



Dr. Andrew J. A. Mango (1926-2014) - In Memoriam

One of Turkey's greatest friends and Atatürk biographer, the polyglot Andrew Mango died at the age of 88 on 6 July 2014. He has proved that it was still possible to be a scholar -in his case of Turkish studies- and a gentleman.

Andrew Mango's grandfather was "Capetan" Andoni Mango. The nickname suggests he was a sailor - not an unusual occupation in Chios. Nothing is known of his ancestors. Nor is it known when they came to Chios. Mango (supposedly meaning little merchant) is not an unusual name in Italy. A village in Piedmont also bears this name. The reason why the family assumed that they were of Genoese origin was that Chios was a Genoese possession from 1261 to 1415.

Andrew's great-grandfather, Dimitri, left Chios at the time of the Greek uprising (1821) and sought refuge on the island of Syra in the Cyclades, where he was registered as a Greek subject after Greek independence in 1830. He moved to Istanbul in the early 1840's, as the Ottoman empire began to prosper under the *Tanzimat* reforms. He was part of a considerable migration from the islands to Ottoman Turkey. He became a printer to the Catholic church, married a Catholic, a Carolina Calavassi, from the island of Syra in the Dominican church of St. Pierre and St. Paul near Galata tower. The church, where his grandfather had also been christened, served a congregation of Catholics from the islands and, particularly, from Malta, who were employed in the harbour.

His grandfather, Anthony, made a fortune in the 1880s-90s establishing coaling stations from Hamburg to the Black Sea, and then formed the Foscolo Mango Steamship Co., his partner Foscolo coming from a Venetian family on the island of Corfu. The company was probably formed in the last decade of the 19th century, as the grandfather died sometime during the 1904-6 period. The coaling stations enterprise was a huge venture, done on his own stretching from Hamburg, right through to Odessa with stations around the Mediterranean, such as Pireaus, Istanbul and Novorosisk.

Andrew's grandfather married a Greek with the name of Evangeline Margaritis. Her family had come from Epirus, and was probably of Albanian or Vlach origin. She came from a lower middle-class family, compared with his grandfather's family. They had five children, Anthony died in Karlsbad in 1906, quite young in his 50s, hopelessly trying to cope with his diabetes, in the days when insulin was still unknown. Through the coal and latter shipping business, he became very rich. He lived mainly in Istanbul, near Galatasaray district, Beyoğlu, which at the time had large mansions. Family fortunes crashed with the depression, as the shipping business accounted for the family's biggest business outlay. Idle ships soon became a major liability.

As the coal came from South Wales and the Durham coalfields in England, Mango's grandfather set up an office in London and sent his eldest son, John, to manage it. Uncle John married Marie Karatodori, the daughter of Karatodori Pasha, who was the Ottoman foreign minister at the congress in Berlin 1878 and then the Ottoman ambassador in St. Petersburg. Karatodori Pasha was simultaneously the vassal Prince of Samos, because after the Greek revolution, the Great Powers did not want to give it to Greece or return it to the Ottoman Empire because of the Greek community, so it became a self-governing mini-principality. He might have visited the island though he never lived there.

Andrew's father, Alexander, was sent in around 1900 to England to study first at the Lees School, a Methodist public school. Yet grandfather was born in Catholic, but when he married his wife became a Greek Orthodox, but was also a prominent Freemason, and Catholics weren't allowed in that institution, yet masonic connection worked really for business in England. He then studied law at Cambridge and then read for the bar. He became a naturalised British subject in 1902. He returned to Istanbul to practise at the British Consular Court and work nominally as a director of Foscolo Mango. The British Consular Court tried civil law cases involving British subjects and other foreign nationals. However, under the Allied occupation (1918-1922) it dealt also with police cases. During the Allied occupation, the family firm joined other shipping agents in what was in effect a cartel called Marine Manutention. However, following this period Istanbul was in steep decline as trade with Russia had been cut off, and the new nationalistic regime in Turkey was steadily restricting traditional business activities. Foscolo Mango went bankrupt in the great depression of 1929.

