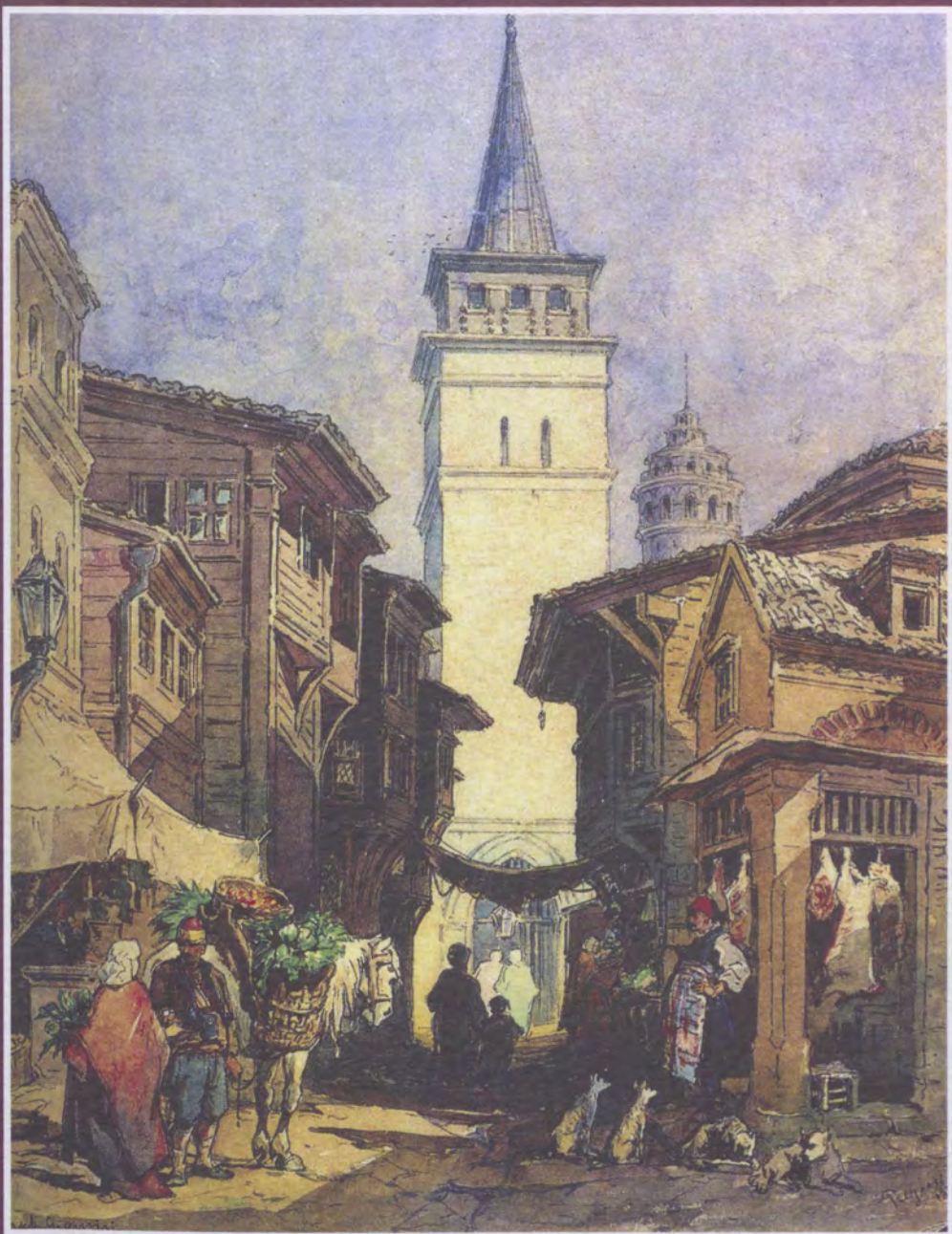# ISTANBUL AS SEEN FROM A DISTANCE

Centre and Provinces in the Ottoman Empire

Edited by
Elisabeth Özdalga, M. Sait Özervarlı, Feryal Tansuğ

SWEDISH RESEARCH INSTITUTE IN ISTANBUL

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CENTRE AND PROVINCES IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

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FERYAL TANSUĞ

The character of a political centre can hardly be analysed without taking its hinterlands into account. A centre is defined through its relations with other powerful actors/polities outside its own territories, but even more important to this definition is the centre's relationship with its own local networks. This is especially true when dealing with pre-modern and/or early modern political systems such as the Ottoman empire. During the Ottoman period, global or international relationships had not the depth they have today.

The image of a centre depends on the theoretical perspectives and/or concepts being used. In his classical article on centre-periphery relations in a Turkish context, Şerif Mardin contrasted centre-periphery relations in the Ottoman empire with those of traditional Iran, on one hand, and with those of the modern nation state in the West, on the other. As against the Iranian rulers, who were often merely "grand manipulators", the methods used by the Ottomans were more "ingenious and varied".[1]

> By co-opting in the ruling elite individuals largely recruited at an early age from religious minorities, by socializing them into the official class, by tightly controlling, though not necessarily centralizing, the system of taxation and land administration, and by dominating the religious establishment, the centre acquired strong leverage in the spheres of justice and education, and in dissemination of the symbols of legitimacy.[2]

Compared to the emerging modern nation states of the West, however, the Ottoman political system remained rigid. In Europe, confrontations between centre and periphery, represented by social forces such as the feudal nobility and the urban middle and lower classes, had brought about compromises and eventually developed into relatively well articulated structures. The kind of co-optations between centre and periphery that led to greater overall institutional integration in the West did not develop in the Ottoman empire. Consequently, according to Mardin, the clash between centre and periphery was, in its rigid form, carried over into the modern Turkish republic.[3]

An even stronger version of the centre-periphery paradigm is offered by the doctrine of colonisation. Under the pressure of modernising reforms, and as part

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1. Şerif Mardin, "Centre-Periphery Relations: A Key to Turkish Politics?" *Daedalus* 102 (Winter 1973): 169.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., p. 170.

of the programme to centralise the Ottoman state, separatist and nationalist movements grew stronger in the various peripheral regions of the empire. Especially in those areas retained under Ottoman control until the final collapse of the empire, the rhetoric of colonisation found fertile ground. Under the influence of Arab nationalism, the Ottoman empire came to be depicted as just another example of colonial oppression.

Over the last couple of decades, interest in Ottoman history has increased. This has paved the way for more, and more qualified, research. One effect of this development has been that previously popular theoretical paradigms have been called into question. The colonisation interpretation of the relationship between centre and hinterland in the Ottoman empire is a case in point.[4] In more general terms, the whole idea of applying a centre-periphery paradigm has been questioned.[5] How useful is this notion of a basic antagonism between a powerful centre and a weak, subordinated periphery? Is the paradigm itself more hindrance to than help in achieving a better understanding of the inner dynamics of the Ottoman empire?

Rather than being a "unidimensional confrontation" or "clash between centre and periphery",[6] relations between the imperial capital Istanbul and its main provinces, such as Baghdad, Damascus, Beirut, Cairo and Sarajevo, were characterised by resilience in terms of authority, autonomy, interdependence, communication and influence. Throughout the centuries, central Ottoman and local or provincial influences have evolved side by side and in competition with one another. Sometimes one, sometimes the other gained the upper hand.[7] The purpose of this book is to follow up on the existing critical research with a closer reading of the historical sources in the hope of arriving at a deeper understanding of these dimensions of Ottoman history.

During the classical era of Ottoman rule (1300-1600), the relationship between centre and provinces generally showed great variation over time and space. Under the influence of modernisation, however, a new and more distinct dynamic arose in the system. As is well known, during the 18th century Istanbul began to enact programmes to exercise greater power over local notables. Eventually, a more centralised political system developed, especially following the Tanzimat reforms (1839-76). The rationale for these reforms to the adminis-

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4. For critical analyses of colonialist depictions of the Ottoman empire, see Israel Gershoni, Amy Singer and Y. Hakan Erdem (eds), *Middle East Historiographies: Narrating the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006) and Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Review* 3 (June 2002): 768-96.

5. See Bruce Masters, "Semi-autonomous forces in the Arab provinces," in *Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 2006), 186-206; Dina Rizk Khoury, "The Ottoman centre versus provincial power-holders: An analysis of the historiography," in ibid., 135-56; Fikret Adanır, "Semi-autonomous provincial forces in the Balkans and Anatolia," in ibid., 157-85; Carter Findley, "Political Culture and the Great Households," in ibid, 65-80.

6. Mardin, "Centre-Periphery Relations". These comments are not intended to discredit Mardin's famous "Daedalus article", which was trail-blazing in demonstrating the structural continuity between the Ottoman empire and the modern Turkish republic, a relationship that had for decades been denied in official Kemalist historiography. Still, Mardin's emphasis on the conflicting relations between centre and periphery needs to be addressed, since many recent Ottomanists have refined their perspectives in critical dialogue with this and kindred paradigms.

7. Halil Inalcık, "Centralisation and Decentralisation in Ottoman Administration", *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, eds. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 1977), 27-52.

trative institutions was preservation of the empire against further disintegration. However, despite the rigorous centralisation practices, regional authorities were often able to resist central demands.[8] The Ottoman historian Donald Quatert has suggested that "the centralizing state was able to insinuate itself more than before into local elites while local elites successfully warded off most of the effects of the centralization program".[9] The chapters making up this volume provide intriguing examples of how centre-province (or metropolis-hinterland) relations were established, and how they were transformed during both the pre-modern and modern periods of Ottoman history.

The book is divided into four parts. The first serves as an introduction to the following case studies. It starts with a chapter that builds on an analysis of the Swedish empire and its provinces, and thereby offers a comparative perspective which enables us to delineate the Ottoman system more clearly. Aware of the geographical and cultural differences between Sweden and Turkey, Johan Holm demonstrates how metropolis-hinterland relationships in Sweden, a much smaller realm, were gradually formed. Initially having nothing but tax collection interests, the central government eventually started to pay more attention to each province. Firmer control over other domestic affairs was achieved through, *inter alia*, the church (Protestanism). To be sure, while Swedish experience differs from that of the Ottoman empire, it does provide analogies, especially on how the balance was struck between centralising and decentralising forces.

The second chapter highlights the importance Istanbul – then the Byzantine metropolis Constantinople – has had for Muslims from the very beginning of their history. It focuses on the motivations for the efforts to conquer this magnificent dream city. Jan Retsö offers details of the two sieges of Constantinople in the first century of Islam, pointing out what magnificent military achievements they were and the subsequent pressure they put on the Byzantine empire. He suggests that the constant efforts to conquer the city had decisive consequences for the course of Middle Eastern and world history. Constantinople was, from early on, seen as an important centre for the promotion of the monotheistic heritage, a conviction that later prompted Sultan Mehmed II (1451-81) to adopt it as the heart of Ottoman Islamic lands. Subsequently, this courageous venture rendered the Ottoman sultans legitimate in the eyes of Arab Muslims, who were subsequently to be subordinated to Ottoman rule.

The next chapter, by Bruce Masters, addresses the evolution of Arab perceptions of the Ottoman sultanate from the early 16th century to the end of the 18th century. It analyses the rationale for the legitimation of Ottoman rule in the Arab provinces. The fact that the sultans were seen as the protectors of their subjects in more than just a material sense helped transform the relationship between sultan and Arab subjects such that provincial Arabs endorsed imperial authority and prayed for its success. It is against the backdrop of this relative mutual respect during the early centuries of Ottoman rule that the loyalty of the Arab provinces held up, even under the pressure of much harsher forms of centralisation towards

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8. One of the first depictions of a more diversified role for provincial powers is Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: Privatization and Political Economy in the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Empire", *Politics and Society* 21 (December 1993): 393-423. See also Ehud Toledano, *As if Silent and Absent: Bonds of Enslavement in the Islamic Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

9. Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 107.

the end of the empire. How these relationships evolved is illustrated through examples in the following chapters.

The second part of the volume includes chapters examining the relations between Istanbul and specific regions, with each chapter focusing on an institutional or communal issue. Leslie Peirce delves into the role of Istanbul in the life of Aintab (today's Gaziantep), a province in southeastern Anatolia, in the aftermath of its conquest by the Ottomans in 1516. Peirce shows how, following the conquest, Aintab ceased to be a frontier city. Instead, it lay at the crossroads between Istanbul and provinces further to the east and south. The inhabitants of Aintab enjoyed increased security and economic recovery under Ottoman rule, but faced tighter religious and legal controls, in the words of the author, "a mixed blessing".

Later on, in other provinces similar satisfaction and discontent were seen, both of which reinforced ties with the centre. Local figures presented their complaints, questions and problems to the central authority in the form of petitions. Nora Lafi instances some of those petitions in her chapter, seeing them from the perspective of the evolving relationship between central administration and urban elites. Focusing on the examples of Tunis and Aleppo, Lafi reveals the role of petitions in the municipal reforms of the second half of the 19th century, and how they were used in resolving disputes.

