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**BOOK REVIEW**

*Kiriakos CAMBAZIS, Divulgence of a Myth*

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# Divulgence of a Myth (Bir Mitin İfşası)

Kiriakos CAMBAZIS

(Translation from Greek to Turkish : Hasan Özgür Tuna),  
Nicosia, Işık Kitabevi, 2013, 120 p.

**Hazırlayan:** Mehmet HASGÜLER\*

*Işık Kitabevi-Galeri Kültür* is a popular (and quite unique) Cypriot publisher, regarded in recent years as the Northern Nicosia bookstore of choice for important Greek to Turkish translations. The publisher's most recent contribution is a translation of "Divulgence of a Myth" by Kiriakos Cambazis, who penned a special preface specifically for the Turkish edition. This translation by Hasan Özgür Tuna represents the third of Cambazis' works to be published by the celebrated *Galeri Kültür*.

Before commenting further on the content of this interesting work, a few words on translated books in Cyprus are in order. Although the opening of Cypriot borders on 23 April 2003 precipitated an increase in available translations, this process began prior to that date. As of January 2014, the number of books transported from Southern Nicosia to Northern Nicosia (and translated from Greek to Turkish) has exceeded 20. Although the South has a demographic advantage (the population of this region exceeding that of the North by three times), the publishers of Southern Nicosia have yet to translate any book published in the North. By contrast, the Turkish Cypriot community, despite its smaller population, publishes translated works annually. For example, though one might find Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's magnum opus *Strategic Depth* in various Greek Cypriot book stores, the Greek translation of this work was completed in Greece and not in Cyprus.

The translation of literary works is crucial to fostering understanding and productive interaction between the two communities. It is therefore necessary to examine the reasons driving unilateral publishing policies in Southern Nicosia. Assumptions to consider include the idea that both publishing company proprietors and their editors presume a lack of interest among Greek readers for works by Turkish authors. Perhaps the publishers of Southern Nicosia have succumbed to "neighbourhood pressure"; alternately, perceptions of the South as a superior or more sophisticated community may serve to diminish the value of Northern literature in the eyes of the public. Finally, the political status of "occupied" Northern Nicosia may wrongly lead readers to believe that ideas coming from this region are unreliable.

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Cambazis impresses upon us, beyond official announcements or state propaganda, the importance of seeking out the opinion of “the other side” on matters related to Cypriot politics. Cambazis completed his education in international law in Kiev and later obtained his doctorate from the Soviet Union Communist Party Social Sciences Institute. Turkish editions of *Divulgence of a Myth* include a preface, introduction, and four separate chapters. There is also an appendix comprising historical photographs from the period 1963-1964, the moment during which inter-communal strife began in Cyprus. While explaining tent usage among Turkish immigrants in Northern Nicosia, Cambazis commented on cultural double standards and the discriminatory policies the Republic of Cyprus meted out to its own citizens. In 1963-1964, Turks who succumbed to these political pressures left their homes out of fear and were accepted as “emigrants,” yet the state claimed that they fled of their volition. By adopting this perspective, the government refused to assist Turkish emigrants with state funding. However, Greek Cypriots, who were forced to leave their homes during this period, were accepted as “victims of Turks,” and state funding was widely made available to them. Cambazis’ comparison between Turkish and Greek Cypriot emigrants emphasises segregation—how the government of Cyprus acted as the servant of one community rather than being an equal care-provider for all of its citizens.

In his Introduction, Cambazis develops an intellectual argument detailing the Cypriot conflict within terminological levels by taking historical, cultural, religious and geopolitical factors into consideration. Although it is now widely accepted that responsibility for the Cyprus debacle can be attributed to external powers, Cambazis affirms that the conflict also has deep internal roots (subsequently discussed in turn, p. 9).

