

6<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Turkish Culture  
The effects and contributions of the Turkish culture to world cultures  
21-26 November 2005, Ankara, Turkey

***The importance of the translation of Nutuk, written by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, into Greek.***

«Η σημασία της μετάφρασης του έργου του Μουσταφά Κεμάλ Ατατούρκ *NUTUK* στην ελληνική γλώσσα». Ανακοίνωση στο 6<sup>ο</sup> Παγκόσμιο Συνέδριο Τουρκικού Πολιτισμού υπό την αιγίδα του Ανωτάτου Ιδρύματος Πολιτισμού, Γλώσσας και Ιστορίας Ατατούρκ, που διοργάνωσε το Ίδρυμα Πολιτιστικού Κέντρου Ατατούρκ στην Άγκυρα, με θέμα «Ο Τουρκικός πολιτισμός, συμβολή και επιδράσεις του στους πολιτισμούς όλου του κόσμου». (Άγκυρα, 21-26 Νοεμβρίου 2005).

Η ανακοίνωση δημοσιεύτηκε στα Πρακτικά του Συνεδρίου.

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First of all at this moment, which I consider to be one of joy and pride in my life, I would like to thank all those who gave me the opportunity to speak from this platform and above all, the chairperson (chairman) of this Conference, Professor (Dr) Taciser Onuk.

Honourable ladies and gentlemen,

Despite the fact that Greeks and Turks have lived in the same part (corner) of the world for hundreds of years, the two peoples have never been able to get to know each other well. Perhaps they were never afforded the chance to know each other in actuality and depth.

As a result of prejudice, each side always dealt with the other with (mutual) suspicion (doubt). There have certainly been pockets of time during which they have co-existed in harmony in harmony and friendship. However, due to conditions born of external factors and de facto conditions, the two nations have more often than not ended up accusing each other, creating tensions and living in a hostile environment. On occasion there have been extremely difficult conditions in Greek-Turkish relations. Knowledge (facts) based on bias was (were) provided by both sides in much the same manner through the media and the relevant literature. A person growing up with such ideas and received data can hardly comprehend reality or desire to acquire actual knowledge. Due to this, we must be the ones to provide the facts which will reveal the truth with great care, maturity and objectivity, and in a wholly scientific manner.

In order to effect this, we had to carve out a new direction in the policies of both countries.

When Greece decided to make a bold and courageous move in its foreign policy, there were many who expressed reservations (caution/ doubt) as to whether such a case would move forward, that the interests of the two countries are entirely opposing, that the changes which had to occur in the diplomatic and military fields would be very hard indeed to bring about.

Nevertheless, for the last fifteen years Greece has launched this new era and has been progressing along the same route (path) steadily and decisively; never before has Greece expressed such a strong will (desire) as to the issue of Turkey's development and the steering of the country along a new course. This attitude represents an historic landmark in bilateral relations.

Subsequently, the Greek people expressed the desire to get to know the “unknown Turk” away from prejudices, without taking into account (consideration) the views (judgement) of others, by “seeing” with their own eyes and assessing the situation objectively, unaffected by external factors for the first time; rather like being under the influence of a new wave of friendship and camaraderie brought about by the passage of time.

The first positive impression came through tourism.

Naturally, the interaction between the two countries does not solely hinge upon superficial relations of tourism. As a matter of fact, such essential (serious) changes in terms of handling the situation, as well as in terms of politics, can only be achieved through final (definite) decisions which will be made by both sides, through continuous effort and with the collaboration of the relevant authorities of both countries; above all, however, this can be achieved by raising and educating our children to move away from bias and direct themselves towards neutrality. Only if we base our efforts on mutual sincerity, integrity and desire for cooperation between the two peoples can we reach the desired result.

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

One of Atatürk's greatest desires was for Turkey to take its place among the civilised – according to him – Western nations. This he laid out thoroughly in *Nutuk*. The words “civilisation” and “civilised nation” were his favourites.

Atatürk, commenting on the abolition of the fez, writes, “Gentlemen, we can no longer avoid discarding the fez from the head of our nation, which functions as a symbol of ignorance and hostility towards anything new and civilised, and replace it with the hat used by the entire civilised world. Thus, we can demonstrate that in terms of neutrality our people in no way differ from civilised societies.” Further on, he states, “It is evident that we may benefit from one fundamental and unique prospect (view): to elevate the Turkish nation to its deserved position in the civilised world.”

During the days of Turkey's EU membership process, we have entered the final stage of the realisation of Atatürk's dream (desire). The Greek governments support Turkey honestly, steadfastly and constantly in every required attempt to join the EU the soonest possible.

Of course, besides the onus carried by both Foreign Ministries, in an effort to familiarise oneself with the other (opposing/ opposite) side, there is a very important part to be played by schools and universities. Particularly the latter is because at this high academic level there is knowledge, education and experience. In our view, the battle of the two nations getting to know each other will be fought (and won?) at this level.

In our days, in all Greek universities there are departments of Turkish Studies. There is great interest in learning the Turkish language. Universities aim at researching data through scientifically objective methodologies and by assimilating evidence of events based on actual facts and truths. These departments became operational to provide the younger generations with the opportunity to study, investigate and comment on events in a new light. The largest such department to have been established, the Department of Turkish and Contemporary Asian Studies of the University of Athens, where I have the honour of teaching Turkish, is already in its third year.

Greeks wish to know the Turkish people and vice versa. New questions (issues) arise and we are called upon to come up with serious answers which will not allow prejudice and criticism based on false data to raise their ugly heads again.

“The virtue of democracy is truth.” with us lies the responsibility entailed in this duty, and wishing to contribute to this new status quo (state of affairs), we decided to place *Nutuk* at the disposal of the Greek reading public.