In the less distant Aegean city of Izmir, the rivalries and tensions were more apparent to political elites in Istanbul. Vangelis Kechriotis describes the internal community conflicts among the Greeks of Smyrna. He amply demonstrates the strategies of the metropolitans of the city in dealing with communal disputes and discusses the relationships of these ecclesiastical authorities with the patriarchate seated in Istanbul.

Similarly, on the Aegean islands Imvros and Tenedos, where inhabitants were predominantly Greek Orthodox, centralised control became more noticeable in the second half of the 19th century. Feryal Tansuğ chronicles this problematic relationship by analysing the correspondence between the central government and the local administrations of Imvros and Tenedos, and the petitions of complaint sent by islanders to the central and local administrations. She demonstrates how the state facilitated the process of complaint and protected the rights of the Greek islanders by not tolerating injustice at the hands of subordinate local officials. Efforts were also made to restore the image of the central authority in the decades that followed the Tanzimat period.

In the third part, visual and logistical aspects are explored, including architecture, transportation and the media. The first contribution focuses on how investment in building in Damascus and its hinterland can be seen as symbolising the Ottoman presence in the province, and on the perceptions of these buildings among locals and travellers. Marianne Boqvist answers these questions by examining historical sources, travel accounts, local court cases and administrative documentation. She also looks at architectural remains, the material evidence of Ottoman domination of the city and its hinterland. As other Ottomanists such as Gülru Necipoğlu have shown, the central palaces and mosques as well as regional architectural buildings were in fact aimed at embodying the glory and power of the sultans.[10]

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10. Gülru Necipoğlu, *Architecture, Ceremonial, and Power* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1991).

Hasan Kayalı's chapter focuses on the Young Turk era, the very last period of the empire. He analyses the effects of the railway project, completed in the fall of 1908, linking Medina to the capital. There is no doubt transportation was an effective tool in exercising power over the provinces. Kayalı examines the mutual advantages to Istanbul and Medina of these logistical improvements. Opening new links stimulated administrative reorganisation, educational and legal reforms and the expansion of the public sphere.

The press is an important source of information about the contemporary reactions of the public to the changes in relations between capital and provinces. Abdulrahim Abuhusayn examines certain aspects of the political turmoil in the Balkans as they were represented in the Beirut press between 1877 and 1908. He focuses on well-known journalists, such as Salim al-Bustani and Khalil Sarkis, in relation to Ottoman management of the Balkan crises, and describes their views on the international dimension of the conflict.

The final part of the volume is devoted to the observations, memories and life stories of individuals from different provinces, with particular reference to the impact of Istanbul and central authority. The section explores the role of public intellectuals as intermediaries through their reports and stories. Tetz Rooke focuses on the prolific writer and journalists Ahmad Amin and Muhammad Kurd Ali and their travel accounts regarding Istanbul. Challenging the nationalist divide between Arabs and Turks, his analyses reveal the survival of pro-Turkish sentiments in Egypt and Syria well after the First World War.

Sami Zubaida concentrates on the two great poets of the incipient Iraqi nation, Ma'ruf al-Rusafi and Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi. Both spent some years in the city before and after the adoption of the 1908 constitution and were elected deputies to parliament. They were impressed by the modernisation efforts of the Ottoman administration and praised the modern spirit of Istanbul. Identifying themselves with the modern Ottoman intelligentsia, they also manifested the ambiguities and inconsistencies associated with this elite.

The volume ends with Mohammad Fazlhashemi's chapter on the significance of Istanbul to Iranian intellectuals. In Fazlhashemi's view, the Ottoman empire had a key influence on the evolution of the image of Europe in Persia/Iran during the 19th century. Iranian intellectuals received images of Europe from the Ottoman contacts they encountered, most remarkably, the European-influenced constitutional movement. The chapter endorses the traditional image of Istanbul as a bridge between East and West.

With this volume, we hope to have made a further contribution to the study of centre-provincial relationships in the Ottoman empire and to have enriched the understanding of the Ottoman legacy in today's Middle East.

PART I

FORMER DENMARK 1660

SWEDEN PROPER 10EST

SWEDISH FINLAND EAST

KARELIA 1617

INGRRIA

THE PROVINCE ESTONIA 1661

THE PROVINCE LATTVIA 1628

THE PROVINCE BREMEN/VERDEN

THE PROVINCE VORPOMMERN 1648
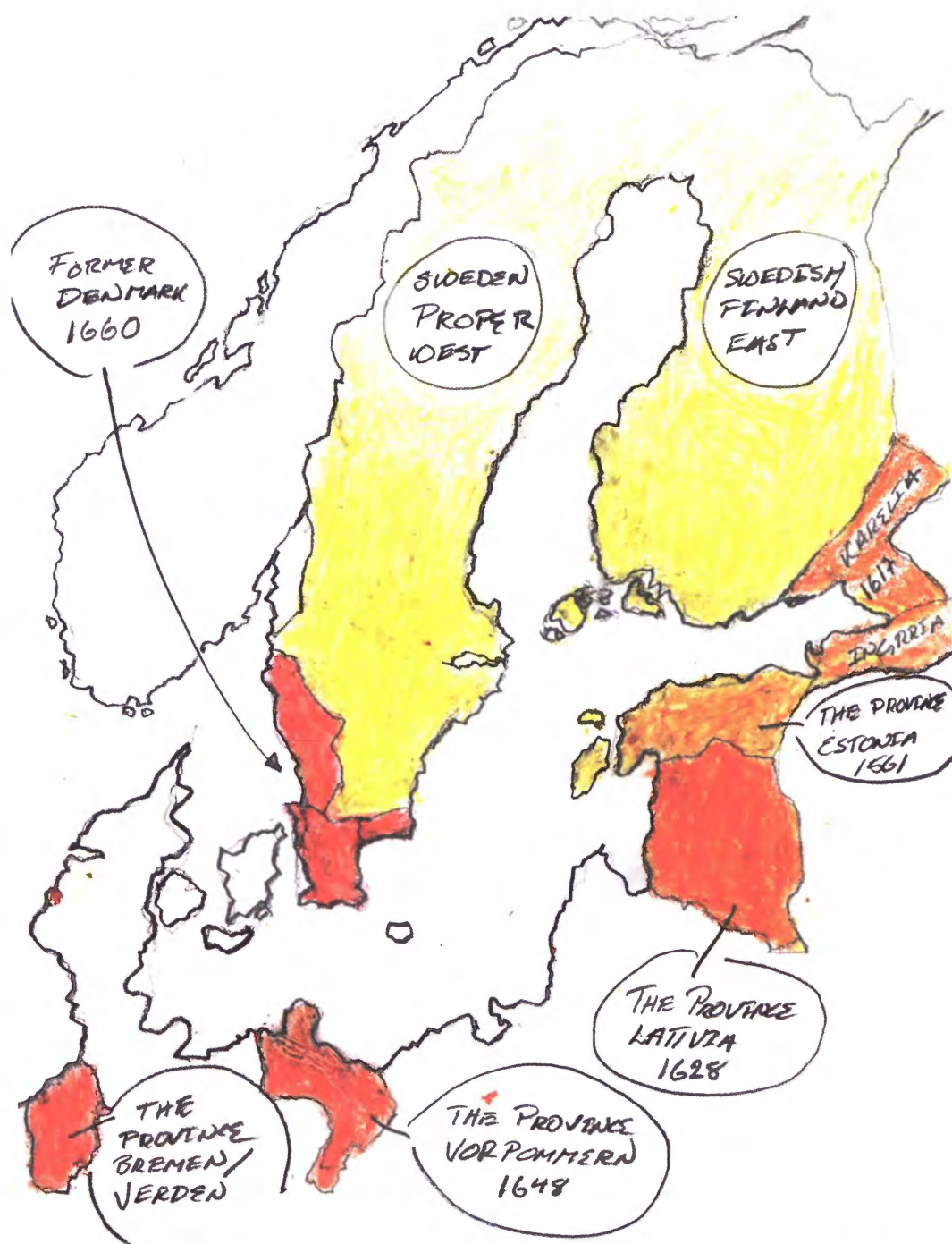
Map: Johan Holm

Stockholm as Seen from a Distance

JOHAN HOLM

The mighty Ottoman Empire existed for hundreds of years, seemingly an eternity. In order to emphasise its uniqueness it may be helpful to consider a much smaller "great power", namely Sweden. The Swedish military state lasted in one or other form from 1561 to 1721, and was at the height of its power for three generations between 1658 and 1721 (which means that Sweden's ascendancy still lasted longer than, say, Napoleon's admittedly much larger empire). Sweden's territories were too small to be called a great empire, but, even so, for about 80 years the Swedes and Finns dominated the Danes, Estonians, Latvians, Ingrians and even a few Germans. And the centre of this power was the Swedish capital, Stockholm.

Stockholm has many similarities with Istanbul. Both cities have grown up along both shores of a strait. Whereas Istanbul guards the Bosporus between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, Stockholm guards the strait between the Lake Mälaren and the Baltic. Due to this geography, both cities have a long history as important trading centres. Both cities have proven difficult for invaders to conquer throughout their history. Both cities had command of good navies, but even better armies, for despite their proximity to water neither really presided over the evolution of naval power on the scale of the British empire or the Dutch. And both Sweden and the Ottoman empire were ruled by a single strong ruler when they were at the height of their power.

But these similarities conceal great differences, especially in terms of scope. Stockholm during the early modern period was smaller than the village the Roman emperor Constantine chose to build up as Constantinople almost 2,000 years ago. Mälaren and the Baltic are not even one-tenth the size of the Mediterranean or the Black Sea. The straits of Stockholm can be bridged by an ordinary pine tree, and a 12-year-old child could easily throw a pebble across to the far bank. The Bosporus, by comparison, is as wide as 16th century Stockholm was from city wall to city wall. And while the Swedish fleet spent its time fighting the Danes in the Baltic, never venturing into the Atlantic, Ottoman fleets fought on three oceans, and saw action against such powers as the Venetians and the Spaniards. And finally, the Swedish absolute rulers of the 17th century lived in palaces that looked like medieval European castles, cold and damp and modestly furnished, while the sultan lived in a palace the size of a small Swedish city.

The truth is Stockholm seen from a distance would not have looked like much in the early modern era. In 1500, the city had perhaps 5,000 inhabitants, and 150 years later, at the height of Swedish military power, the capital numbered just over 10,000 souls. The Swedish realm did not grow out of a flourishing trade and

culture, but, on the contrary, out of military necessity and conquest. The fact is that by the time Sweden was on its march to glory, its leading men felt ashamed of the capital. On leaving the city for the last time in 1630, King Gustavus II wished Stockholm's burgers that "their small huts might become large stone buildings, and that your tiny boats might turn into great ships ...".[1] Basically, what he desired was a capital more worthy of the great military power Sweden had become in 1630. The poor impression created by the primitive capital continued to plague the leading men of the time after the king's death in 1632. At the great king's funeral, concerns were expressed about the royal stables, and it was considered important that the foreign guests should not see them, as the horses were poorly fed.

Stockholm as seen from a distance was, in short, something the Swedes preferred to keep more or less to themselves. Yet it was the capital of a military realm that incorporated modern Finland, Estonia, parts of Latvia, parts of Russia, parts of Germany and what used to be the eastern part of Denmark. What happened in Stockholm affected thousands of people and the object of this chapter is to present a picture of what Stockholm would have looked like from afar.

This chapter looks at the contacts and influences between Sweden and its provinces during the 150 years that the great realm lasted. What was said and done during those years? How were the provinces governed? And how did the people of the Swedish realm view Stockholm, the centre of power? While I have not had the time or resources to visit archives in Estonia, Denmark and Germany, I have studied the communications between the realm's leading politicians and governors abroad and the government in Stockholm, especially during the early years of the incorporation of the provinces. In addition, I have read parts of the Swedish *Riksregistraturet* (a collection of all outgoing mail), which provides a good idea of the usual communications between the provinces and Stockholm, and their frequency. In this regard, my particular focus has been the years 1680-90, when the second attempt to integrate the provinces was made.

In 1520, the old and weak kingdom of Sweden was a sparsely populated province of the greater Nordic empire of the king of Copenhagen. One hundred and thirty years later Sweden had built a military empire of its own, in the process almost making of the Baltic Sea a Swedish *mare nostrum*. How did this come about? How could the very thinly populated Swedish counties give rise to a military state powerful enough to take on and defeat Russians, Poles and Danes?

Sweden Becomes a Great Power – in a far off Corner of the World

Like the peoples of many empires before them, the Swedes did not have a plan or an initial wish to create a great realm. Chance, coincidence and a measure of luck gave rise to the Swedish realm. In addition to modern Sweden, modern Finland also belonged to Sweden in 1600, as it had in 1500 and, indeed, since the 1250s, the era of the Swedish crusades.

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1. Gustav II Adolf's farewell speach to the diet in 1630, in Emil Hildebrand and Karl Grimberg, *Ur källorna till Sveriges Historia I* (Stockholm: Nordstedts, 1911), 130.

