

## F.W. Hasluck and *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*

*Paschalis M. Kitromilides*

It is no exaggeration to suggest that for the history of scholarship on the post-Byzantine world, the death of Frederic W. Hasluck at the age of forty two in 1920 was a great tragedy. This is a haunting impression that strikes anyone who looks at the list of his writings and even more so at the record of his unfinished projects. The impression becomes stronger when one reads his work. It is not just the sheer volume of original material he collected and the breath-taking range of the subjects that attracted his interest over a period of just two decades. I think it is mostly the capacity of his writing to provoke reflection upon the experience of past societies, a stimulus to rethink and to reconceptualise. There is something different about his work, which presupposes what is best in European scholarship without ever becoming merely conventional. I have often wondered why that might be so and, in preparing for the Conference 'Scholars, Travels, Archives', I think I came up with an answer: what makes Hasluck's work different as historiography, especially a work like *Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*, is that it tries to capture and record images of pre-modern and especially pre-national society. It therefore runs against the current of conventional historiography, which thinks about the past in national terms, and follows an agenda which is primarily set by the aspiration to recover the national past of modern societies which have been connected to nation-states. Hasluck's work leads precisely in the opposite direction: it tries to rescue pre-national pluralism which is directly threatened by the agenda of nationalism and appears doomed to extinction on account of the policies of the nation-state.

*Christianity and Islam* precisely records and documents two facts of life of pre-modern society that are totally intolerable to nationalism. One is the pervasive cultural and social syncretism which defines life in pre-modern society. Hasluck chose to focus on the most symbolically evocative expression of syncretism in pre-modern society, its religious aspect, which has left



Fig.10.1: F.W. Hasluck; BSA Photographic Archive: SPHS-6266.

the most tangible traces in monuments of faith and in places of worship. Religious syncretism, however, does not operate in a social vacuum. It encapsulates much broader phenomena of symbiosis and social pluralism which make the historical ontology of pre-modern or traditional society very different from the homogeneous and culturally levelled society constructed by the modern state.



Fig.10.2: The Kilise Mosque, Church of St Theodor; Istanbul.

The second fact of life in pre-modern society that seems to emerge from Hasluck's account is the fluidity and plasticity of religious and ethnic identities, which seem at any given point along the trajectory of pre-modern society — that is in society before its attachment to the modern state — to be capable of a number of alternative forms of subsequent development. This is precisely what negates the historical teleology presupposed by nationalism, which understands forms of pre-modern ethnic consciousness as just preparatory stages in a foreordained course of development leading up to national plenitude. It is this teleological logic that is negated by the documentation of syncretism, and by the way it makes imaginable the potential of multiple alternative future collective destinies for particular population groups.

All these are conjectures and scenarios that arise from a reflective reading of Hasluck's work. This is what makes it so valuable and so challenging. There is one further thought I should like to record, however, in

order to complicate the picture a little further and especially in order to warn against a misleading impression that may emerge from the argument about pluralism and symbiosis in pre-modern society. This thought has to do with the role of violence and its impact not only in effacing traditional syncretism and pluralism but also in bringing it about. Conventional wisdom usually regards the role of violence as connected to the leveling of social pluralism, but things work the other way around as well: violence can initiate dislocations and relocations that result in the emergence of pluralism. Hasluck's work is replete with evidence for this second causal chain of social and cultural change.

After these broader considerations let me turn to the work itself and to the multiple possible readings to which it lends itself. As is well known, *Christianity and Islam* is a posthumous book. It was first published in 1929, nine years after the author's death, thanks to the loving care and dedication of his widow, Marga-



Fig. 10.3: *St James the Persian, Nicosia; Lacarrière 2003, 34–5.*

ret Hardie Hasluck.<sup>1</sup> It was composed of the notes and partial manuscripts of the author, originally intended for two different projects. The one was provisionally planned as ‘Transferences from Christianity to Islam and Vice Versa’, which eventually made up Part I of the published version, occupying most of volume I. This part focuses mostly on sanctuaries and places of worship and their transfer from one religion to the other or their use by both religions. It constitutes a most valuable record of the author’s field research primarily in Asia Minor and to a lesser extent elsewhere. The other project was entitled ‘Studies in Turkish Popular History and Religion’ and was published as Part II of volume I. This is primarily a study of heterodoxy in the Islamic society of Asia Minor, including the very important examination of the origins of Bektashism. This is pio-

neering work indeed and a very important specimen of religious history.<sup>2</sup>

Miscellaneous notes from each project which could not fit into the more or less unitary texts of Parts I and II were placed in Part III which makes up the second volume. This is indeed a Miscellany which records valuable primary evidence gathered on the author’s field trips. Its most important part is certainly the extensive sections on the expansion of Bektashism which transpose the focus of attention from Asia Minor to the Balkans.<sup>3</sup>

Margaret Hasluck states in her editorial note that the title of the work was coined by herself. I dare suggest that a slightly revised version of the title might capture and convey more precisely the spirit of the content and also the impact of the material recorded in Hasluck’s

1. Hasluck 1929, I–II. A new two-volume edition was published in Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2000.

