but rather like a small town. He made this castle triangular; the sides of the right angle went up to the summit; for the locality had a gradual slope; each like an outwork, with its tower projecting, and uniting the transverse sides and guarding them. The base along the shore was strengthened by other towers at each end of that side, smaller in size than the ones at the apexes, but by no means deficient in strength. He planned this in the first place so that he might control as much of the shore as possible by the stone-hurling cannons. The thicker parts of the wall were along the sea front, so that the cannon might stop the passage and sink the ships. In the second place, by means of the fortifications at the summit, he would keep the warriors of the enemy as far away as possible, lest they shoot at the guards on the battlements and wound them. [I might insert a parenthesis to say that so far as we know, this castle was never attacked by anyone from the time of its building.] He also prepared all sorts of weapons--javelins, bows, spears, also helmets and shields; and these, with the cannon and the large and small crossbows, armed all the larger and smaller towers. The largest of the cannon were down by the seashore, on the ground under the wall [i.e., in the arched openings under the outer wall at the seaside; which were not for bringing boats inside, but were holes for the cannon to fire from.] They were placed close together along the whole side, and pointed out toward the sea, in both directions, for they hurled immense stones that went along the surface of the sea as if swimming."

The account of the siege and capture of the city is too long and detailed to give in full; but some quotations will be interesting. After telling of the preparation of the fleet for action against the enemy's ships and for the siege of the city, Kritovoulos relates the arrival of the Italian nobleman, Giustiniani, with four hundred warriors in two large galleons. Giustiniani was a strong helper to the ill-fated Romans, for he was better trained in all military affairs than any of them. The Sultan then assigned various parts of the city attack to his various generals, chief of whom were Zaganos, Karadja, Halil, Ishak and Mahmoud, with Baltaoghlu in command of the fleet. Baltaoghlu, by the way, is the man for whom Balta liman, or Balta's harbor, was named. Our author then tells about the construction of the cannon. Many of these were cast at or near Arianople, but the larger number seem to have been cast near the Turkish camp outside the Stamboul walls. They would make a core, or center, out of clay mixed with many other ingredients; then an outer sheath or mould, and the molten bronze was poured in between and allowed to overflow the top, making the butt end of the cannon. You may see any day four of the cannon of that time, now on exhibition at Dolma Baghche, two on either side of the highway. Kritovoulos is at a loss to know what to call these new instruments; so he calls them "machines," giving as alternative terms, "taker of cities," "hurler," "implement," and other words equally vague. But his description of gunpowder is still more interesting. He calls this "botany," and says it had been invented by the Germans and Kelts about hundred-fifty years before. (The Greeks of some regions still call gunpowder, *χορτάρι*--grass, or fodder.) "It is," he says, "a combination of the very warmest and driest forms of nitre, sulphur, carbon and herbs, making a dry and warm gas (pneuma), which, being enclosed in the impervious, strong and compact body of the bronze, and not having any other exit of any sort, being impelled by the explosion from within, gives so powerful an impulse to the stone ball, as often to cause the bursting of the cannon as well."

The cannon did their part in the breaching of the wall. They were a great improvement on the cannon Sultan Mehmed's father had used in the siege of the city in 1422, when, as Professor Van Millingen tells us, seventy balls struck one tower without producing the slightest effect. But in this assault there were many contributing factors of interest. One of the biggest attacks on the wall failed, due largely to the ingenuity of Giustiniani, who placed a stockade of wood covered with hides, outside the wall chiefly attacked, which hides, being more impervious to the balls rendered them comparatively harmless. Another failure is recorded by Kritovoulos, when he relates how three large galleons filled with food and with troops to help the besieged were sent as a vanguard for thirty more, by the "High Priest of Rome." The thirty others never arrived at all; for they were so belated that when they reached the island of Chios, they learned of the fall of the city, and so went home. As these three ships were sighted, word was given to the Sultan, who ordered Baltaoghlu to put out with the entire Turkish fleet and "either capture the galleons and bring them to him, or else never to come back safe themselves." The Admiral immediately started out in great hopes of capturing them all. But in the first encounter it was clear that this was not an easy task. "It was a terrible struggle," writes Kritovoulos. "Some carried fire and tried to set the galleons ablaze from below; some hurled javeline and stones, while others with axes and daggers tried to break through their side walls; and others with long lances and darts, shot at the warriors from below; and still others climbed up, clinging to anchors and chains, and tried to board the ships. The men on the galleons were fully armed, and fought desperately against them from their higher position. [That seemed to be the trouble--the Italian ships were larger, with three or four decks, and with high masts and crow-nests, and their men could fire down on the smaller Turkish ships, with deadly effect.] First, they emptied great vessels of water, which they had hung over the sides, and thus put out the fires; then they dropped down from above heavy stones that they had tied with ropes, and killed many. After that, some of them hurled spears and javelins and pikes down on the attackers; others beat down with clubs and sticks, and broke the heads of the men below. There was great shouting and din on all sides. Yet, though the men in the galleons fought bravely, the Turkish fleet by sheer force of numbers was getting the better of them, had not a south wind, coming up strong, blown into the bellying sails, and powerfully swelled them out, driving the galleons along with great speed, so that in a short time they left behind the triremes, which could not keep up with the galleons. Thus the fighting died down, and they safely got away to the other galleons at the entrance of the harbor, and were safe. The Sultan, seated on his horse by the shore, watched events, and seemed to be encouraging his men; but when he saw the wind freshening, and the galleons gaining, he was greatly chagrined, and whipping up his horse he went off in silence. Baltaoghlu, the Admiral of the fleet, was hit in the eye by a stone; and this contributed both to the safety of the galleons and to the saving of Baltaoghlu himself from death by order of the Sultan. For the latter took very hard the escape of the galleons, accusing Baltaoghlu of cowardice and pusillanimity. So he relieved the Admiral of his command immediately, and put the fleet under Hamza, one of his companions whom he greatly trusted." [This Baltaoghlu was a renegade Bulgarian.]