In 1611, the Swedish king Gustavus II and his ministers embarked on a policy of warfare that half a century later had resulted in Sweden's great realm. The first province was Estonia, whose acquisition did not require the Swedes to go to war. In 1561, when German medieval state building in the Baltic collapsed, the German nobility turned to Sweden for protection against the chaos and warfare raging in Russia at the time. The leading nobility of Estonia offered taxes in return for Swedish defence.

The Swedish kings, who were the sons of Gustavus I, had earlier involved themselves in the Russian conflict in the hopes of gaining from it. Later, a feud over the Swedish crown led to open warfare between Polish and Swedish armies, and in 1610 Sweden was involved in wars on two fronts. In 1611, Swedish diplomacy and the policy of King Charles IX towards Denmark failed, and Denmark declared war. The ageing Charles IX oddly suggested to the young Danish king that the conflict be resolved by a duel between the two kings, perhaps in the hope of avoiding a war he knew he could not take on. However, the Danish king responded by insulting him and shortly afterwards Denmark launched its attack. Already tied up on two other fronts, Charles IX had no resources to spare and the situation for Sweden was critical. In response, Charles IX summoned a diet, but died of a stroke before it had time to meet.

The diet met in the very small town of Nyköping, and all the leading men in the diet were still very young. The new king was just 16 when his father died, and had turned 17 just in time for the diet. The man of the future was the very gifted Axel Oxenstierna, 28 years old at the time, whom Charles IX had decided to make chancellor. Oxenstierna was also the leading man in the royal council, a body of young noblemen that also included his younger brothers, Per Brahe and Per Banér, among its most prominent members. These young men decided to make the even younger crown prince king. He was, after all, the best educated of them when it came to warfare. It was painfully clear to these young men that Sweden would have to become a very efficient military state in a very short time, or it would be cut to pieces.

The young king concentrated his efforts on figuring out how society could best serve a military purpose and how one could deliver military competence with very limited resources. Oxenstierna set about constructing a civil society that could efficiently gather the resources the king needed to create an army capable of defending the kingdom's borders. Poland was much stronger and richer than Sweden, as was Denmark, whose forces were now spreading north through Sweden, and, of course, Russia was infinitely larger. The king and the leading men of the royal council faced the challenge of figuring out a way to offset this imbalance.

In one respect, Sweden differed from Denmark and Poland, in that the Swedish king Gustavus II Adolphus enjoyed good relations with the nobility. Together with Chancellor Oxenstierna, the king managed to convince first the nobility and then the taxpaying farmers of the need to make the war effort first priority. Neither the nobility nor the ordinary people were particularly enthusiastic about this prospect, but they did agree to it and give it their support. This meant that Sweden could organise itself, raise taxes and turn the revenues into military hardware in a way that neither Poland nor Denmark could match. When Sweden mobilised for the Thirty Years War in 1628, every resource that could be spared was devoted to the war effort. The tax system was extremely efficient,

corruption was probably less prevalent than in the rest of Europe at the time and the army, trained and forged in the Russian wars, was among the best in Europe. In short, the urgency of the situation and lack of internal conflict made the creation of the military state possible.

Success followed on the battlefield, with Sweden ending up with a small empire. Victory in Russia secured Sweden control of the Gulf of Finland and linked the eastern part of the empire to the province of Estonia, while victory over the Polish armies secured Latvia. And by being on the victorious side when the Thirty Years War finally ended, Sweden acquired the German provinces of Vorpommern and Bremen-Verden. Finally, after a succession of wars against Denmark, that country's territories were reduced by almost half, as all of its eastern provinces were now in Swedish hands.

What the Provinces Meant to Sweden

The provinces meant different things to Stockholm and were treated differently. The Baltic provinces were primarily a source of tax and revenue, or to be more exact, they supplied the centre with grain and revenues from the ports along the Baltic Sea. Another goal of these provinces was gaining control of the Russian trade and the rich revenues taxation of that trade would yield. From a military point of view, the Baltic provinces served as a buffer against Russia and Poland, whose armies could reach the Swedish and Finnish heartlands only after they had passed the defences in the Baltic.

The German provinces were economically insignificant, but were Sweden's doorway to culture and science. It is important to remember that Sweden at this time was a young military empire, and not especially cultivated. Universities were rare, but Sweden had acquired the University of Greifswald in Vorpommern as a bonus in the Westphalia peace deal of 1648. However, the German provinces were a military disaster, as they were difficult to defend and were unable to defend themselves. Their value was scientific and cultural and they were important in furnishing the image of a developed European realm. Finally, the Danish provinces were quickly incorporated into the Swedish kingdom. This process came naturally to the Swedish leaders, as these provinces had been part of the Viking world from 700-1000, when kingdoms in Scandinavia had been small and short-lived. In the 14th century, Magnus, king of Sweden, had bought the richest of them, Skåne, from Denmark, but Sweden had lost it shortly afterwards to the new Danish king, Valdemar Atterdag, and his army. Sweden's Gustavus I had claimed them again in the early 16th century, but, lacking military forces and unable to control his own kingdom, had lost them to the Danish king. When the Swedish armies finally reconquered the provinces in the 1650s and 1660s, great efforts were made to make them integral parts of Sweden.

Efforts to Make the Provinces Truly Part of the Realm

For Charles IX, the Baltic wars were an extension of the wars against the Polish line of the Wasa family. Thus, whatever territory was conquered was to become part of Sweden and the further from Stockholm and the closer to Warsaw

the new territory was the better. Charles IX, however, did not live to see his ambitions through, and it was his son, Gustavus II Adolphus, who conquered Riga and that part of Latvia that became the Swedish province of Livonia. It was also Gustavus II Adolphus who conquered Ingria and Kexholm and signed an agreement with the new Russian tsar, Mickail Romanov.

Gustavus II did not share his father's interest in the Baltic provinces, but set his mind on expansion into the German countries instead. This meant that the Swedish presence in the Baltic was primarily military. A creative nobleman from the royal council, Johan Skytte, was appointed governor of Livonia, Ingria and Carelia in February 1630, and he reported back to the royal council and to the Swedish chancellor and strong man, Axel Oxenstierna.[2] From this correspondence we get a clear picture of early Swedish rule over the Baltic states.

Of great importance was the faith, and Sweden was a fanatically Lutheran kingdom. In 1604, a law was passed forbidding any king from being anything other than a Lutheran of the Augsburg confession. Another law was passed in 1617 extending this provision to all Swedes: adherence to Catholicism was considered high treason and punishable by death. In short, to be a Catholic was to be an enemy of the Swedish king and the Swedish state. One must recall that the warrior king Gustavus II claimed to be the international defender of Protestantism and used these arguments to justify his entry into the Thirty Years War in 1629. After conquering Ingria in 1617, Gustavus II found himself with subjects of mainly Greek Orthodox background. Many of these peasants, fearing the ruthlessly Lutheran Swedish king, fled across the Russian border. By 1619, this flight was becoming a problem and Gustavus II contemplated plans to hang all peasants trying to flee. Later, Swedish criminals were sent to colonise the province.[3]

In the provinces, Swedish religious policy was somewhat more moderate, but Catholicism was intolerable and fortunately Estonia was Protestant. In what is today Latvia the Swedes had fought against the Poles during the 1620s. Following the Swedish victory, Sweden did its best to stamp out Catholicism. The German provinces did not prove problematic since they were already Lutheran, as were the Danish provinces.

In the province of Estonia, acquired early on, the Swedish church was established in the 1580s, along with the possibility for peasants to gain an education and climb the social ladder. When Latvia was conquered, Gustavus II established high schools in Riga and Revel, and in 1632 a university was built in Dorpat that was open to everyone. This did not sit well with the German-speaking nobility, which at least managed to retain the practice of serfdom. To the ordinary peasants, these developments must have felt like a step in a better direction, although the actual consequences were modest.[4] Ingria was another matter, as there was virtually no nobility or central law, thereby enabling Gustavus II to enforce Swedish laws and customs. Skytte was the man tasked with implementing this general approach, although he confronted a variety of problems in doing so.

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2. *Axel Oxenstiernas Skrifter och brevväxling* (Axel Oxenstierna's writings and correspondence) (AOSB) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1897), II del 10, 304.
3. Michael Roberts, *The Swedish Imperial Experience, 1560-1718* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1979), 85.
4. Ibid., 88-89, 91.

From Skytte's correspondence, we know that he concentrated his efforts on three main questions: collecting tax revenues, building up the Swedish forces in the region and supplying these forces.[5] We also have confirmation that the Swedish government suffered a perennial shortage of funds. In a letter written in 1630 to the Swedish chancellor, Skytte states that, "I for my part do not know how I in this desolate province will be able to cope. My credit has become very weak, and I have no means [at] my disposal".[6] In 1632, Skytte informed the chancellor that both nobles and commoners complained of the tax burdens, and suggested that a few taxes should be cut.[7] This exchange clearly indicates that the burden of the Swedish war effort fell heavily on the people of the Baltic provinces.

This in turn suggests two things. First, the Baltic provinces did not often communicate directly with the Swedish government and, second, the Baltic people regarded the Swedish empire of which they were part as harsh and demanding. The difficulty in raising money for the troops created other problems for Skytte, who wrote to the chancellor in 1632 that lack of payment had given rise to "dangerous comments among the troops".[8] Upon Skytte's return to Sweden, the policy of making the Baltic provinces more like Sweden came to a temporary halt.

The Baltic and German provinces were allowed to retain their old laws, while the Baltic nobility were allowed to keep control of the unfree peasants, something that worried the Swedish free farmers in the Swedish diet to a degree. However, the legal system fell under the control of the Swedish governor. In 1614, the Estonian court of appeal was removed from Reval, where it had sat since 1561, to Stockholm, and by letter from the chancellor in 1630 Skytte was given full jurisdiction over the Baltic provinces, including Ingria and Latvia. By the end of 1630, a Swedish royal court led by Skytte himself was in place.[9]

Only after the ambitious integrator Skytte had returned to Sweden do we find the first signs of the Baltic provinces making direct contact with the Swedish government. On 31 January 1633, a letter was read in the royal council (the Senate) "from the mayor of Riga", and although it is not clear what the nature of the letter was, it is apparent that the matter was immediately resolved.[10] To the nobility, these new circumstances represented something of a victory, as the system of serfdom had survived and they still exercised a lot of local authority. Even though education had been made available to the lower classes and final jurisdiction had moved to Stockholm, Stockholm was far away and there are signs that the German nobility counted on matters to revert to their earlier state of normality. However, they didn't: the burden of the never-ending Swedish wars weighed heavily on peasant and nobleman alike, and the nobles came to understand that the way to influence policy lay not in isolation, but in participation.

In 1643, the Latvian nobility and other prominent men held a diet, the result of which was a request to join Sweden as a central part of the kingdom, not just

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5. AOSB II, del 10, 304-5.
6. Ibid., 311.
7. Ibid., 336.
8. Ibid., 337.
9. Ibid., 321-2.
10. Svenska Riksrådets Protokoll (The Protocol of the Royal Council) (SRP) (Stockholm: Nordstedts, 1878), del 3-4, 1633-1634, 15.

as a province.[11] This meant the nobility would probably have to give up on serf-dom and also that former serfs would appear in the Swedish diet along with the free Swedish farmers. Apparently, the Latvian nobility had concluded this would be tolerable provided they also had a seat in the Swedish diet and could have a say and vote when it came to war and taxes. Had Skytte been so requested in the early 1630s, he and the king would probably have had the Latvian province incorporated in short order. But Skytte was back in Stockholm, the king was dead and the Swedish high nobility, led by Oxenstierna, were in charge. Under pressure from his friends in the first estate, Oxenstierna in his policies had swung from being an impartial patriot to an outspoken ally of the nobility. And the Swedish nobility had two good reasons not to accept the proposal. First, many of them did not like the thought of new competition, as the noble families were few and powerful and preferred to keep it that way. Second many of them had been granted generous "donations" of the production surpluses of Latvia, donations produced on lands on which serfdom was practised and which therefore made them very profitable. The Swedish bishop, Rudbeckius, challenged Oxenstierna in the diet about his Baltic politics, railing against serfdom and rallying behind the Baltic nobility. In the end, the chancellor curbed him in his criticisms and the Latvian nobility were turned down. They raised the question again in 1662, but with the same result, so that Latvia remained a province.[12]

When it came to the German provinces, Sweden had had to promise to let them retain their old laws and they were still regarded as part of the Holy Roman Empire. Swedish influence was therefore negligible here, but then again, the Swedish leadership did not want to change these provinces but to learn from them.

In the early 1680s, the young Swedish king, Charles XI, managed to establish himself as absolute monarch and ruler under God thanks to the mismanagement by the government of noblemen who had ruled Sweden during the king's childhood. After Charles had secured control of the kingdom, he focused his attention on the former Danish provinces. Since the people of these provinces often sided with Denmark against Sweden in the frequent wars between the two, the king decided that the best way to pacify them would be to make good and reliable Swedes out of them. Providing them with seats in the diet (in 1662) had so far not made them more loyal, and nor had the establishment of the University of Lund in 1668. The task of introducing Swedish law, customs, education, the Swedish church and Swedish clergy into the region was given to Rutger von Ascheberg. The programme proved highly successful and when the Danes next came, in 1698, the farmers of Skåne did not side with them and no guerrilla warfare was reported.