2. See also Shankland 2004, 26–8.

3. Cf. the appraisal by Irène Mélikoff (2004, 297–307).



Fig.10.4: Holy Spring of the Dormition of the Virgin Vefa, Istanbul, 1 July 2006; author's photograph.

work: *Encounters between Christianity and Islam under the Sultans*. It should be clarified also that the chronological breadth of the material evidence — primarily archaeological — recorded in the work is such that the term Sultans should be taken as referring not only to those of the House of Osman but also to the Seljuk Sultans of Konya who preceded them.

A work so complex and so rich in its contents invites multiple readings. Its unfinished character and therefore open-endedness proves, not a weakness but a main strength, in that it functions as a temptation to the reader's imagination to explore further possibilities of research along the lines suggested by Hasluck. In this direction I could suggest from my own experience some instances of additional evidence for the phenomena of religious encounters described by Hasluck, thus adding more detail to the vast map of cultural syncretism he has drawn in his work. We can follow his lead on an imaginary journey in the Orthodox East, predictably setting off from Cyprus, crossing over the Cilician Sea to Asia Minor and ending up in Constantinople.

The evidence on Cyprus in Hasluck's work is rather sparse. To what he writes on the Church of St James the Persian<sup>4</sup> (FIG.10.5) in my native Nicosia and on Kirkklar Tekke<sup>5</sup> and on the cult of St Therapon in Larnaca a lot could be added,<sup>6</sup> including a visit to the sanctuary of St Sozomenos near the obviously converted village of Potamia.<sup>7</sup> Examples of common worship of Christian and Muslim Cypriots in the outlying regions of the island are multiple and can be gleaned from the interior of Paphos and from the Karpass peninsula, areas of endless fascination first explored by David Hogarth in the late nineteenth century.<sup>8</sup>

Let me just recall the example of the Cypriot church chanter Emmanuel Christodoulou Hadjiphilippou from Choulou village in Paphos, who at a moment of religious enthusiasm climbed up the minaret of the

4. St James the Persian in Nicosia is mentioned by Kyprianos 1788, 395 as a Capuchin sanctuary. It could perhaps be identified with the 'chapelle de Saint Jacques' belonging to sire Simon de Montolif, mentioned in a 1468 document of payments from the royal household of the kingdom of Cyprus. See Richard and Papadopoulos 1983, 111. As a Latin sanctuary it passed into the hands of the Turks after the Ottoman conquest of Nicosia in 1570 and that is probably why it had to be purchased from a janissary in 1627–28 by a French missionary, Pacifique de Provins. From then on and throughout the seventeenth century San Giacomo features frequently in the correspondence of the Latin clergy of Cyprus with the Vatican. See Tsirpanlis 1973, 66, 67, 116, 118, 166, 167, 172. Of special relevance is a report by the missionary Giuseppe Maria da Bourges, dated 12 August 1662, which records the veneration of an old wall painting of St James the Persian in the Capuchin church of Nicosia by Greeks and Turks alike, who came to the church every day to pray for relief from pain. See *ibid.*, 178. This then is the captive church of St James which today can be seen surrounded by ruins in the buffer zone in Nicosia. I am indebted to my friend Rita Severis for guiding my research on St James.

5. See Jefferey 1918, 183 but especially Gunnis 1936, 453, who expressly notes that 'the shrine is equally holy to Moslem and Christian'.

6. Jefferey 1918, 19 and esp. 364 noting 'St Arabo' in the village Ay. Therapon in the highlands of Limassol, recording also a holy spring and Gunnis 1936, 165–166, 425 on other shrines of St Therapon.

A fascinating account on the translation of the cult of St Therapon from Cyprus to Bulgaria is provided by Galia Valtchinova, 'Christian-Muslim religious symbiosis according to Hasluck, comparing two local cults of Saint Therapon', in Shankland 2004, II, 159–81.

7. Jefferey 1918, 206 and Gunnis 1936, 205.

8. Hogarth 1889. Hogarth is keenly aware of the ethnic pluralism of Cypriot society, but remains uninterested in forms of modern religious syncretism. Hasluck was quite aware of the significance of Hogarth's work. See Hasluck 1926, 57.

village mosque and chanted the Koran with the local Hodja's approval. My mother Magda Kitromilides, who records this incident from the early twentieth century, also states that Emmanuel was dissuaded from repeating this practice of partaking in the rituals of both religions because the village priest as a penalty for his action forbade him to chant in church for several days, thus depriving him of an important source of his livelihood.<sup>9</sup>

Let us cross over to Asia Minor. In this case readers of Hasluck have at their disposal an inexhaustible treasure on the basis of which to extrapolate, annotate and enrich his own account. This treasure is the oral history archive of the Centre for Asia Minor Studies in Athens. If one looks at the contents of Hasluck's first volume, especially its Part I, one gets a strong impression of the affinities between his own survey of religious syncretism in Asia Minor and the groundwork upon which the research of the Centre developed later on. Although his work does not seem to have influenced the Centre's intellectual universe—in contrast for instance to the work of R.M. Dawkins—the Centre's projects touched on many subjects he first brought into focus in Asia Minor research. I remember Aglaia Ayioutanti, Madame Merlier's closest associate, referring to him with admiration and respect.