The next move of the Sultan was a very surprising one. Being unable to break the chain or boom at the mouth of the Golden Horn, or force the Greek ships there to an open fight, he conceived the idea of getting some of his ships into the Horn another way. "He ordered his commanders to construct a wooden glideway up over the hills from the Bosphorus to the Golden Horn, beginning at a place called 'Diploukionion,' where the distance to be covered was reckoned at eight stadia." There has been great argument as to which path he followed--that from Dolma Baghche up to near the Taxim, and down to Kasim Pasha valley, or from Tophane up to the region of the Pera Palace Hotel or Galata Saray, and thus down to Kasim Pasha valley. I am inclined to think that Sir Edwin Pears and others are not so likely to be right as Dr. Van Millingen, Dr. Mordtmann and others; for the route via Dolma Baghche, which was then a deep bay and the headquarters of the Turkish fleet, seems the more probable. The

whole movement had to be kept absolutely secret from the Greek army; and Tophane would be distinctly more visible from the city than that deep bay. In either case, the plan was utterly unsuspected by the defenders; and the glideway was completed, and cradles made to hold the ships on the stays while they were being hauled over the land by long lines of men with heavy ropes, and with capstans.

"And," says the account, "their crews manned the ships on the stays as they were being hauled over, as if they were on the sea; some of them hoisted the sails with a shout; and the breeze caught the sails and bellied them out; others seated themselves on the benches, holding the oars in their hands and moving them as if rowing; while the commanders running along with whistlings and shoutings, whipped the oarsmen on the benches, bidding them row. As they reached the Golden Horn, they lowered the sails with great shouting. It was a strange spectacle, and quite unbelievable, except to those who had actually seen it--the sight of ships borne along over the main land as if sailing on the sea. A fleet of sixty-seven vessels was thus moored in the Horn. The Romans, when they saw such an unheard-of thing actually happen, were astounded and in the greatest consternation, perplexity, and despair. For they had left the walls unguarded for a distance of about thirty stadia, fearing no attack; and now they had to strip the other battlements so as to bring men there to guard against this new danger. But the defenders, being thus taken away from the rest of the wall, left only a single defender to two or three of the parapets or crenellations. Not only this, but the attackers built a new bridge across the upper part of the Horn. Further, the ships at the entrance of the Horn were now subject to attack from within as well as from without."

A general assault came May 7, but failed, with great loss to the Turks. The final battle, and the place where the Emperor Constantine XII fell fighting, cannot perhaps be definitely located; but it seems to have been quite near the Gate of San Romanus, and not far from the low bed of the Lycus River, near the modern Top Kapou. This was on May 28 and 29.