The Department of Turkish Language, Culture and History of the Ionian University, foreseeing (the recent) developments in Greco-Turkish relations, assigned to me the translation of, and commentary on *Nutuk* as the topic of my doctoral thesis. With his urging and advice, as well as with the support and guidance of Dr. Ioannis Mazis, Professor of Geopolitics and President of the aforementioned Department, Atatürk's work is about to be published in Greece, after much thorough research and detailed study.

Honourable ladies and gentlemen,

It is very natural for Greeks to wish to know Atatürk, the opponent both on the battlefield and in the realm of politics, of the famous Greek politician E. Venizelos. To them, Atatürk is a “familiar

stranger". "Familiar" because everyone has heard or heard about him. Everyone knows that he was the founder of the modern Turkish nation, that the outcome of the war in which he led his troops influenced Greek history, and that even today Turkish people vow to follow in his footsteps and remain true to his principles; he was a personality who even today defines the life of Turkey.

On the other hand, Atatürk is a "stranger" because the majority of Greeks are unaware of his character, his abilities, his dreams, principles and ideals; they are not cognizant of his notions concerning Turkey's state and foreign policies.

Atatürk mentions that he wrote *Nutuk* so that he could convey to his descendants the events of his time: "Here, I feel it is my duty to define once more certain recollections (memories) and official documents which involve the past so that they can be utilised in the forming of the political and social morality (ethics) of the coming generations," he writes.

Atatürk blames those who rush to judge without having previously consulted serious and valid sources, and he advises them to benefit from them, avoid external factors and the judgement (criticism) of strangers (foreigners?).

Therefore, we considered it our duty to translate *Nutuk* word for word, with great care and attention. *Nutuk* is a serious, valid and trustworthy source of information which he himself wrote. We appended lists of place names, individuals' names and a glossary of terms, and we hereby submit it to the Greek readers in the hope that their questions will be answered.

It is certain that the Greek reading public will welcome *Nutuk* with great interest, as a book in the pages of which Atatürk's philosophy of history, world viewpoint and political methods (strategies) are recorded by his own hand. Conversely, a very significant part of Greek history is also negotiated therein. After all, from the very beginning, on page 1, we come across issues relating to Greeks being discussed.

The Greek people, born in the cradle of civilisation and raised with feelings of respect for, and pride in their cultural heritage, will find in the pages of *Nutuk* that Atatürk placed great emphasis on civilisation, on everyone living in a civilised nation taking pride in their origin, and on how he considered the sense of honour and joy created by these values to be of extreme importance.

(The Greek people) They will read in *Nutuk* why Atatürk so fervently desired Turkey to join the civilised Western nations; about his efforts to attain this and his struggle against opposing forces; that Greece, willingly and determinedly, offers a helping hand to Turkey.

The Greek nation is the one which first forged the ideal of democracy and then passed it on to the rest of the world. The notions of freedom and independence are non-negotiable, de facto rights for the Greek people. The idea of PEACE (EIRINI) was used as the title of Aristophanes' famous comedy in classical antiquity. The Greek people form a society which has always fought in order not to be denied these ideals.

Here, then, will the Greek readers note that these selfsame notions comprise keywords in the ideology and principles of Atatürk. They will read how a nation must fight for these principles, and will realise how important and meaningful these principles were for Atatürk.

They will comprehend and appreciate the value of the saying "peace at home, peace in the world," and perhaps they will understand why E. Venizelos nominated Atatürk for the Nobel Peace Prize.

The honourable Professor (Dr.) Ceyhan Atuf Kansu analyses in his writings the similarities between *Nutuk* and ancient Greek tragedy. For philologists, this comparison carries great weight.

Politicians and diplomats will find out first hand and directly from the source, the one whose principles form the basis of Turkish state and foreign policies, from the founder of the republic of Turkey, from the man who mapped out Turkey's modern course – with the aim of establishing Turkey as a civilised nation; from the politician who took the first serious, decisive and defining steps in that direction. They will find out how that man assessed, and commented on events, as well as on which data he based his political methods (strategies). As for those who take up the study of political and military history, they will have at their disposal an invaluable new source which will allow them to investigate events from a different angle.

Such an important work had never heretofore (thus far) been translated into the Greek language. One could find certain excerpts in newspapers and books, but there was no line-by-line, word-for-word translation.

This year, on January 4<sup>th</sup> 2005, I read in Hurriyet, in the Yazarlar column, Ozdemir Ince's article. In it, Ince claims that *Nutuk* has to be translated so that non-Turks can read it and that if translated, it would become a best seller. I felt overjoyed because we had already submitted the translation of *Nutuk* to the Papazissis publishing house. The insight and wisdom of my Professor Ioannis Mazis were demonstrated once again.

Translators will immediately discern the difficulties of this undertaking, with complex notions, hard to convey certain terms with accuracy. The structure of the Turkish language, wholly divergent from that of Greek, made translating *Nutuk* all the more challenging, considering Atatürk's facility in handling language, as well as his style, which was thoroughly worked on in every detail.

The Greek language is rich and thus, thankfully, allows one to convey the rhetorical skill, intricacy and sophistication evident in the style of *Nutuk*. It is a matter of great attraction (interest) for the translator, but at the same time the onus of responsibility is great. The task demands careful, detailed study, and great care and diligence.

We did not shy away from the labour and the required attention, and we worked with great focus and a sense of duty so as to effect the optimum result.

The translation of *Nutuk* into Greek will be a milestone in Greek and Turkish bibliography. Its launch in the Greek market will make us pleased and proud of having toiled for the completion of this task.

At the same time, and within the context (framework/ limitations) of the translator's work, it will give us great satisfaction to feel that we have contributed, even in the slightest, to the establishment of open and honest relations between the two nations.-