This success in Skåne and the other former Danish provinces inspired Charles XI to unify the whole realm, and so the "Swedefication" of the Baltic provinces, last abandoned over 60 years earlier, began again. Swedish law was enforced, with no exceptions made, and the old institutions of the Baltic nobility were swept away, just as the nobility there had requested in the early 1630s. The church law of 1686 was imposed on the whole realm and Swedish clergymen

11. Ridderskapets och adelns Riksdagsprotokoll (The protocol of the first estate) (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1871), 182, VIII, 180.
12. Roberts, *Imperial Experience*, 93-4.

became very active in the Baltic provinces. The Swedish bible was finally translated into Latvian in 1693. A massive programme of primary education was launched and Reval received its first Latvian bishop. The University of Dorpat was modernised and opened to commoners, a move regarded with suspicion by the nobility, as all the professors were Swedes. In Narva, Swedish became the official administrative language in 1684, but as late as 1690 the city's laws required that over half of the town council be German, and the German presence was still felt.

Finally, working closely with the church, the crown renewed the struggle against serfdom. In 1683, there was a massive flight of peasants, many of whom turned up in Stockholm to petition the king, and not in vain. The motives of the Swedish crown in taking action in this field were threefold. First, Sweden had no tradition of serfdom and the Swedish farmers' estate pressed the matter in the diet. The Swedish kings had long been in alliance with the farmers, and under strong kings the Swedish nobility could be held at bay. Second was the question of tax revenues, and the crown wanted a greater part of the resources of the provinces. Finally, the church fiercely opposed serfdom on both moral and financial grounds. Peasants working seven days a week could not attend church on Sundays and could not pay church taxes.[13]

Together with these initiatives came the policy of *reduction*. This was Charles XI's way of strengthening the crown's finances: it basically meant that revenues from the estates earlier given to the nobility by the crown were now taken back by the crown. This was possible because of the earlier mismanagement of the state by the royal council during Charles XI's childhood. After the Swedish nobility had been curbed and Charles XI had made himself absolute ruler, the nobility of the Baltic and German provinces stood no chance of opposing the king. They protested in vain and the reduction fell heavily on them.

In 1694, the Baltic nobility again tried to be fully incorporated into Sweden and gain a seat in the Swedish diet, and again their request was turned down. The Swedish nobility still wanted no competition and persuaded Charles XI to refuse, one of the few successes in their relations with their absolute ruler. And there the matter stood. Five years later, Sweden was again at war and would lose Ingria, Estonia and Latvia to the Russians.

In Pomerania, where the Swedish government was more cautious, serfdom lasted another 100 years and it wasn't until 1806 that it was abolished by Gustavus IV. This measure was very popular among the masses, but did not mean much to Sweden: in 1815, this, the last of the provinces, was lost.[14]

What Communication Looked Like

So what did the contact between the provinces and Stockholm look like? What did the provinces want from Stockholm, and what did Stockholm demand from them? In the Swedish National Archives all outgoing mail has been preserved, and one is struck by the fact that direct communication with the provinces

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13. Roberts, *Imperial Experience*, 113-15.
14. Ibid., 107, 121.

was very sparse. The German provinces almost never got direct orders or instructions from Stockholm, while the Baltic provinces did communicate with Stockholm but evidently not very often.

My thorough review of outgoing correspondence during the years of intense "Swedefication" (1680-90) reveals that only 48 letters/instructions/questions/rulings were issued from Stockholm to the provinces. There was no communication with the German provinces but only with Estonia, Latvia and the former Russian parts of the Baltic, Ingria and Kexholm. Half of these letters were issued in response to incoming questions and requests from the provinces. Of course, it is possible that some incoming questions and requests went unanswered, but that cannot often have been the case. The bottom line is that the provinces did not deal directly with Stockholm very often, and when they did, the topics were seldom pleasant.[15]

It was almost only the nobility and the burgers of the cities of Reval, Riga, Narva and a few other more minor cities that communicated with Stockholm. The peasants kept in serfdom certainly did not communicate and the clergy were to some extent Swedish. The nobility received primarily two types of letters from Stockholm: resolutions on their questions and requests, and rulings in complicated juridical matters. Secondly, they received a fair number of letters urging them to strengthen their borders, build fortifications and take other costly protective measures. The burgers received similar letters concerning the defences of their cities. From time to time, Stockholm also informed local leaders in the provinces that they should prepare themselves to feed large numbers of soldiers heading their way. Stockholm also, as in Johan Skytte's days, showed great interest in the delivery of surplus grain from the provinces, or at least the remittance of the *licentierna* taxes on grain exports. Among the letters there are a fair number arising from the reduction, such as rulings on requests from noblemen wanting to buy back what the government has just taken from them. In these cases, the government could be reasonable: if the nobleman had the money, he could certainly buy back his land.

What Would Stockholm Have Looked Like from a Distance?

The Swedish great power did not experience major revolts or serious uprisings between the Dacke disturbances in 1543 and Dalarnas great march on Stockholm in 1743, only a few violent protests against conscription and increased taxes. In the Baltic states, independence was never an issue, and Swedish military protection was fine for as long as the Swedish army did the job. In the German provinces, independence, for obvious reasons, wasn't an issue either. It is unlikely that the Swedish provinces and their inhabitants identified with Sweden, and the Swedish cause probably did not command much loyalty. The Pomeranians were Germans and part of the German world, while the German nobility in Estonia and Latvia tried in vain to become part of the Swedish world. Finally, it was only the Danes who revolted, and ironically they were the only ones who were made into good, patriotic Swedes, as they still are today.

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15. Riksregistraturet, Rgr (The Royal Correspondence), 1680-1690, Riksarkivet (National Archives), vol. 65, 1680-90.

This state of affairs was due in part to the fact that the Swedish provinces were not under constant threat and their way of life was not on the line. No foreign superpower threatened the Baltics or Pomerania. As long as the Swedes could keep the peace, that was a good thing, but being part of the Russian empire or the Swedish realm did not really matter in the 18th century. What burgers and nobles wanted to avoid was war and the prospect of armies marching across the land, plundering and burning, and taking the cities by storm.

For the ordinary farmer in the Baltic lands or in Pomerania, his was a smaller world, and his contact with Stockholm was nonexistent. In fact, Stockholm seems to have been more distant from its provinces then Istanbul was from its hinterland. While any man living in the Ottoman world could petition the sultan, only the nobility and the burgers in the Swedish provinces could petition the Swedish government. So how did the inhabitants in the Swedish provinces look upon Stockholm?

The answer depends on the distance. It is fair to say that people in the German provinces had no idea about Stockholm whatever. Pomeranian business was handled locally and communication with Stockholm was sparse. Pomerania belonged to the German cultural sphere and the language was German. The fact that some German provinces remained in Swedish hands until the early 19th century must be attributed to the fact that German unification did not occur until the 1860s.

The former Danish provinces must have looked upon Stockholm as the seat of a strong foe of their king. However, the "Swedefication" process was remarkably successful and in the Great Nordic Wars during the early 18th century regiments from the former Danish provinces distinguished themselves on the battlefields of Poland and Russia.

For the eastern provinces, Estonia, Latvia, Ingria and Kexholm, timing mattered. The Baltic people had come under the sway of the Swedish crown at a time when people and provinces in eastern and central Europe often changed hands and kings. How they viewed Stockholm would have depended on how much Stockholm interfered in local politics, and how much it's leaders tried to incorporate the peoples of the provinces.

To the Estonians and Latvians, Swedish rule meant taxes and being the military buffer zone for the central parts of Sweden, which in turn meant feeding and arming Swedish troops. This task was mainly borne by the nobility and rich burgers. A letter from Stockholm was invariably bad news, and Stockholm must have been viewed with a fair amount of suspicion by Estonians and Latvians. At the same time, Stockholm meant stability and even though the cost was high both Latvians and Ingrians could notice the benefits of belonging to a small empire.

Stockholm first began to interfere in local politics with Johan Skytte in 1630. His aim was clearly to make the Baltic provinces a lot more Swedish and the measures he took must have felt threatening to both noblemen and rich burgers. After his departure, Stockholm became distant and fell silent, only to stir again in the 1680s. New orders were issued, schools and universities were built or reopened, better possibilities for commoners became available and the presence of the Swedish church was felt. The nobility and rich burgers accepted the changes with a few minor protests. They still viewed Stockholm with enough suspicion to

avoid contact unless it was absolutely necessary, but most of them accepted Stockholm as their capital and the centre of power in their corner of the world.

To the ordinary people, Stockholm would have been virtually invisible. They were peasants and many lived in serfdom, which meant that, unlike their Swedish brothers, they had no right to write directly to Stockholm and the king. Their world comprised the parish, neighbours and the powerful local nobleman. However, during the 1680s word could have got out that changes were coming and that a new wind was blowing from Stockholm. The establishment of a stronger Swedish church meant that new ideas about education and against serfdom became known to a wider public. At the same time, Stockholm was obviously a city of generals and warmongers and it was from Stockholm that all the orders came.

In conclusion, the Swedish empire did not last very long and its rulers never succeeded in having the capital they wished for. Stockholm was poor and a lot less impressive than the Swedish armies of the time. Consequently, the kings and noblemen ruling the Swedish military state did not promote Stockholm internationally. No rumours about its splendour and riches are to be found. On the contrary, visitors were often struck by the poverty of the city. Stockholm was mainly the distant centre of power that held the realm together and the place from which orders and armies always came, making demands. However, it was also the locus of decisions that meant secure borders and education and land not only for the German nobility, but for peasants as well.

Constantinople and the Early Islamic Conquests

JAN RETSÖ

The Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 was the fulfilment of a project that had already been launched by the first Muslim conquerors in the first century of the hijra. Arabic sources refer to two major attacks on the city. Indeed, an additional attempt was reported as early as the year 644 under 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khalid, who did not reach the city proper but stopped at Pergamon.[1] The report is a short notice in Ṭabari and it is difficult to judge its historical value. But the two others were, according to both Arabic and Byzantine sources, real sieges of the city: the Muslim armies actually stood before the walls. The first most likely took place between 667 and 672, thus lasting almost six years.[2] This attack is of a particular renown since Abu Ayyub Khalid ibn Zayd al-'Ansari, who had carried the Prophet's standard in the battle of Badr in 624, fell in it and is said to have been buried before the walls. The present tomb was "discovered" during the siege in 1453, but had already been referred to by Ibn Qutayba in the middle of the 9th century.[3] He mentions that it was known to the Byzantines, who venerated it.[4]

The second siege was undertaken during the caliphate of Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Malik in 716-17 and was led by his brother Maslama.[5] The siege is surrounded by legends and the foundations of the Galata tower as well as the Arap Camii are said to have been laid out during this event, although there is still no archaeological confirmation of this.

The two sieges of Constantinople were remarkable military achievements, even if the Muslims did not succeed in taking the city. When Mehmet Fatih finally made the city part of *dar al-islam,* a *hadith* was circulated in which Muhammad is reported to have said, "You [the Muslims] shall conquer Qustantiniyya; peace be upon the prince and the army to whom this shall be granted!" According to Mordtmann, this *hadith* cannot be traced back earlier than *al-Suyuti* (5th century).[6] It can, however, be found in Ahmad ibn Hanbal's *Musnad,* one of the six

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1 Tabari, *Annales auctore Abu Djafar Muhammad ibn Djarir at-Tabari,* ed. M.J. De Goeje et al. (Leiden: Brill, 1879-1901), II: 86.

2 Theophanes, *Theophanis Chronographia* I-II, ed. C. De Boor (Leipzig: Breitkopf und Hirtel, 1883, 1885), 353ff.; Tabari, *Annales,* II: 86, 163.

3 Ibn Qutayba, *al-Ma'arif li-bn Qutayba,* ed. Th. 'Ukasha (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1377 H/1969 CE), 274.

4 Tabari, *Annales,* III: 2324.

5 Theophanes, *Cronographia,* 886-99; Tabari, *Annales,* II: 1314ff.; J.H. Mordtmann "Qustantiniyya: Tothe Ottoman conquest (1453)," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed. V: 532-4.

6 Mordtmann, "Qustantiniyya," 532.

canonical books compiled in the 9th century CE, and there the prince is identified as Maslama ibn 'Abd al-Malik.[7]

The thrust against the capital of the Roman empire was part of a larger event, namely, the Islamic conquests. This project is definitely one of the most remarkable military enterprises in history. Unlike many others, it has had decisive consequences for the course of world history: the spread of the Arabic language in the Middle East and North Africa and the spread of the new religion which was soon transformed into a major spiritual force in the world, creating a cosmopolitan culture of amazing richness and variety. What were the reasons for this enterprise and what role did Constantinople play in it?