Kritovoulos goes on: "To withstand the fierce attacks of the Janissaries [a body organized in 1326] and the other troops, Giustiniani and his men, with the Romans in that section, fought bravely with lances, axes, pikes, javelins and other weapons, for it was a hand-to-hand encounter. There was much shouting on both sides, and mingled sounds of blasphemy, insults, threats of those who, in anger and wrath, did all sorts of terrible things. But the hapless Romans were destined at last to be brought under the yoke of servitude, and to suffer the horrors of it; for while they were battling bravely, and though they lacked nothing in bravery, willingness and daring in the contest, Giustiniani received a mortal wound in the chest from an arrow fired by a machine, that passed clear through his breastplate; and he fell where he was, and was carried to the rear, in hopeless condition. All who were with him were scattered, being demoralized by their loss; they abandoned the palisade and wall where they had been fighting, and thought only of the one thing--how they might carry him on to a galleon and getaway themselves safely. But the Emperor Constantine besought them earnestly to wait a little till the fighting should subside. They would not consent, but taking up their leader, with all their armor they boarded the galleons and made off with all speed, giving no consideration to the other defenders. The Emperor forbade the others to follow, and though he had no idea what to do next--for he had no reserves to fill the places of these deserters--still with his remaining Romans and his bodyguard, he stood at the wall and fought bravely. Sultan Mehmed, perceiving that the parts of the wall that had been deserted were empty of defenders, shouted out: 'Friends, we have the city! we have it! They are already fleeing from us! They can't stand it any longer! The wall is bare of defenders. Just a little more effort, and the city is taken! Don't weaken, but on with the work with all your might, and I am with you!'" The last Byzantine Emperor himself was killed, and his guard annihilated.

Kritovoulos relates another incident of the last day of the siege. It would seem that Orkhan, the uncle (or near relative) of the Sultan, who had fled to Constantine for protection against Murad (since it

was the habit of the reigning sultan in those days to kill his nearest male relatives in order to avoid plots against the throne), the previous Sultan some years before, out of gratitude to his benefactor, was fighting with the Greeks on the wall; but when he saw that the city was captured, he wanted to save himself. First he thought he would get away secretly, as if he were one of the Turkish army, because of his uniform and of his correct pronunciation. But as soon as he saw he was recognized and was being pursued, he threw himself over the wall and died. The soldiers rushed up, cut off his head, and bore it to the Sultan, who had wished to see him, dead or alive. Dukas, however, gives a somewhat different story, according to which Orkhan and the Grand Duke Lukas Notaras were together at the time; and when Orkhan threw himself from the wall, he was badly injured, and was killed by a naval officer, who also arrested the Grand Duke, and took the latter, with the head of Orkhan, to the Sultan.

The story of Kritovoulos goes on to say that the Sultan went on into the city, and first to the great church of the Holy Wisdom (Sancta Sophia), which was full of terrified inhabitants, and took all of them captive, selling some and sending others away. It is not true that there was any massacre inside the church; and the tale told by guides today that the Sultan rode his horse over the bodies of the slain inside the church is without foundation.

The numbers of troops engaged in the siege on the two sides have been very differently recorded by various authors; but by comparing these accounts, we come to the conclusion that the attacking Turkish army consisted of about 150,000 fighting men, including the Janizaries; while, inside the city, the defenders could not summon up more than a total of from 7,000 to 8,000 troops, some of these being Italians, mostly Genoese or Venetians from the suburbs; and these few men had to guard some thirteen or fourteen miles of wall as best they could. One cannot but admire the desperate courage with which the defending few warded off the attacks of so many for as long as they did.

Kritovoulos's estimate of the numbers of killed and captured at the taking of the city, seems to indicate if true, how weak the defense really was, at the end, for he asserts that, "there died of Romans and of foreigners, as was reported, in all the fighting and in the capture itself, all told, men, women and children, only four thousand; while a little more than fifty thousand were taken prisoners, including about five hundred from the whole army."

Our author then tells about how the Sultan arranged for the repopulating of the city, bringing in not only Turks, but large numbers of Greeks from the surrounding towns, and later from prisoners captured in Greece itself; also "many of the Hebrews". Later on, the author says: "He was, above all, solicitous to work for the repopling of the city, and to fill it with inhabitants as it had previously been; he gathered them there from all parts of Asia and Europe, but more especially of Christians. So profound was the passion that came into his soul for the city and its peopling, and for bringing it back to its former prosperity." And again, after his conquest of Corinth, Kritovoulos tells of the Sultan's bringing 3,000 of the prisoners from there to settle in the big city; as also from Phocæa, or the two Phocæas, in Ionia, and from the islands of Thasos and Samothrace. The Sultan also called back many inhabitants who had fled at the time of the capture, and had gone to Adrianople or Gallipoli or other places north and west of the city. Further, he built houses and gave gardens and grounds to those who would come and help in this repopulating. Our author tells, too, that Mehmed II had the parts of the land walls that had been destroyed, rebuilt--although we know that the part where the main breach was made seems never to have been restored. And he saw to the construction of the fortress of the Seven Towers, at the Marmora end of the land walls, "a strong fortress near the Golden Gates, where there had formerly been an imperial castle." In a recent volume entitled The Turkish Castles of the Bosphorus, Prof. Albert Gabriel, of the French Institute of Archaeology, has denied that there was such a former imperial castle. But this is strange in view of the fact, not only that

Kritovoulos states it explicitly, but also because the Emperor John V. Cantacuzenos, who died in 1383, states the same, saying that he repaired it and made it an almost impregnable acropolis, capable of being provisioned for three years, and strong enough to defy the whole city in time of strife. The Golden Gate had been the Imperial entrance to the city for centuries; and it would be natural to have it fortified by a castle, as it seems to have been at least hundred years before Mehmed II, when Cantacuzenos reigned.

