
In memory of Donald Quataert (1941-2011)

A leading figure in the field of nineteenth-century Ottoman history, as well as friend and mentor to many associated with *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Donald Quataert passed away on February 10, 2011, at his home in Binghamton, New York. His legacy consists of several books, dozens of articles, numerous students, and a strong imprint on Ottoman social, economic, and labor history.

Donald Quataert was born in Rochester, New York, in 1941. To save money for his college education, he went to Samsun, Turkey, between 1961 and 1963 to work in the building of a radar station for General Dynamics at the height of the cold war. This experience turned out to be very formative, for following his return to the US he completed his undergraduate education at Boston University and went on to Harvard University in 1966 to pursue his graduate education under the supervision of Stanford J. Shaw, a leading Ottomanist. Two years later, he moved to UCLA, along with Shaw who had decided to join the department of history there. His decision to follow Shaw to UCLA presented an opportunity, not only to continue his graduate training under the guidance of Shaw who had encouraged him and drawn his attention to Ottoman history, but also to study with such eminent scholars as Andreas Tietze, Speros Vryonis, Richard Hovanissian, and Nikki Keddie, each of whom had been working, in their own special fields, concerning the territory that the Ottoman Empire had ruled from medieval to modern times. He also met his future wife and life-long intellectual companion, Jean Quataert, in one of the economic history seminars at UCLA.

Donald Quataert completed his dissertation, "Ottoman Reform and Agricultural Development, 1826-1876," in 1971. It was published in *Journal of American Studies*, 5(1), 1-24 (1971).

tation research¹ but he never turned the dissertation into a book, probably because, perfectionist that he always was, he was not entirely satisfied with it and before publishing a monograph wanted to extend his research—particularly on peasant resistance, as he was inspired by the “history from below” approach of the British Marxist Historians.² As he would later recall, scattered archival documentation and the near absence of scholarship on the subject prompted him to abandon his early ambitions concerning peasantry and instead led him to focus on workers in urban environments.³

In the meantime, just like many other social and economic historians, he was preoccupied with the question of how the European eco-

companies that operated in various sectors such as tobacco, railways, and mining in Ottoman Anatolia and Istanbul, and showed how the government and the workers were affected by and resisted to company activities. Conducting research in the Ottoman as well as several European archives and employing a fresh approach in Ottoman studies by giving voice to local actors and internal dynamics, Donald Quataert established a solid reputation in Ottoman scholarship.

Following the publication of his first monograph, he intensified his research on labor history. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to claim that he established labor history as a field within Ottoman social history. Especially at Binghamton University, where he started teaching in 1987, he excelled in research and writing. The department of history there—with its considerable number of scholars specialized in American and European labor history, the Fernand Braudel Center under the direction of Immanuel Wallerstein, and the Center's Research Working Groups undertaking various projects on the issue of labor around the world—provided an excellent environment to nurture his scholarly interests. While publishing several important articles on Ottoman labor history during the 1980s, he started researching more extensively Ottoman manufacturing, which resulted in the publication of *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* in 1993.⁷ In this book, he successfully showed that certain handicraft industries, especially carpet manufacturing, thrived thanks to the strong demand from European markets, contrary to the commonly held assumption that the entrance of European industrial goods into the Ottoman lands resulted in the wholesale destruction of the local manufacturing sector.

In the early 1990s, Halil İnalcık, the doyen of Ottoman studies, invited Quataert to join him in the preparation of *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*, in its size and quality arguably the best and most comprehensive account summarizing the scholarly accumulation in the field over the past half century. Quataert not only nurtured the publication of the book, but also wrote a book-length essay about the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, in which he ad-

Journal of Social History ()
 Turkish Studies Association Bulletin
 Women in Middle Eastern History: Shifting Boundaries in Sex and Gender
 Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution ()

mirably meshed twenty years of his own research with the existing literature⁸

By the 1990s, Donald Quataert already had an unwavering reputa

- 1914
() New Perspectives on Turkey. Special Issue: The 1838 Convention and Its Impact
() Syria: Its Society, Culture and Polity

Selected Articles

- () History Compass
() Méditerranée, Moyen-Orient, deux siècles de relations internationales: Recherches en hommage à Jacques Thobie
() Turkish Studies in the United States
() International Labor and Working Class History
()