As far as the general causes of the conquest are concerned, several explanations have been suggested.[8] A along and widely held idea was that the aim was conversion: the conquests aimed at spreading the new religion from Arabia and making the world Muslim. The concept of jihad, "the holy war", was consequently seen as essential among the forces behind the conquests. A variation of this interpretation is the idea that while the ideological pretext was religious, the main forces were economic. The religious motivation was an intellectual superstructure legitimising a gigantic razzia. The motive force was the cupidity and lust for booty characteristic of the "Bedouin". This explanation was advanced by two leading scholars during the first half of the 20th century, L. Caetani and C.H. Becker.[9] The former especially rejected the importance of ideology, claiming that the "Arab nomads" had no sense of religion at all.[10] An even more "secularised" model was suggested by H. Winckler, who saw the expansion of the Arabs as the last great invasion of nomadic Semites from the Arabian peninsula, the first of which had been the Akkadians in 2400 BCE, then the Amorites around 2000 BCE, followed by the Aramaeans (including the Israelite invasion of Palestine) around 1200 BCE.[11] Undoubtedly, these explanations reflect the orientation towards economy and social structure as the main forces of history so characteristic of Western historiography since the end of the 19th century.

There were, however, dissenting voices. In two articles published in the 1950s, G.H. Bousquet voiced scepticism about the prevailing abstract economic models for the conquest.[12] He emphasised what the sources actually say, namely that Islam was a religious movement founded by a prophet who was not a military man and that the whole culture created by the conquests was permeated by ideas and ideals ultimately stemming from this prophet and the circle around him. To deny the religious, or rather, ideological factor is a blatant denial of what the sources state. Certain subsequent scholars tried to develop explanations that included the ideological factor alongside the main "secular" causes. One important line of thought, advanced by M. Hodgson, F. Donner and H. Kennedy, is that Muhammad actually created a new kind of political entity in Arabia founded on

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7 Ibn Hanbal, *Musnad Ahmad ibn Hanbal* (Amman/Riyad: np., 2004), 4: 335 no. 19165.

8 Fred McGraw Donner: *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 3-19; Fred McGraw Donner (ed.), *The Expansion of the Early Islamic State*. vol. 5: *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World* (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2008).

9 Donner, *Expansion of the Early Islamic State*, xix-xx.

10 Ibid., 1-13.

11 Ibid., xix.

12 Ibid., 15-35.

Once impregnable fortresses? The Marble Tower of the Constantinople city-walls (*surlar*).
Engraving reproduced in the journal *Malumat,* 21 October, 1895, Vol. 22.
Cengiz Kahraman Archive, Istanbul

the new religion.[13] This entity transformed the role of the nomadic tribes: they had to stop warring among themselves. Instead, their energy was directed outwards towards the Fertile Crescent. The ideology was able to institutionalise traditional booty-taking, which, however, remained a main factor in the mobilisation of the tribes.

The ideological factor was radically reintroduced by P. Crone and M. Cook in their now famous *Hagarism. The making of the Islamic World,* published in 1977. Based on their reading of contemporary non-Arabic sources, they claimed that early Islam was a kind of a Jewish revival movement located in northwestern Arabia aiming at the conquest of Palestine and the rebuilding of the temple. This triggered the first conquests, which were later transformed into something else. Bousquet had already emphasised the different stages of the conquest.

Hagarism met with fairly strong criticism from several scholars, and its authors seem later to have backed away from certain quite provocative statements in the work. It has also prompted renewed work with the sources, Arabic and non-Arabic, for the first century of Islam. The result has been a substantial number of expert studies on several aspects of the conquest, including, for instance, the splendid series of publications named *The Formation of the Classical Islamic World.*

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13 Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam. Conscience and History in a World Civilization.* vol. 1: *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 207ff; Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests,* 55, 251-71; Hugh Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests. How the spread of Islam changed the world we live in* (Philadelphia: Da Copa Press, 2007), 56f.

Without denying the non-ideological factors behind the conquest, it is obvious that ideology played a central role. The emphasis on this aspect is the lasting result of Crone and Cook's work. However, their construction of a Jewish revival movement in *Hagarism* is not very convincing. Nonethless, there is evidence in addition to that pointed out by them that may shed new light on a very important factor for our understanding of the Islamic conquest.

One major problem concerning the conquests in general is the lack of contemporary Arabic sources for the period. The main testimonies were written down more than a century after the events, even if these sources often quote older ones dating to the period. This makes the matter of source criticism both crucial and difficult. There is one source discovered fairly recently that sheds dramatic light on the ideological aspect of the events. It is the *Kitab al-Fitan* (The Book of Tribulations) written at the beginning of the 9th century by Hammad ibn Nu'aym, a respected *hadith* scholar (d. 842 CE). This book is a compilation of eschatological statements by different authorities. A substantial part of it originates among Yemenis belonging to the community of Yemeni Muslims in the city of Hims in Syria at the end of the Sufyanid period in the Second Civil War around 690 CE. There is no reason to doubt the basic correctness of the attribution of these sayings to the people of Hims, as has been convincingly shown by W. Madelung in a groundbreaking article in which he presented the text for the first time.[14] Subsequently, the text, which is preserved in one manuscript, was edited a couple of times. The text offers a unique glimpse into the thinking and ambitions of a substantial part of the Muslim community in Syria during the early stage of the conquests. The sayings show how the Yemeni Muslims envisaged the final stage of world history, an event they obviously considered themselves to be part of and witness to. The sayings do not describe a distant eschatological scenario but a cataclysmic event that was unfolding before their own eyes.

The scenario is as follows: Mu'awiya ibn Sufyan, founder of the Umayyad dynasty, is the great hero. He is part of a series of seven rulers, the last of whom will be the *amir al-'usab*, "the prince of the hosts", a messiah of Qahtanid descent, that is, a Yemeni. This figure is given the title *al-mansur*, "the victorious one", and *al-mahdi*, "the guided one", two designations that thus have a Yemeni origin. He will put an end to the reign of Quraysh and will rule until the end of the world. He is the one who will face the final battle with the main enemy of Islam and he will fulfil the ultimate purpose of the message of the Prophet – the conquest of Constantinople and the final defeat of Rome. The great battles, *al-malahim al-'uzma,* are described in glowing colours and in great detail. An *umma* of the people of Musa and, in another saying, the descendants of Qadar, that is, both Israelites and North Arabians, will join the people of Saba in the final battle which will take place on the plain of al-'Amq at Antioch, followed by the capture of Constantinople.[15] After that, 'Isa ibn Maryam will descend at the eastern gate of Damascus.

The portrayal in the *Kitab al-Fitan* is completely clear: for the Yemenis in Syria, the main goal of the Islamic project was the conquest of the Roman empire

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14 Wilferd Madelung, "Apocalyptic Prophecies in Ḥimṣ in the Umayyad Age," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 31 *(*1986*)*: 141-85.
    15 Ibid., 158-9.

and its capital, Constantinople. The sayings preserved in the book originate in the context of the ascendance of other rival groups in Syria during the Sufyanid caliphate. There is, for instance, a violent polemic against the Syrian Quda'a-tribes, which later became the allies of the Yemenis after the battle of Marj Rahit in 684 CE. The sayings are thus earlier than this date.[16]

These ideas among the Yemenis of Syria could be of limited importance, representing the local ideals of one group among many others in the early Islamic movement. However, it should be noted that the Yemenis played a crucial role in the conquest of Syria. They are said to have been a decisive factor in the first wave of conquests.[17] It is said that when the order to mobilise was given by Abu Bakr, the Yemenis were very keen on taking part in the Syrian campaign, whereas it was more difficult to engage them against Iraq and only a few tribes joined that campaign.[18] The details cannot be presented here, but the impression is that the Yemenis had a special urge to advance on Syria – the Roman empire.

One other element should be pointed out. Yemen looms large in the early Islamic quasi-historical picture of the history before the 6th century. In the genealogical system, the Yemenis are identified with the "real Arabs", for they are the ones who first received the Arabic language and most of the prophets mentioned in the Qur'an whose historical domicile was uncertain or unknown, such as Hud, Salih, Luqman and Dhu'l-Qarnayn,[19] the people of *tubba'*,[20] are traced to Yemen. These elements are accepted as canonical history in the entire corpus of classical Islamic historiography, but they do not correspond with the political standing of Yemen after the first century of the hijra, for from 720 the Yemenis were successively marginalised and have remained so until this day. The picture of Yemen's prominence must thus have been formed very early, in the first century, and it can therefore be assumed that it reflects the prominence of the Yemenis during this early period of the conquest of Syria. What seems to have been the first world history in Islamic literature, written by the Yemeni scholar Wahb ibn Munabbih in the 720s CE and now extant in the *Kitab al-Tijan* edited by Abu Muhammad 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham one century later, is a most eloquent document concerning the early Yemeni view of their role in history.[21] The conquests of the Umayyads are there presented as mere repetitions of the (unhistorical) conquests by the pre-Islamic kings of Yemen. The univocal acceptance of these Yemeni views in ensuing Islamic historiography up to this day is also remarkable, and may indicate that the Yemenis should not be seen as one group among many but as a leading element in the early Islamic movement.

The Yemeni eschatology documented in the *Kitab al-Fitan* should be read in this context. It is most likely not only the wishful thinking of groups beginning to lose their prominence (thus Madelung), but also contains elements that were basic incitements in their heyday, namely during the initial stages of the Islamic

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16 Ibid., 180ff.

17 Tabari, *Annales,* I: 2612; 'Abd al-Muhsin Mad'aj M. Al-Mad'aj, *The Yemen in Early Islam. A Political History* (London: Ithaca Press, 1988), 69-75; Madelung, *Apocalyptic Prophecies*, 183f.

18 al-Mad'aj, *The Yemen in Early Islam*, 65-69.

19 The Qur'an, 18: 83 ff.

20 The Qur'an, 44: 37.

21 Jan Retsö, "Wahb b. Munabbih, the *Kitab at-tijan* and the History of Yemen", *Arabia* 3 (2005-06): 227-36.

conquest. And we have seen that there is no doubt about the goal of that project: the defeat of Rome and the conquest of Constantinople. If this was the ideology inspiring the Yemeni faction in the Islamic movement, and if their position in that movement indeed was that of central military leadership, one may begin to wonder where these ideas originated.

I suggest that the background should be sought in the pre-Islamic history of Arabia, especially the recently uncovered empire which ruled over Arabia under a monotheistic religion for more than two centuries before the rise of Islam. The realisation that the kingdom of Himyar was not a Bedouin entity, like the Lakhmids in al-Hira or the Ghassanids in Syria, but a real imperial project, based on an ancient agricultural society with an urban culture and many contacts with the surrounding world, that established itself as the leading power in Arabia during the 5th century CE, reaching Roman lines in Syria around 500,[22] is likely to change our understanding of the rise of Islam considerably, to say the least.

There are two factors that should be singled out in this context. The first is the religion of Himyar, which definitely was monotheistic and, according to later Arabic historiography, Jewish.[23] What kind of Judaism was practised in Himyar may be debatable, but there is little doubt about the connection to the great monotheistic biblical tradition. The tracing of the Queen of Sheba to Yemen is documented for the first time by Philostorgius at the beginning of the 5th century,[24] and it is tempting to see this as a reflex of self-understanding in Himyar. The Himyarites were, of course, not Israelites, but the story of the Queen of Sheba as the righteous gentile was well established by the Christians and, when identified with the Yemeni Saba, gave the Yemeni monotheists a great predecessor and a place in the sacred history.

Let us assume for a moment that monotheistic Himyar indeed identified itself with Sheba of the Old Testament. Admittedly we have no contemporary document from Himyar itself indicating this, although the identification is well established in the *Kitab al-Tijan* and most likely in the Qur'an (cf., suras 34 and 27). Since Saba' was the old name of the most renowned kingdom in South Arabia and was preserved in the official title of the kings of Himyar, the identification with Sheba in the Old Testament must have been almost compulsory. It is difficult to imagine a judaising monotheistic ideology in historical Sheba not exploiting this fact. In the Hebrew Bible, there are some passages in which Sheba is given an eschatological role. In Isaiah 60:1-11 and in Psalm 72:11 it is told how Sheba at the end of days shall come to Jerusalem with perfumes, myrrh and frankincense and innumerable camels to pay homage to the king of Israel. It should be remarked that the Christian kings on the other side of the Red Sea used similar biblical references, such as Psalm 72:9 and 68:32 in order to legitimate their own claims to be a new Israel. The glorious role of Sheba in the salvation history is indicated by the saying of Jesus in Matthew 12:42. According to these biblical passages, Sheba will be among the foremost representatives of those

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22 Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Fifth Century* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 1989), 120ff.

23 Christian Julien Robin, "Le judaïsme de Ḥimyar," *Arabia* 1 (2003): 97-172; Iwona Gajda, *Le royaume de Himyar à l'époque monothéiste* (Paris: L'académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres, 2009), 223-54.

