

# DID YOU KNOW? (14)

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**By Jirair Tutunjian**, Toronto, 10 May 2022

Gaston Maspero (1846-1916) was a French Egyptologist who was the director-general of excavations and antiquities for the Egyptian government. He said the Hyksos who ruled Egypt for nearly six centuries, were Hittites who lived in Western Armenia. While famed British scholar, poet and novelist Robert Graves said the homeland of the Hyksos was the Armenian Highlands. The first scholar to identify the Hyksos as Armenian was Mkhitarist Father Avker. He based his conclusion on the works of Hamlet Mardirossian who had studied pagan alphabets, mythology, linguistics and rock carvings in Syunik. Maspero said the following pharaohs were Hyxos-Armenian: Salatis, Pnon, Hian, Qar, and others. The Hyksos introduced horses and horse-driven chariots to Egypt. When the Hyksos were driven out of Egypt, they settled in Palestine.

Several failed attempts were made to film the life of Lawrence of Arabia before finally, David Lean made the movie in the early Sixties. The earlier attempts failed because of pressure from Turkey. In the mid-Thirties, the Lawrence Trust authorized director Alexander Korda to make a movie about Lawrence's life. After considering Laurence Olivier and Robert Donat for the lead, Korda picked Leslie Howard. After obtaining a draft script, the Turkish embassy protested to the British government that "the Turks were represented as tyrants and oppressors of Arabs," casting unacceptable aspersions on "Turkish history and national character." Expecting another world war, Churchill said it was important to have the Turks as allies when the war came. The movie was canceled. Another attempt was made in the early '50s with Alec Guinness in the lead. That too was canceled for political reasons.

When in the Thirties the British attempted to produce a movie about Lawrence of Arabia, the MGM studios in Hollywood were working on the script of "Forty Days of Musa Dagh". Clark Gable was to be the lead. Sets were constructed and a shooting schedule was ready. The project was canceled when the Turkish Ambassador complained to the State Department which pressured MGM to drop the movie. Fifteen years ago, Sylvester Stallone announced he would produce a movie based on the Musa Dagh novel. He said the movie would be "an epic about the complete destruction of a civilization...talking about a political hot potato, the Turks have been killing that subject for 85 years."

In the late Seventh century, numerous nakharars and thousands of Armenians settled in Byzantium (Constantinople, Thrace, Pergamum, Macedonia, and Cyprus). Many famous "Byzantines" were descended from these Armenian migrants. Among them was the great general Vrtanes (Bardanes Philipicoa) of Pergamum who became emperor (711-713). Basil I, perhaps the most important Byzantine emperor after Justinian, was the son of Armenian immigrants. He was born in Macedonia.

Fatih Sultan, after his conquest of Constantinople, brought Turks and Armenians to the city so as to reduce the influence of the Greek majority. He settled the Armenians in the Koumkapou district of the city. He also helped establish the Armenian Patriarchate in the city.

Yr Hen Gapel ("The Old Chapel") is the first (1733) Armenian chapel in Wales. It is known as the

mother chapel of Welsh Unitarians. The great uncle of poet Dylan Thomas preached at the chapel.

In the 1920s Manuel Karakashian wrote about the Deir Zor Armenian bones which a European company had gathered to take to Iskanderoun/Alexandretta. Historian Vasis Achidisi wrote that on Dec. 13, 1924, a ship filled with Armenian bones left Mudania for Marseille. When the ship stopped in Salonica, porters noticed that the bones were those of humans. Although port officials were informed, permission was granted for the ship to continue its journey. On Dec. 24, the "New York Times" reported that the ship had arrived in Marseille. The paper reported that the ship's cargo had become the talk of the town. According to locals, the bones were to be converted to buttons.

In "The Basque History of the World" Mark Kurlansky wrote: "The first book entirely in Euskara was not published until 1545. No Basque had attempted to study their own history or origins until the sixteenth-century Guipuzcoan Esteban de Garibay. Spanish historians of the time had already claimed that Iberia was populated by descendants of Tubal, Noah's grandson who went to Iberia thirty-five years after the Flood subsided. Garibay observed that Basque place names bore a close resemblance to those in Armenia where the ark had landed, and therefore... the Basques descended from Tubal. It was also maintained that Mount Gorbeya in southern Viscaya was named after Mount Gordeya in Armenia.

When in June 1941 the German army invaded the Soviet Union, a frightened Stalin withdrew to his dacha and refused to see anyone. Finally, politburo members went to see him. Stalin asked: "Why are you here?" Anastas Mikoyan, who had led the group, wrote in his memoirs that he then realized Stalin had assumed they had come to arrest him. Mikoyan asked Stalin to make a statement to the country and take his leadership role.

Ottoman Bank executive Berc Turker Kerestecyan/Kerestec/Kerestejian (1870-1949) was the co-founder of the Turkish Red Cross and a deputy at the Chamber of Deputies. He informed Ataturk's lawyer about a British plot to sink Ataturk's ship when Ataturk was about to launch his "war of independence". Ataturk awarded him the Medal of Independence. In 1934, when the law of last names was passed, Ataturk gave Berc the family name Turker (Turkish for Turk man) for his patriotism. Kerestecyan, who was orphaned at an early age, was raised by his uncle Bedros who had authored the etymological dictionary of the Turkish language.

## Comments



**H** – 2022-05-12 01:26:46

Thank you Mr. Tutunjian! Treasure of pertinent, and interesting information. Disturbing as well, to be reminded of the powerful turkish lobby at the US State Department and the British authorities.



**Dave** – 2022-05-10 12:44:17

Always fascinating information by Mr. Tutunjian.