The first chapter scrutinises the “Meaning of the term Cypriot People: Reunion and Breakaway”. In this chapter, Cambazis discusses popular comprehension of the term “Cypriot People,” focusing primarily on the construction of the term’s meaning with its almost exclusive Greek emphasis. The exclusion of Turkish Cypriots from the Republic of Cyprus was, for Greek Cypriot political elites, a natural solution as the state was of the opinion that the term *Cypriot People* represented by Greek Cypriots alone (p. 20).

In fact, it is important to note that the first action of Greek Cypriot political elites at the time was to close down the Communal Assembly and found in its stead the Army of the Greek National Guard following the abandonment of Republican institutions by Turkish Cypriots. For many years, official justification for this action was cited under the Obligation Doctrine (Law). Cambazis, however, denounces this perspective (p. 20), arguing that the Obligation Doctrine was part of a nationalist policy preference prevalent among the Greek Cypriot ruling class.

Using the nationalist conception of “Cypriot People” to commandeer the right of self-determination, local Greek historians approach the roots of the Turkish Cypriot community with suspicion, claiming that Turkish Cypriots are simply *Turkified* Helens. Cambazis tells us, however, that the Greek Cypriot leadership is “expansionist.” This policy was encouraged not only by the leadership of the Church of Cyprus throughout the

1950s, but also by the only organised political power of that period—the leadership of communist AKEL (Progressive Party of Working People). Archbishop Makarios famously sent a letter to the UN Secretary General just after the infamous Church-sponsored Plebiscite of 1950, writing “Being the Archbishop of Cyprus and the national leader of the *Cypriot People*, I request from you...” Cambazis argues that from the onset, the content of this letter reveals a clear expansionist mind-set excluding Turkish Cypriots from the very definition of “Cypriot People” (p. 23). In fact, the mandate of the Church of Cyprus extended only to the Greek Cypriot Community; thus, the head of the Church could not claim to be the “national leader” of all Cypriots. Similarly, the program of AKEL, which was published in 1953 argues that “Cypriot People” are an indivisible constituent of the “Helen People” (p. 26). The communist party was thus approaching a construction of national identity in which “the Cypriot people” was synonymous with “the Greek Cypriot people”. In July 1981, the management of AKEL adopted an official platform of international solidarity with the democratic actors in Turkey despite its internal policy of considering its own Turkish community as foreigners (p. 32). AKEL, a party that counted amongst its own ranks a number of Turkish Cypriot members, was thus thrown into the familiar nationalist conflict between “us” and “them”.

In his second chapter, Cambazis discusses the subject of “self-determination”. In particular, he elaborates on those factors driving the crisis of self-determination evident in Cyprus. Cambazis underlines the two basic peculiarities of the Greek Cypriot anti-colonial struggle; although this movement has a liberalising and therefore progressive platform, he argues, it also has strong nationalist undertones, as the movement regularly avoids the potential benefits of the Turkish Cypriot community (p. 48). In fact, the sole purpose of the Greek Cypriot struggle was ultimately the annexation of the Island of Cyprus to Greece (*Enosis*).

The title of the third chapter is “Political Problems Encountered during the Development of the Constitution.” Greek Cypriot political elites perceived the Zurich and London Treaties of 16 August 1960 (and the extension of these treaties in the later Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus) as a step leading to annexation to Greece through *Enosis* (p. 66). Until that time, the main enemy of the Greek nation was the colonial policies of the United Kingdom. In the 1960s, however, the enemy shifted dramatically, becoming instead the rights and privileges granted to Turkish Cypriots by the Constitution. Cambazis quotes President Makarios, who infamously stated: “until the devastation of the small Turkish Community, which is a part of the Turkish race, the most terrible enemy of Hellenism, our duties for the heroes of EOKA would not be considered as completed” (p. 67). The most important implication of this statement is that it was, in essence, a declaration of war against 18 percent of the population by the Cypriot President, a leader who had taken an oath in front of the Assembly of Representatives of the State affirming his commitment to the constitution. In other words, Makarios, upon taking office as President of the Greek Cypriot Community, did not hesitate to call into question the legitimacy of the Turkish Cypriot Community in the face of *Enosis* and the Greek community at large. Following the intercommunal clashes that began in December 1963,