24 *Philostorgius Kirchengeschichte* hrsg. J. Bidez, 2 Aufl. (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1972), 3, 4.

loyal to the monotheistic faith. It was not difficult for Yemenis to envisage an eschatological role for themselves even in the new religion, Islam, which after all, was not that different from their own monotheistic faith. As a matter of fact, the telling of the story of the Queen of Sheba in sura 27 of the Qur'an may indicate that Yemeni monotheism was recognised and already accepted in Islam during the time of the Prophet

The other factor is the dramatic developments in South Arabia around 520 CE. According to the historian Procopius, the Romans prevailed upon their allies in Ethiopia to take action against the Jewish kingdom of Himyar, which obviously had become a major threat to Roman interests in Arabia and the Red Sea.[25] The Ethiopian invasion in 525 CE was a major event in the history of the age, with great repercussions in the Christian world and in Arabia.[26] We have no certain literary documents showing the reactions in Yemen proper, but an attack by a Christian power against a New Israel must have generated a strong ideological response. It was not the first Roman and Christian attack against Israel and its allies. On two occasions in the past, Israel had received support from Iran: in the time of Cyrus the Great and during the Parthian invasions in 40 BCE, still reflected by the presence of the Magi in the birth story in the gospel of Matthew. The anti-Christian Yemeni sought support from the Sassanian ruler in Ctesiphon, and the Iranians took action and finished off Ethiopian rule in Yemen around 570 CE.[27] The new Yemeni king, enthroned with Iranian support, Sayf ibn Dhi Yazan, is even now surrounded by legends and is seen in later Arabic tradition as one of the main promoters of the *din Ibrahim*.[28] He is even said to have been the first to prophesy that the small boy Muhammad would become the greatest of prophets, a Yemeni countering of the *Bahira* legend.[29]

The question is now, was there a Yemeni idea of revenge against the Christian empire that had crushed theirs in 525 CE? We do not have univocal contemporary evidence, but the joining of Yemen with the Islamic state in Western Arabia around 630 CE created a main new political power in Arabia, which in many ways was surprisingly similar to the ancient kingdom of Himyar.[30] Until then, Islam had mainly been a local Hijazi phenomenon. Following the events leading up to the year of delegations (630 CE), a new power had risen in Arabia. The Yemenis were, as we have pointed out, quite keen on the Syrian campaign. Did they have a political and ideological agenda? The sayings preserved in the *Kitab al-Fitan* point in that direction. The remarkable position of Yemen in earliest Islamic historiography until this day could indicate that its role was much more prominent than is usually recognised. Among the learned Yemenis of Hims in the mid-7th century, there seems to have been no doubt: the

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25 *Procopius History of the Wars* I-II, ed./transl. by H.B. Dewing (Loeb Classical Library 48) (Cambridge MA and London: Loeb, 1996), I, 20.

26 Gajda, *Le royaume de Himyar*, 82-10: Norbert Nebes, "The Martyrs of Najran and the End of the Ḥimyar: On the Political History of South Arabia in the Early Sixth Century," in *The Qur'an in Context. Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu,* ed. A. Neuwirth, N. Sinai and M. Marx (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 27-59.

27 Irfan Shahid, *Byzantium and the Arabs in the Sixth Century.* vol. I: *Military history* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library, 1995), 365-72; Gajda, *Le royaume de Himyar*, 149-56.

28 J.-P. Guillaume, "Sayf ibn di Yazan," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, IX:101-2.

29 *Kitab al-tijan li-Abi Muhammad 'Abd al-Malik ibn Hisham,* ed. Zayn al-'Abidin al-Musawi (Haydarabad: np., 1347 H/1927-28 CE), 306-10.

30 *Pace* Donner, *Early Islamic Conquests,* 55.

conquest was a joint Israelite-Yemeni attack against the arch-enemy, the Roman empire. The conquest directed against Rome generated other conquests – Iraq and Iran, Egypt – as side-effects. However, it seems that the central thrust was against Rome in Syria.

If this is true, then the Islamic conquest must be placed in a new perspective. The struggle between monotheism and the Mediterranean empire (or empires) had started already with the Maccabaean insurrection of 167 BCE and culminated in the Jewish uprisings of 70 and 132 CE. The hatred against Hellenistic world domination is a central theme in Jewish thinking over the centuries, and is evident, for instance, in the Book of Revelation. With the rise of the judaising Himyarite kingdom, the ideological struggle was renewed.

The position and role of Constantinople in Islam had thus been crucial from the beginning: the capital of the arch-enemy of the pure monotheistic heritage. The great attack in the first Islamic century failed, although it came close to succeeding. A prophecy that the Yemeni messiah, consequently the conqueror of Constantinople, would be a man with three letters in his name was already circulating in about 700 CE.[31] It could refer to the name of the second caliph, 'Umar ibn al-Khattab, but also to the name Muhammad. In the latter case, the prophecy was at last fulfilled in 1453.

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31 *Akhbar 'Ubayd ibn Shariya al-Jurhumi,* ed. Zayn al-'Abidin al-Musawi (Haydarabad: np., 1347 H [1927-28 CE]), 478.

Arab Attitudes towards the Ottoman Sultanate, 1516-1798

BRUCE MASTERS

Istanbul loomed in the minds of the Arab intellectual elite in the first few centuries after the Ottoman conquest not so much as an actual physical place but rather as a synecdoche for the political power invested in it as the seat of the sultanate. Islambul, the name of the city used in most of the surviving sources from the period, evoked the city's legitimacy in the geographical imagination of those writing as the capital of the *Dar al-Islam*. Officials and soldiers dispatched from the capital were recorded as *rijal al-bab* (men of the gate) in the local court records of the Arab cities in an abbreviated invocation of the sultan's authority as being vested in a physical place, namely his palace. We have very few actual travel accounts of the city written in Arabic,[1] and Arabic-speaking authors recorded events that occurred in the city generally only insofar as they concerned the sultans. The sultans may have been physically distant from the lives of their Arabic subjects, but that did not mean they were absent from the concerns of at least the literate classes among them. For the latter in particular, it was obvious that Istanbul was the seat of power. It was from there that the governors and chief judges who governed in the cities of the Arab provinces were sent, and it was to Istanbul that appeals for justice against actions taken by those same officials were sent. In the Arab geographical imagination, the city could not be separated from the institution of the sultanate.

The Ottoman sultans were not universally successful in gaining control of the Arab lands and resistance proved especially strong in Morocco, which remained independent, and in Yemen, from where the Ottoman forces were ejected in the early 17th century and did not return until the late 19th century. These two areas proved to be the exceptions, however. Elsewhere, local elites accepted the transfer of power to a sultan reigning in Istanbul with little overt opposition. Once established, the Ottoman regime in the Arab lands acquired an aura of permanence. As a result, resistance to the House of Osman's claim to legitimacy was rare in the cities of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent, and dissatisfied elements of the military accounted for most of the civil unrest that occurred in the first centuries of Ottoman rule. The same could not always be said of the countryside, where the sultan's writ was often tenuous.

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1 Two such extant accounts are those of Ibrahim al-Khiyari al-Madani, *Tuhfat al-udaba' wa salwat al-ghuraba'*, 3 vols. (Baghdad: Wazarat al-Thaqafa wa al-Iclam, 1979) and Qutb al-Din al-Nahrawali, see Richard Blackburn, trans. and ed., *Journey to the Sublime Porte: The Arabic Memoir of a Sharifian Agent's Diplomatic Mission to the Ottoman Imperial Court in the Era of Suleyman the Magnificent* (Beirut: Orient-Institut Beirut, 2005).

Ottoman military power waned in the 18th century and local strong men exercised virtual autonomy in most of the Fertile Crescent, though, significantly, none asserted independence. Rather, they remained nominally the "sultan's loyal servants". The hope of a revived Mamluk sultanate did challenge a continuing Ottoman presence in Cairo in the middle of the 18th century. Even there, however, the local Muslim intellectual elite did not question the Ottoman sultan's ultimate political stewardship over them: Mamluk bluster did not undermine Istanbul's claim to authority. The veneer of the *Pax Ottomana* finally cracked at the turn of the 19th century when Napoleon Bonaparte occupied Egypt in 1798 and desert warriors, led by the clan of ibn Sa'ud, sacked Karbala in 1802 and later occupied Mecca and Medina. Before that dramatic diminution of Ottoman authority, however, the ideology that legitimated the House of Osman in the eyes of the Sunni Arab elite for almost three centuries rested not on their acceptance of that dynasty's claim to the universal caliphate, as advanced by some of the religious scholars in Istanbul. Rather acquiescence in, if not necessarily enthusiasm for, Ottoman rule by Arab scholars lay in their understanding of the institution of the sultanate and its place in the political ordering of their world as they understood it.

Although Sunni Arab scholars considered the institution of the sultanate to be necessary, they did not automatically grant the House of Osman exclusive rights to that office. That was most apparent in the initial ambivalence towards the dynasty expressed by Arab authors after the conquest of Damascus in 1516 and of Cairo in the following year. Over time, however, Arab scholars bestowed upon the rulers in Istanbul their unquestioned loyalty. That acceptance was based on more than simple inertia, as the Ottoman elite sought to broaden the sultan's appeal to his Arab subjects by employing several strategies. One of the more unusual of these, in retrospect, was the cultivation of the memory of a local Damascene luminary, Muhiy al-Din ibn al-'Arabi. Patronage of his cult by Ottoman governors in Damascus helped to legitimate their rule for some of those they ruled. That strategy provided an ideological link between the sultan and many of his Sunni Arab subjects until ibn al-'Arabi's legacy itself came under attack from some quarters in the Sunni intellectual establishment. Coincidently, perhaps, many of those who were the most vehement in their denunciation of ibn al-'Arabi in the Arab lands were also those who no longer unquestioningly accepted the legitimacy of the House of Osman.

The Sultanate in Theory

The failure of the Ottoman sultans to establish long-lasting hegemony over Yemen or to achieve military success in Morocco lay in part in the question of the dynasty's legitimacy to rule. In both places, the sultans faced the claims of dynasties to a lineage older and nobler than theirs. Of course, physical distance from the Ottoman capital was also a factor, as a campaign in either would have required greater naval resources than the Ottomans possessed. Nevertheless, it was difficult for the sultans in Istanbul to claim their family tree was superior, and hence their legitimacy greater, when they were dealing with rival dynasties that claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad. Bothered by the Ottoman house's lack of a noble pedigree, Mar'i al-Ramli, writing in Cairo in the early

The historical peninsula. 19th century engraving.

17th century, sought to create a proper Arab lineage for Osman Gazi, although he named no specific Arab ancestor as progenitor of the family tree.[2]

Al-Ramli's attempt seems to have had few echoes among his contemporaries. Writing at roughly the same time, Muhammad al-Bakri al-Siddiqi (d. 1661) cited the 16th-century chronicler ibn Ayas as having written that Osman Gazi was of the lineage of the Caliph 'Uthman ibn 'Affan (d. 656). Without commenting on the dubious historical argument that ibn Ayas had employed to bolster his assertion, al-Bakri al-Siddiqi went on to delineate Osman Gazi's Central Asian ancestry following the genealogy favoured in Ottoman Turkish histories.[3] Clearly, al-Bakri al-Siddiqi did not think Osman Gazi was of Arab origin. Nor did it matter to him that he was not. Rather, the legitimacy of Ottoman rule over the Arab lands rested on the Muslim legal scholars' more general understanding of the institution of the sultanate. It was the office of the sultanate that legitimated the Ottoman family's lineage for Arab Muslim scholars, rather than the other way around. That understanding was a product of the evolution of Muslim political theory that had occurred over several centuries before the arrival of the Ottoman army.

From the 11th century onwards, Sunni Muslim legal scholars wrestled with the political reality that the universal caliph, whom Islamic political theory had

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2 Michael Winter, "A Seventeenth-Century Arabic Panagyric of the Ottoman Dynasty," *Asian and African Studies* 2 (1979): 130-56.

3 Muhammad ibn Abi Surur al-Bakri al-Siddiqi, *al-Manah al-rahmaniyya fi al-dawla al-'uthmaniyya* (Damascus: Dar al-Basha'ir, 1995), 9-16.

established as the only legitimate head of the Muslim polity (the *umma*), was a figurehead at best as the *umma* fractured into competing states. In response to the ideological crisis, 'Ali al-Mawardi (d. 1058) developed a theory of the sultanate that offered a compromise between the idealised state and what actually existed. Scholars who came after him also devoted attention to the question and ultimately adopted Mawardi's model, adding further refinements.[4] The scholarly consensus, as it emerged over a century, assigned the rulers of these breakaway states the newly coined title of "sultan" and affirmed that their rule was in accordance with Muslim law.

The scholars thus acknowledged the political reality of the fragmentation of the Muslim world. They, however, upheld the legitimacy of multiple sultans only as long as those sultans, in turn, recognised the caliph's theoretical right to supersede them should a strong caliph emerge. As a sign of that fealty to the higher office, coins in a sultan's realm would bear the caliph's name, and blessings during the Friday prayers would begin with the caliph's name being mentioned before that of the ruling sultan. Furthermore, the sultan or sultans were obliged to protect Muslim lives and property and govern according to Islamic law. An additional prerequisite for legitimacy, the waging of war against infidels, appeared in some later treatises. The religious scholars, faced with the reality of rule by non-Arabs, allowed that the sultans' right to rule was not dependent on their descent from the Prophet Muhammad's tribe, the Quraysh, a continuing prerequisite in their view for those seeking the title of caliph. Righteousness, backed by military might, had replaced lineage as the key to legitimation.

