

In Memoriam

Roderic Hollett Davison (b. April 27, 1916) died on March 23rd, a month short of his 80th birthday. When he published *Reform in the Ottoman Empire 1856-1876* in 1963, the study in the West of the Ottoman 19th century was in its infancy. Bernard Lewis' *Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Uriel Heyd's "Ottoman Ulama and Westernization" and Şerif Mardin's *Development of Young Ottoman Thought* had just appeared, and Niyazi Berkes' *Development of Secularism in Turkey* was only in press. I well remember the excitement of graduate students in history at Columbia in discovering what Davison had accomplished in using Turkish sources, and that book as much as anything else energized what would become a new generation of Ottomanists in the United States. In his *AHR* review, C. Ernest Dawn remarked that "Davison's preliminary attempt to recount and assess the major reform developments must be reckoned an unqualified success... all the chief questions have been clarified." And the most recent survey of Ottoman history, Robert Mantran (ed.), *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman* (1989), continues to list Davison's book as essential reading.

Rod Davison always had a great affection for Turkey and the Turkish people. Although born in Buffalo, Davison grew up in Rumeli Hisar while his father was on the faculty of Robert College. He received his B.A. at Princeton in 1937, and both MA (1938) and PhD degrees (1942) in History at Harvard. During the war, Rod performed alternative service with the American Friends Service Committee and Civilian Public Service.

Davison came to Ottoman history from a European history background. His PhD dissertation, "Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876," read by Professors Michael Karpovich and Daniel C. Dennett, Jr., was the work that would lead him ultimately to become what Norman Itzkowitz recently identified as the "senior specialist in Tanzimat studies" (in a review in *The Middle East Journal*). Rod continued throughout his career to be fascinated with the impact of the West on the Ottoman Empire and the Turks, writing many insightful and interesting essays, some of which were recently published together as *Essays in Ottoman and Turkish History, 1774-1923* (1990). He also authored *The Near and Middle East: An Introduction to History and Bibliography* (1959), *Turkey* (1968) and *Turkey: A Short History* (1981 & 1988). William C. Langer, who had originally encouraged Davison to embark on his study of the Tanzimat, thought so highly of his work that he got the editors to invite him to contribute to *The Diplomats, 1919-1939* (1953).

Davison joined the Department of History at George Washington University in 1947. He became Professor of History in 1954 and Professor Emeritus in 1986. He also taught at Princeton, Johns Hopkins and Harvard.

Rod's peers rewarded his sound scholarship with a number of grants and fellowships over his career. He was an SSRC Fellow, a fellow of the Fund for the Advancement of Education, a Guggenheim Fellow. Widely respected for his common sense, good humor and collegiality, Rod was called upon by his profes-

sion to serve in various capacities of leadership: he was Treasurer of the American Historical Association (1974), 10th President of the Middle East Studies Association (1974-75), Vice-President of the Middle East Institute (1976-82) and President of the Turkish Studies Association (1980-81). He was on the Advisory Board of Editors of *The Middle East Journal* for 30 years from 1954.

Roderic Davison will be missed by those who knew him. His profession will miss his collegiality, generosity, humility and kindness. In his Presidential Address to MESA (November 21, 1975), Davison asked "...what is a historian of Europe who works in Turkish history doing here, in this confluence of the seas of Arabists and Persianists and Turcologists? The MESA Fellows who know me have evidently done a pretty good job of concealing my true identity. Have they been practicing *taqiya* on my behalf?" Rod's scholarship and professional leadership have proven that those Fellows were right.

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Roderic H. Davison: An Appreciation

Rod Davison grew up in a happy, close-knit, academic family. They loved music and intellectual pursuits and were spiritually mature pacifists; both of his younger brothers, W. Phillips and John H. Davison, also became professors. Rod spent early teen years at Robert College, Istanbul, where his father, a Presbyterian minister later professor and dean at Auburn Seminary, taught English. Rod subsequently attended Deerfield Academy, graduated with highest honors from Princeton, and earned his PhD in History under William Langer at Harvard in 1942. His magisterial thesis on *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876*, was revised and published in 1963 with a second edition in 1973.

The depression and experiences in Europe 1935-44 opened horizons that Rod enlarged throughout an exemplary life. During the Spanish Civil War, he and three French hiking friends became lost in a Pyrenees fog and were facing execution as alleged spies in a Barcelona prison in 1937. They were ransomed after two months by the French consul, who assured passportless, penniless, grateful Rod that he acted "...pour l'honneur de la France!" Rod knew Europe, French, German and Turkish well and learned some Greek and Serbo-Croatian. He studied at the University of Nancy and led Experiment in International Living groups in France and in Germany in the summers of 1935, 1937 and 1938, thereby enlarging his vast repertoire of classical and folk songs, opera and hymns. World War II interrupted his doctoral research in Paris and Vienna and plans for more in Turkey. He accepted an instructorship at Princeton, where he completed his dissertation and helped to revive the Friends Meeting, 1940-42. Rod inspired trust and evoked good in everyone he met.

He returned to Vichy France in 1942 as a pacifist American Friends Service Committee volunteer assisting Jewish refugees while his father headed the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Interned by the Germans in the Brenner Park Hotel in Baden-Baden in early 1943, Rod helped organize a university and taught