Makarios put the economic and military embargo into force illicitly, thereby violating the constitution in order to weaken Turkish Cypriot resistance. With this application of force (instigated as an internal directive given the Ministry of the Interior), Makarios hoped to prohibit Greek Cypriots from selling properties to Turkish Cypriots, although in reality this action backfired. After six years, this directive was written into law (49/1970) in 1970. Official justification for the use of force cited the Obligation Law and threats to internal security—an official policy that was even more interesting (p. 72). Despite the official line, it was the decision of the government and the parliament to offer indemnity to Greek Cypriots, the “sufferers of Turks”, though there was no indemnity or remedies paid to Turkish Cypriots, the “sufferers of Greeks”. The AKEL government did not even remain silent on this issue, announcing an affirmative vote for Law no. 49/1970 (p. 73). Such political actions were not the only discriminative and at times contradictory approaches of AKEL. Following the intercommunal clashes of December 1963, a decision was made by the 10th General Assembly of AKEL to make a bid for complete independence. By 1966, however, the 11th General Assembly realised that further efforts were necessary prior to the annexation with Greece (*Enosis*) and the ultimate dissolution of the State of Cyprus (p. 85). It was also strange that AKEL had so little foresight in regard to the Colonels’ Junta, which would come to power the following year. All of these discussions led to the coup d’état staged by the Greek Junta on 15 July 1974, dividing Cyprus into two parts and annihilating the *Enosis* project which had been readily supported by AKEL. Both Makarios and the management of AKEL regained perspective after this development.

In the fourth chapter, “About Annan Plan and Partnership Federation”, Cambazis turns to the attitudes of Greek Cypriot political actors toward the document submitted for referendum on 24 April 2004. In this chapter, Cambazis argues that the basic philosophy of partnership is solidarity. As then-President Tassos Papadopoulos tearfully announced in 2004, “I received an internationally recognized state. I will not give back a voiceless community which seeks for a custodian” (p. 95). Papadopoulos thus identified the Republic of Cyprus as one dominated for years by the Greek Cypriot community. With the negative stance of the Church towards the Annan Plan, the long-standing *Enosis* project was finally recalled (p. 99). AKEL’s lack of opposition to the Church campaign was ultimately a serious mistake. The Cypriot policies of the current DIKO leadership cannot be considered a departure from the approach of President Papadopoulos. According to Cambazis, Papadopoulos was bound to the “Community-State” policy. EDEK, itself a member of Socialist International, returned to its former policy under the leadership of honorary chairman Lissarides during this period (p. 103). Despite European socialist party incentives, the EDEK failed to demonstrate flexibility in Annan Plan negotiations. AKEL rejected the Annan Plan in its congress. Mr Christofias, Secretary General of AKEL, announced that the decision to reject the Annan Plan was made due to the failure of the UN Security Council to provide sufficient application guarantees. AKEL leadership was therefore sanctioning the rejection of the Annan Plan, intending that the “Community-State” thesis of then-President Papadopoulos would be instated, thereby creating a platform for Turkish Cypriots.

Ultimately, Cambazis exposes (with detailed examples) the reasons why a solution to the Cyprus problem was impossible. Cambazis attributes this problem—which originated as an internal disagreement and later burgeoned into a full-fledged conflict—to contemporary Greek political culture and perception. The book is most successful in its objective approach to historical events and its analysis of the conflict as a product of internal Cypriot politics. From Cambazis' perspective, one of the major factors creating deadlock within the Cyprus problem is the existence of a harmonious alliance among Greek Cypriot political parties on the issue of a "Community-State" for the Republic of Cyprus. It is obvious, however, that the sustaining "Community-State" structure is the greatest hindrance in the face of a Federation in Cyprus. In fact, the main reason for the stoppage of today's negotiations is the monistic sovereignty insight of "Community-State" power. It would not be incorrect to claim that the "Sovereignty of Community" is hindering a "Sovereignty of Partnership" in a probable federation; thus, there is no intention to abandon such insight.