Commentaries written by Arab scholars after the fall of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258 and the murder of the last reigning caliph diminished or ignored any role for the caliphate in the political life of Muslims. There remained, of course, a nominal caliph of the Abbasid line who resided in Cairo, and those holding that office served as the source of legitimation for the Mamluk sultans in much the same way as bishops crowned monarchs in the Latin west. Scholars writing outside the Mamluk territories did not, however, acknowledge his status, as they had that of his ancestors in Baghdad.[5]

An example of the evolution in the understanding of the caliphate by Arab scholars is found in the *Muqaddima* of 'Abd al-Rahman Abu-Zayd ibn Khaldun, written at the start of the 15th century. After establishing that the caliphate was the only just form of government, ibn Khaldun concluded that the office had only existed in the reign of the first four "Rightly Guided Caliphs" (632-61). He went on to explain that although those from among the non-Arabs (*A'jam*) might claim the title of caliph, it was historically the sole prerogative of the descendants of the Prophet's tribe, the Quraysh. Ibn Khaldun concluded that the caliphate was an institution whose historical moment had passed, with the implication that its revival was impossible.[6] However, he did not state that explicitly and it is not clear if all of his contemporaries would have conceded that point. With no reigning caliph, Arab scholars acquiesced in the theory of a just sultan

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4 'Ali al-Mawardi, *al-Ahkam al-sultaniyya wa al-wilaya al-diniyya* (Cairo: al-Maktaba al-Tawfiqiyya, 1978).

5 Ann Lambton, *State and Government in Medieval Islam: An Introduction to the Study of Islamic Political Theory: The Jurists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), 103-29.

6 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1958), 1: 11-12, 285, 394-402.

who would reign in accordance with Islamic law as the only legitimate form of Muslim government.[7]

Abandoning that rationalisation of the sultanate in the absence of the caliphate, Ottoman Sultan Mehmed I (1413-21) explicitly claimed the title "Shadow of God in the Two Worlds, Caliph of God of the Two Earths". This was in line with the understanding that had emerged in Hanafi legal tradition outside the Arab lands in the post-Mongol centuries, which held that any Muslim ruler could legitimately lay claim to the title of caliph. Ebu's-Su'ud Efendi, Sultan Süleyman's legal advisor, further elaborated on that understanding by promoting the theory that the House of Osman had not only a just claim to the title of caliph, but an exclusive one. As caliph, the Ottoman sultan could, furthermore, rightly claim universal sovereignty over Muslims everywhere.[8]

It must be noted that the House of Osman also claimed to be the rightful heir of that other regional Mediterranean model of universal governance, the Roman/Byzantine empire. A possible context for its claim to the caliphate was that it was the political authority of the caliphs that the sultans were asserting, rather than any religious functions of the office. For example, unlike their predecessors in the Abbasid dynasty, no Ottoman sultan ever led the annual *hajj*, which was one of the religious duties of the caliphate as delineated by earlier Muslim scholars. Rather, they designated proxies to fulfil that religious obligation for them. The possible distinction between political and religious functions of the office of caliphate, however, remained implicit rather than explicit in subsequent Ottoman discussions of the sultanate/caliphate.

In contrast, Arab writers before the late 19th century rarely, if ever, conceded the title of caliph to the Ottoman sultans.[9] For them the caliphate was imbued with religious authority and was non-transferable to anyone not of the Prophet's tribe. The Prophet Muhammad had said, "The leaders of the prayer are from the Quraysh" and claims by someone not of Quraysh descent to the title seemed to Arab commentators to be unviable. Rather, they acknowledged that, in one author's formulation, the Ottoman sultans had inherited the "royalty and the glory of the caliphate" if not the actual office itself.[10] The late 18th-century Egyptian historian 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti employed a slightly different strategy when he wrote that the early Ottoman sultans, and especially Süleyman (1520-66), followed the precedent set by the "Rightly-Guided Caliphs" (*Rashidun*) in their handling of the affairs of the *umma*, through their good governance and in raising up Islam over the "unbelievers".[11] In short, the Ottoman sultans, if not entitled to the title of caliph, were as admirable and worthy of their subjects' allegiance as those early paragons of Muslim political virtue.

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7 Ahmad ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-Damanhuri, *al-Nafa' al-ghazir fi salah al-sultan wa al-wazir* (Alexandria: Mu'assasat Shabab al-Jamca, 1992).

8 Colin Inber, *Ebu's-su'ud: The Islamic Legal Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 103-6.

9 Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule 1517-1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), 29-32; Otfried Weintritt, "Concepts of History as Reflected in Arabic Historiographical Writing in Ottoman Syria and Egypt (1517-1700)," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian Politics and Society*, ed. Thomas Philipp and Ulrich Haarmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 188-95.

10 Winter, "A Seventeenth-Century Arabic Panagyric," 155-6.

11 'Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti. *'Aja'ib al-athar fi al-tarajim wa al-akhbar*, 7 vols. (Cairo: Lajnat Bayan al-'Arabi, 1958-67), 1: 66.

Without a caliph, the Arabic-speaking Sunni religious establishment acquiesced in rule by sultans of non-Arab origin as long as they continued to enhance and protect the faith, "to command right and forbid wrong" in the common legalistic formulation of that obligation. In his history of the Ottoman dynasty, al-Bakri al-Siddiqi stressed each and every sultan's commitment to wage the just war against heretics and infidels as well as the sultan's role as benefactor of Muslim charities. In contrast, he highlighted the lack of piety among the Mamluks, as well as their alliance with the "heretical" Shia in Iran, as a justification for their eventual overthrow. In his view, God had worked out His plan on the battlefield of Marj Dabiq in 1516 through the actions of His servant, Sultan Selim Khan. Defence of the faith, piety and good deeds were all that was seemingly necessary to constitute a ruler deserving the loyalty of the "people of the Sunna". By al-Bakri al-Siddiqi's time, there was no cause to question what had become a transparent reality.

The Sultanate in Practice

After the initial shock of conquest in 1516, Muslim scholars accepted the legitimacy of the House of Osman to rule and their loyalty to the sultanate provided the strongest bond of cohesion between Arabic-speaking Muslims and their Ottoman rulers. There was simply no viable alternative for Muslim Arabs to the Ottoman sultanate until Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab challenged the legitimacy of the Ottoman house's claim to be the "Servitor of the Two Holy Places". Society in the early modern age was hierarchical, and for the Sunni intellectual elite in urban centres such as Cairo, Damascus, Baghdad and Medina the sultan was at the summit of that hierarchy. They further believed that their society would not continue to function without someone serving as sultan: the alternative would be anarchy. It was not forgotten, however, that the reigning sultan did not necessarily have to come from the House of Osman.

That principle underpins the account of Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Tulun (d. 1546) of the events before and immediately following the conquest of his native city of Damascus by Sultan Selim in 1516. In his entry for the year 922 A.H./1516-17, ibn Tulun started by stating that Mutawakkil was the caliph and that the sultan of Egypt and Damascus was Qansuh al-Ghawri. He then listed the governor of Damascus and the names of the *qadi*s representing the four Sunni legal schools.[12] When he did have occasion to mention Sultan Selim, ibn Tulun identified him simply as being the "king of Rum (Anatolia)" (*malik al-Rum*) and not its sultan. His entry for the following year began with the same caliph but then continued, "The sultan of Egypt and its dependencies is Tuman Bay while the Sultan of Damascus and Rum is the victorious king Salim Khan bin 'Uthman".[13] The start of the entry for the year following, 924 A.H., noted that Caliph Mutawakkil had left Cairo for Istanbul and that Selim was "Sultan of Egypt, Syria (*Bilad al-Sham*) and Rum".[14]

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12 Shams al-Din Muhammad ibn Tulun, *Mufakahat al-khillani fi al-zaman tarikh Misr wa Sham,* 2 vols. (Cairo: al-Mu'assasa al-Misriyya al-'amma li-l-ta'lif wa al-anba' wa al-nashr, 1964), 2: 3.
13 Ibid., 2: 41.
14 Ibid., 2: 78.

Significantly, neither in his chronicle nor in that of ibn Ayas, his contemporary in Cairo, is there any mention of the (apocryphal) story that would become popular in later Ottoman Turkish histories of the dynasty in which the last of the Abbasid caliphs passed his cloak of office to Selim.[15] If that event had occurred, it would have been an acknowledgment of the House of Osman's claim to the caliphate. In contrast to the Ottoman version of what happened in Cairo in 1517, the Egyptian cleric Ahmad al-Damanhuri (d. 1779) summarised the end of the caliphate as follows:

> Prophecy ended with Muhammad, God bless him and grant him peace, and the caliphate ended with Muta'sim bi-llahi al-'Abbasi whom the Tatars killed in Baghdad in 656. But the "fictive Caliphate" (*al-khilafa al-suriyya*) was transferred to Cairo and it continued until the time of Sultan al-Ashraf al-Ghawri. After him, Sultan Selim offered a profession of loyalty (*bay'a*) to al-Mutawakkil 'ala Allah and took him to Constantinople (*al-Qustantiniyya*). When Sultan Selim died, al-Mutawakkil returned to Cairo and remained as caliph until he died in 950 (1543-44) in the time of Daud Paşa. With his death the "fictive Caliphate" of the Abbasids passed from the world and nothing remains except the sultanate and the wazirate.[16]

Despite the transfer of the last caliph to Istanbul, it did not take long for a challenger to the Ottoman sultan's claim to rule in Damascus to emerge. Janbirdi al-Ghazali, whom Selim had appointed as governor in Damascus, rose in rebellion against his son Sultan Süleyman in 1520. Cautious not to pick sides, ibn Tulun recorded that al-Ghazali assumed the title of *Sultan al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn* (Sultan of the Two Holy Places, namely Mecca and Medina) and the sermon during the Friday prayers at the Ummayad mosque was said in his name.[17] It is significant that al-Ghazali chose to associate himself with the holy cities, rather than simply taking the title *Sultan al-Sham* (Sultan of Damascus) used by his Mamluk predecessors. Later Arab historians recorded that Selim had first been given the title *Sultan al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn* by the *khatib* of the Umayyad mosque in Aleppo, or alternatively that of the Azhar mosque in Cairo, although none of the contemporary Arab chroniclers of the conquest recorded that piece of information.[18]

Irrespective of the truth of that episode, Janbirdi sought to reclaim that exalted title from the Ottomans and clearly hoped it would provide him with an Islamic pedigree that would trump any claim to legitimacy advanced by Süleyman. It did not seem to matter to ibn Tulun that al-Ghazali's men did not actually control the two holy cities, which were under the control of troops commanded by Kha'ir Beg, governor of Cairo, who had remained loyal to his Ottoman masters. Thereafter, ibn Tulun referred to al-Ghazali as "the Sultan" while Süleyman reverted to being simply "*malik al-Rum*". Once the Ottoman forces retook the city, ibn Tulun again conferred the title of sultan on Süleyman. He recorded the transition from one sovereign to the next without editorial com-

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15 Mustafa Nuri Paşa, *Netayic ül-Vukuat*, 2 vols. (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1979), 1: 123.

16 al-Damanhuri, *al-Nafa' al-ghazir*, 44-6.

17 Shams al-Din ibn Tulun, *I'lam al-wara' bi-man wulliya na'iban min al-Atrak bi-Dimashq al-Sham al-kubra* (Damascus: al-Matba'a al-Jarida al-Rasmiyya, 1964), 236.

18 Muhammad Raghib al-Tabbakh, *I'lam al-nubala bi-ta'rikh Halab al-shaba,* 3 vols. (Aleppo: Dar al-Qalam al- 'Arabi, 1977), 3: 141; Muhammad al-Bakri al-Siddiqi, *al-Tuhfa al-bahiyya fi tamalluk Al al-'Uthman fi al-diyar al-Misriyya* (Cairo: Matba'at Dar al-Kutub wa al-Watha'iq al-Qawmiyya, 2005), 81.

ment and we must assume that ibn Tulun considered all three rulers – Mamluk, Ottoman and post-Mamluk Mamluk – equally legitimate.

In contrast to ibn Tulun's ambivalence regarding Sultan Selim's legitimacy to rule in Damascus, his contemporary Muhammad ibn Ayas in Cairo spared no ink in condemning the behaviour of Sultan Selim and his men. They were, from the sultan down to his janissaries, impious Muslims who did not fast during Ramadan or implement the holy law, preferring to rule instead through the sultan's arbitrary decrees. Furthermore, according to ibn Ayas, Selim was a liar, cruel and despotic, and a drunkard who sexually abused women and boys. Michael Winter suggests that ibn Ayas's Mamluk origins might have coloured his view of the new rulers, but there seems to be little doubt that the Ottoman conquest of Cairo and the overthrow of the Mamluk regime was a shock to the city's civilian elite.[19] However, as the memory of the conquest faded, Egyptian scholars acceded to Ottoman suzerainty and even praised the conquest that ibn Ayas had condemned. Although later Arab chroniclers would criticise individual Ottoman governors and judges, no author after ibn Ayas would extend his ire, or his blame, to the sultan himself or his lineage.[20] The House of Osman by its success had become legitimate and above reproach.