Two instances of Mehmed's liberal attitude toward the Greeks, especially toward the more educated men among them, are given by Kritovoulos. One was immediately after the taking of the city, when he made provision for the continuance of the religious life of the Greek Community. We read:

"During that period, he called for Gennadius, a very wise and remarkable man [his real name was George Scholarios, a learned and patriotic scholar with a European reputation, who had taken the name Gennadius when he became a monk.] For he had already heard much through the common report about the wisdom and prudence and virtue of this man. So immediately after the conquest he sought for him, being anxious to see him, and to hear some of his wisdom. After a painstaking search, he found him at Adrianople, in a village, kept under guard in the house of one of the notables, but enjoying great honors; for his captor knew of his talents, even though he himself was a military man. When the Sultan saw him, and had in a short time had proofs of his fine qualities, and also of his power as a speaker, and of his religious character, he was greatly impressed with him, and held him in great honor and respect, and gave him the right to come to him at any time, with full liberty of conversation; and he enjoyed his various talks with him, and his replies, and loaded him with many suitable and costly gifts. In the end he made him Patriarch or High Priest of the Christians, and gave him many other rights and privileges, and the rule of the church and all its power and authority, no less than that previously enjoyed under the Emperors. He also granted him the privilege of delivering before him fearlessly and freely many fine lectures concerning the Christian faith and doctrine; and he himself went to the residence of this man, taking with him the dignitaries and wise men of his court. Furthermore the Sultan gave back the Church [of the Holy Apostles] to the Christians, together with a large part of its estates."

From Phrantzes and Ypsilantis we learn that the Sultan received Gennadius at his seraglio, and with his own hands presented him with a valuable pastoral cross of silver and gold, saying to him: "Be Patriarch, and be at peace. Count upon our friendship as long as you desire it, and you shall enjoy all the privileges of your predecessors." He also caused him to be mounted on a richly caparisoned horse, and conducted to the Church of the Holy Apostles.

Later on, we have the account of another man who became a friend of the Sultan: "Among the companions of the Sultan was a man named George Amiroukis, a great philosopher, both in physics and dogmatics and mathematics and geometry and the analogy of numbers; also in the philosophy of the Peripatetics and Stoics. He was also full of encyclopaedic knowledge, and was an orator and a poet as well. The Sultan learned about this man and sent for him and on getting well acquainted with his training and wisdom, through contact and conversation, he admired him more than anyone else, and gave him a suitable position in his court, and honored him with frequent audiences and conversations, questioning him on the teachings of the ancients, and on philosophical problems and their solution. For the Sultan studied all the writings of the Arabs and Persians, and whatever works of the Greeks had been translated into the language of the Arabs and Persians--I refer particularly to the writings of the Peripatetics and Stoics; so he made use of the most important philosophies of the various teachers."

Kritovoulos also speaks of the construction of the beginnings of the covered bazaars, and of baths, and of bringing in new sources of water by aqueducts; also of building inns, or halting places, both in and near the city. Also of course, the building of the great

palace, near the spot where the tall tower on the University grounds now stands; and of the Fatih Mosque. He did his utmost for the beautifying and enriching of the city, and tried to make it a worthy capital for his growing Empire.

Would that some one might discover a second volume by Kritovoulos carrying the story of the Conqueror on from 1468 till his death in 1481! There are in this city a large number of Turkish libraries, both in mosques and in private houses, and many of them open to the public. Dr. Dethier found the present work in the Top Kapou Library in 1865, but it had apparently lain there undiscovered for nearly four hundred years. Among you young people in this room tonight, there might easily be found another hunter after hidden treasure, who could unearth the companion volume--if perchance there be such--not in the same library, for that has been pretty carefully combed; but somewhere in this great city, or even in the Island of Imbros, and thus restore to the historically-inclined a further section of a most interesting biography.

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi

Arşiv ve Dokümantasyon Merkezi

Kişisel Arşivlerle İstanbul'da Bilim, Kültür ve Eğitim Tanıtı

Scott Ailesi Koleksiyonu



SCTIAC0302001