The Centre's archive is replete with testimonies adding detail and depth to the phenomena of religious syncretism recorded by Hasluck, enriching especially knowledge of such phenomena for the region of Cappadocia.<sup>10</sup> Besides St George, two other Christian saints whose cult attracted faithful from both religions throughout Asia Minor were St Charalambos, protector against the plague, and St Mamas, protector of shepherds and their herds and animals. Extensive evidence of religious syncretism and shared places of worship is also recorded for the region of Pontos along the Northern coast of Asia Minor and into the highlands of the Pontic Alps, with its epicentre in the



Fig.10.5: *Holy Spring of the Dormition of the Virgin Vefa, Istanbul, 1 July 2006; author's photograph.*

great shrine of the Dormition of the Virgin at Sumela Monastery.<sup>11</sup>

Our final stopover will be in contemporary Constantinople, not the imperial Istanbul of the Sultans but the megapolis under the Turkish Republic in the opening decade of the twenty first century (see PLATE V). One very important part of Istanbul's Christian heritage are its innumerable holy springs, *αγιάσματα* ('ayazma' in modern Turkish), still tenderly cared for by the Orthodox communities in the broader Istanbul region on both sides of the Bosphorus. Some of them have been common places of worship of Christian and Muslim faithful throughout the centuries. Hasluck unfortunately did not record the holy spring of St Therapon in the walls of Top Kapi, still in Orthodox hands but

9. Kitromilidou 2001, 20.

10. Some of the testimonies, focusing on common worship of Christian Saints, have appeared in publications of the Centre over the years. See for instance Marava Hadjinicolaou 1995, 37–44, 46–7, 53–5, 60–1; Loukopoulos and Petropoulos 1949, 30–2, 61, 96 and Petropoulos and Andreadis 1971, 68, 76, 88, 92–4.

11. An authoritative source is Bryer 2002, III, 277.



Fig.10.6: Foundation inscription, St Therapon holy spring, Istanbul; author's photograph.

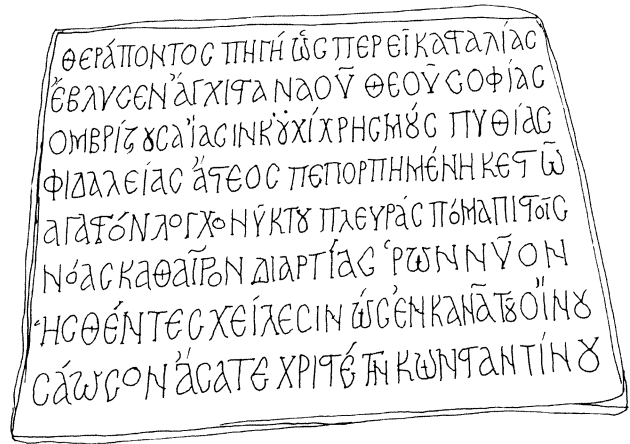


Fig.10.7: Transcript of foundation inscription of St Therapon holy spring, Istanbul.

often visited by Muslims.<sup>12</sup> (FIG.10.6) The same is true of the αγιάσματα of St Dimitrios at Kurucesme on the Bosphorus<sup>13</sup> and of St Catherine at Modi on the Asiatic side<sup>14</sup>. The most famous and popular, however, is the holy spring of the Dormition of the Virgin at Vefa in the heart of Istanbul.<sup>15</sup> (FIG.10.3) On the first of each month when the priests come to bless the holy water, throngs of Muslim Istanbul crowd into the grounds of the sanctuary and into the underground chapel to receive the blessing of the holy water and to pray. A visual record of July 1, 2006 (FIGS.10.4, 10.5) illustrates a phenomenon which would have greatly fascinated Hasluck. It would have been very interesting from an anthropological point of view to study these worshipers and to try to trace their geographical origins and religious backgrounds. Such an investigation could perhaps supply evidence of the survival of forms

of religious life first recorded by Hasluck in Ottoman Anatolia and still lingering in Istanbul as Turkey stumbles on the way to the European Union.

#### REFERENCES

12. Atzemoglou 1990, 17–9. For details see Anonymous 1936. On the wall facing the entrance the holy spring of Hagios Therapon preserves an ancient inscription, stressing its location close to the great church of Hagia Sophia. The inscription is rather poorly published by Atzemoglou (1990, 17). It is republished here (Fig.10.6) and transcribed (Fig.10.7). I am grateful to my colleague at the National Research Foundation Ioannis Meimaris for his help.
13. See Gedeon 1904, 271 and Atzemoglou 1990, 104–5.
14. Papas 2001, 375–84, esp. p.380 noting that among the pilgrims who visit the holy spring frequently 'there are many Turks, Armenians, Syrians and others'.
15. Vapheiadis 1918. See also Atzemoglou 1990, 21–3.

- Anonymous, 1936. *Αναμνηστικόν λεύκωμα επί τη πανηγύρει του αρχαίου Βυζαντινού ιεροῦ αγιάσματος του Αγίου ιερομάρτυρος Θεράποντος*. Constantinople.
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