Andrew Mango was born in 1926 in a house in Beyoğlu, near the British Consulate and went to the English High School for boys. Some of the boys were sons of German Jewish refugee academics teaching in Turkey - Frank, Neumark, Schacht to name a few. There was also a strong -and rough- contingent of Maltese boys whose fathers were tradesmen in the harbour. He matriculated in 1942 aged

16 and worked for a couple of years in the Balkan Press Reading Bureau at the British Consulate in Istanbul, translating from newspapers published in Bulgarian and Croatian under the German occupation. His mother Ada was a White Russian refugee and thanks to her, Andrew found it easy to learn other Slav languages.

Ada had lost both parents in the turmoil following the Bolshevik revolution and the civil war in Russia, and escaped alone by train and on foot, like many others to land destitute in the streets of Istanbul. Her maiden name was Damonov. She came from a middle-class family. The couple communicated in French, as Mango's father's French was excellent and in those days the Russian bourgeoisie also spoke French. Ada came from Baku where her father was an oil engineer in the original Nobel concession - the first oilfield exploited in Baku, and was virtually the world's first large scale exploitation. Ada's parents died fairly young, but of natural causes, during the period of the Russian revolutionary turmoil. Her father came from governate of Tambov which is in South-Central Russia, the so-called black earth belt, where her father was a grain merchant. Russia was a major exporter of wheat in those days and much of the wheat passed through Istanbul. Unlike many British subjects, the Mangos did not move to the relative safety of İskenderun, as the German armies neared the Turkish borders during the World War II. The war years were a period of stress to all minority communities in Turkey which were targeted for an extortionate 'wealth tax', whose epicentre was amongst the merchants of Beyoğlu. The Levantines seem to have been spared the extremes of the abuse by the tax assessors and collectors.

Andrew Mango was clearly a linguist as he knew French, Latin and Greek. His Latin, however, was rudimentary as it was taught at the English High School on a voluntary basis. He left Istanbul in 1944, going first to Ankara where he worked as a translator (English to French - French was spoken at home) at the British Embassy press office. His main job was to feed British-source news to the Anatolian Agency, which had a monopoly of news distribution and accepted news from foreign embassies in French only - hence his job as English to French translator. He accepted a job offer from the BBC while in Ankara as he was looking for a job that would allow him to enroll in a university in Britain. He went to England early in 1947 to work for the BBC external broadcasts, and, at the same time, study at the School of Oriental Studies, London University, where he read classical (medieval) Persian and Arabic.

He became assistant head of the BBC Turkish Section in 1957, head three or four years earlier, and was in charge of Turkish language broadcasts for fourteen years until 1975 before being promoted head of all the South European and then also of the French language services. He had to learn a fair amount of Italian and

Spanish as head of the BBC South European Service. He retired from the BBC in 1986.

It was in retirement that Andrew came to his own as a major intellectual figure. He was a very productive writer and commentator, producing a stream of excellent and highly original works. He published numerous articles and four books on Turkey. The best known of these, of course, was his masterful biography of Atatürk. He spent five years working on the subject, using Turkish printed sources. The book which came out in 1999 took a cooler, deeper, but still highly respectful view of the founder of the Turkish Republic. It has been claimed that his biography constitutes the definitive account among many other works and reveals the long suppressed darker aspects of its subject, showing us a far more complex personality than we had seen before. Mango did distill what took place in Atatürk's life up to the founding of the Turkish Republic in 1923. The book is a balanced and exhaustively researched account of the influential life of one of the most complex and controversial figures in 20th-century world history.

Andrew Mango was a highly social person, full of jokes. He was loved by a very wide range of friends in Turkey and in England. He travelled to Turkey many times giving speeches as a guest of honour in many universities. Until his final illness, Andrew was a regular visitor to Turkey, where he was feted as an author who understood the complexities of the country and its culture. He was awarded several honorary doctorates by Turkish universities, as well as the Turkish Distinguished Service Medal. He made frequent appearances on Turkish television. Turkish statesmen and senior government figures greeted him as an old friend, listening carefully to his ideas.

Andrew Mango was a remarkable man, one of Turkey's greatest friends, and a wonderful and endlessly instructive and entertaining friend. At the passing of such a unique figure, our grief must be mixed with gratitude and admiration for all that he has accomplished. We are sure that future generations of Turks will also remember him with respect and deep appreciation.

He married in 1956 the journalist Mary Muir. She survives him, as do their children, Daphne and Benedict, four granddaughters and two brothers.

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