Selim was the first and last Ottoman sultan to visit Damascus, but there is no indication in the works that have survived from the three centuries following the conquest that the physical absence of the sultan affected the dynasty's legitimacy in the eyes of the city's inhabitants. Sharaf al-Din Musa al-Ansari (d. c.1594) and Muhammad ibn Kannan (d. 1740), writing more than a century apart, dutifully recorded at the start of each year's entry the same hierarchy established by ibn Tulun.[21] Firstly, they recorded the sultan's name and then the names of the governor in the city and the chief Hanafi judge. Authors in the Mamluk era had employed the same practice in their chronicles. The continuation of the practice suggests a hierarchy of power that was self-evident to the authors.

The chroniclers duly noted the succession of sultans as well as the births of their sons. When that succession was not peaceful, as in 1730, concerns could creep into the narrative. Recording the imprisonment of Sultan Ahmed III after his resignation in favour of his nephew Mahmud I, Ibn Kannan in Damascus took comfort from the peaceful transfer, as opposed to the more violent practice common to the era when caliphs still nominally ruled.

> In the time of the caliphs if a sultan was deposed, they weren't satisfied with simply imprisoning him but they removed his eyes and dressed him in the ragged, rough clothes of a commoner, leaving him to beg from the people. But as for the sons of 'Uthman, it's much better. [The sultan] is imprisoned with ample sustenance until he dies, or is poisoned.[22]

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19 Michael Winter, "Attitudes toward the Ottomans in Egyptian Historiography during Ottoman Rule," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950-1800)*, ed. Hugh Kennedy (Brill: Leiden, 2001), 195-210.

20 James Grehan, "Street Violence and Social Imagination in Late-Mamluk and Ottoman Danmascus (ca. 1500-1800)," *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (2003): 215-36.

21 Sharaf al-Din Musa al-Ansari, *Nuzhat al-khatir wa bahjat al-nathir*, 2 vols. (Damascus: Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 1991); Muhammad ibn Kannan, *Yawmiyyat Shamiyya* (Damascus: Dar al-Tiba'a, 1994).

22 Ibn Kannan, *Yawmiyyat*, 414.

Despite the ominous alternative ending for the sultan's life, the author clearly longed for a legal and non-violent transfer of power, even though he misrepresented the history of the Ottoman dynasty, which did include cases of regicide.

The close identification of the House of Osman with the Sunni cause is a literary trope that runs consistently through the Arab narratives. This is most apparent in the works by Sunni scholars in Mosul and Baghdad,[23] but also had echoes in the works of authors further removed from the battlefields in Iraq. Two biographical dictionaries that have survived from Aleppo, written by Radi al-Din Muhammad ibn Hanbali (d. 1563) and Abu al-Wafa al-'Urdi (d. 1661), contain lengthy biographies of Ottoman grand viziers and chief judges (Şeyhülislam) of the empire who visited the city on their way to campaigns against the Safavids in Iran. Typical of these is a biography written by al-'Urdi for Grand Vizier Hafız Ahmed Paşa, who lost Baghdad to the Safavids in 1624. After recounting how "our soldiers" ('askaruna), that is the Ottomans, lost the city, he detailed the "martyrdom" of Sunni religious scholars in Baghdad, including the city's chief Hanafi judge and mufti, following the capture of the city by Shah Abbas I (1587-1629). According to the author, the shah ordered the men to curse the first three caliphs, and when they refused, he had them beheaded. After providing what was for him an atrocity story, al-'Urdi then exposed to the reader some of the "wrong" beliefs (ghalat) held by the Shia. He completed the entry with a prayer that the sultan would preserve the "people of the Sunna" from error.[24]

A century later, the Damascene chronicler Muhammad ibn Kannan recorded in the year 1143/1730-31:

> It was heard that Sultan Ahmed bin Osman set out to attack the Shi'ite country of the Persians and that he departed Islambul and that he passed through Aleppo on his way to the campaign at the start of spring. Later he was in some Anatolian provinces. May God grant victory to the Sultan of the Muslims and to all of the people of the Sunna.[25]

The attitude towards the Shia had clearly hardened over the course of more than a century of wars waged to decide who would rule Iraq. Earlier in the struggle, Arab authors had shown greater ambivalence. Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn al-Himsi recorded in Sha'aban 928 (June-July 1522) that pilgrims from Iraq were arrested in Damascus, then tortured and executed on suspicion that they were spies for the "Sultan of the East, Isma'il Shah al-Sufi". He added that no one knew why this terrible act was done, other than that it was on the order of Sultan Süleyman. He then added, "May God fight the order and the one who carried it out and judge them for this heinous act". Tellingly, Ibn al-Himsi did not blame Süleyman as the issuer of that order, only the order itself. In the entry for the next year, he praised that same sultan for the capture of Rhodes and noted that the whole city of Damascus celebrated the victory over the "pirate infidels".[26] The

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23 Yasin ibn Khayr-Allah al-'Umari. *Zubdat al-athar al-jaliyya fi al-hawadith al-ardiyya* (Najaf: Matba'at al-Adab, 1974); Percy Kemp, "History and Historiography in Jalili Mosul," *Middle Eastern Studies* 19 (1983): 345-76; Dina Rizq Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul 1540-1834* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 160-71.

24 Abu al-Wafa'al-'Urdi, *Ma'adan al-dhahab fi al-a'yan al-musharrafa bihim Halab* (Aleppo: Dar al-Mallah, 1987), 146-9.

25 Ibn Kannan, *Yawmiyyat*, 409.

sultan was held responsible for acts that ennobled the people of Islam and duly praised for them, but not for those that did not.

If the enemy in the east were Shia "heretics", then in the west that role fell to Christian "infidels". As an indication that the outcomes on distant battlefields were on the minds of the authors, many of the Arab Muslim chroniclers routinely recorded Ottoman victories and defeats in the Balkans. This stands in contrast to the assertion by Michael Winter that Arab chroniclers rarely evinced an interest in the empire's fortunes in the Balkans.[27] Ibn Kannan, towards the end of his chronicle, provides an example in his entry for 1152 (1739-40). Having recounted the fall of Belgrade to the Ottomans and then separately the removal by Sultan Mahmud I of janissaries who had been terrorising the population of Damascus, ibn Kannan linked the two actions:

> An imperial decree arrived from his imperial majesty (hadrat al-Hunkar) al-Sultan Mahmud, may God help him to victory in this world and the next. He is the most righteous of kings from among those whom God aids to victory, for he has taken Bi'r al-Aghrad [Belgrade, literally, "the well of the objectives"] from the sect of the Unbelievers as well as more than a hundred castles and fortresses. He has freed Damascus from the vilest of tyrants and those who are the least in their degree of religion and faith. For he is like Antar and the equal of Nimrod deserving of praise; may God allot our lord sultan with the best portion, amen.[28]

It is telling that the author compared the Ottoman sultan to two heroes of the Arab narrative tradition, suggesting a link of chivalry, if not actual lineage, between Sultan Mahmud and the Arab heroes of the pre-Islamic past.

Ibrahim al-Khiyari of Medina (d. 1672), who was a visitor at the sultan's court in 1669 when news of the final conquest of Crete by the Ottomans arrived, lavished praise on Sultan Mehmed IV for that victory and composed a poem to honour the day.[29] The scholar Mar'i al-Ramli praised the Ottoman sultans for keeping his world equally safe from Christian Corsairs and Bedouin raiders.[30] The latter were also a constant terror for the chronicler Muhammad ibn al-Khanqah al-Makki (d. 1722), writing in the inland Syrian town of Homs. Whenever he mentioned the various nomadic peoples (Bedouin, Kurds, Turkmens) who raided his city, he added his prayer that the sultan might obliterate them.[31] He, like his contemporary ibn Kannan in Damascus, also occasionally prayed for the sultan's victories in Europe, but he clearly had more immediate threats on his mind. Battles won or lost were matters of concern to Muslim scholars across the sultan's Arabic-speaking provinces, and the sultans who commanded Muslim armies against infidels and heretics deserved the authors' prayers.

Although Ibn Tulun's loyalty to the sultan was seemingly mercurial, as generations of Muslims became accustomed to the House of Osman as their right-

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26 Shihab al-Din Ahmad ibn al-Himsi, *Hawadith al-zaman wa wafiyyat al-shuyukh wa al-aqran,* 3 vols. (Sidon: al-Makataba al-'Asriyya, 1999), 3: 43, 49.

27 Michael Winter, "Historiography in Arabic during the Ottoman period," in *Arabic literature in the post-classical period,* ed. Roger Allen and D.S. Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 187-8.

28 Ibn Kannan, *Yawmiyyat,* 511.

29 al-Khiyari, *Tuhfat al-ubada',* 1: 317, 324-5.

30 Winter, "A Seventeenth-Century Arabic Panagyric," 142-3.

31 Muhammad al-Makki. *Ta'rikh Hims* (Damascus: Institute Français de Damas, 1987), 16, 27, 43, 86, 175-6.

ful sovereigns, their loyalty to the ruling dynasty intensified. In contrast to ibn Tulun's ambivalence over the Ottoman conquest of Damascus, a century and a half later al-Khiyari wrote praise poems in memory of Sultan Selim I and to celebrate that very conquest.[32] The question remains, however, whether the loyalty to the sultan professed by Muslim Arab authors was simply perfunctory. Ibn Tulun's easy shift from Mamluk to Ottoman sultan suggests that as long as the rulers were Sunni they would be equally legitimate in the eyes of the authors. Even ibn Kannan, who was extremely attentive to the affairs of the sultanate, could only offer the phrase, "May God stop the fighting", rather than his usual "May God grant the sultan victory", in recording a battle between the Ottomans and the forces of Nadir Shah, whom the author believed to be a Sunni Afghan.[33]

Loyalty to the Ottoman sultanate was not absolute, nor did it come without conditions. For the Sunni urban elite of the Arabic-speaking lands, loyalty to the sultan was strong as long as he defended the sharia, "commanded right and forbade wrong" and upheld the unity of the empire against "heretics and infidels". Such absolute, if conditional, loyalty to the sovereign was not unusual in the early modern world. Inductees into the Orange Order in Ireland in 1796 pledged "to the utmost of my power [to] support and defend the present King George III, his heirs and successors so long as he may support the Protestant Ascendancy, the Constitution and the laws of these kingdoms".[34] If the House of Osman provided sultans who would watch over the lands of the Muslims and keep them from harm, then the Arab authors represented here would rejoice in the sultan's victories and fret over his defeats. Alternative candidates for the sultanate besides the scions of the House of Osman were possible, but by the 18th century most in the Arab lands would be hard pressed to say who they were.

If the Muslim Arab authors identified with the successes and defeats of the House of Osman, two Christian Arab authors from the 18th century present a more complex picture. Yusuf Dimitri 'Abbud (d. 1805), in chronicling events in his native Aleppo in the last quarter of that century, made frequent references to events in Istanbul, including accounts of huge blocks of ice floating in the Bosporus or of that city's frequent devastating fires.[35] This was a reflection of fact that he was a Melkite Catholic merchant and that many of his community, including relatives, frequently travelled to Istanbul on business or were resident there. That awareness of the wider empire extended to the sultan as his sovereign. 'Abbud followed any mention of a sultan's name in his chronicle with pious expressions that were similar to those invoked by Muslim authors. For example, following the news of the enthronement of Sultan Abdulhamid I in 1774, 'Abbud adds, "May God make his days brilliant, full of security and joy".[36] Jewish sources from the same period suggest a similar identification with the dynasty by the authors.[37]

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32 al-Khiyari, *Tuhfat al-udaba'*, 2: 140-1.

33 Ibn Kannan, *Yawmiyyat*, 382.

34 Marcus Tanner, *Ireland's Holy Wars: The Struggle for a Nation's Soul 1500-2000* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 192.

35 Yusuf Dimitri 'Abbud, *al-Murtad fi ta'rikh Halab wa Baghdad*, ed. Fawwaz Mahmud al-Fawwaz, MA thesis, University of Damascus, 1978, 36, 38.

36 Ibid.,13.

37 Matt Goldish, *Jewish Questions: Responsa on Sephardic Life in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 144.

The inclusion of such pious phrases after the sultans' names by both Muslim and non-Muslim authors may have been simply ritualistic in the way that pious phrases are used by Arabic-speakers to cover any number of daily occurrences. The absence of such pieties after other Ottoman officials' names in the chronicles, however, seems to indicate an acknowledgment that the House of Osman sat at the head of a natural political hierarchy that for most of his subjects was ordained by God, to be respected if not enthusiastically endorsed. Governors, in contrast, could be lambasted for their cruelty, their avarice, their impiety or a combination of the three.

Respect for the dynasty was, however, not universal among non-Muslim authors. Fr. Mikha'il Burayk (d.1782) in Damascus had little regard for the House of Osman. He recorded the death of sultans and their enthronement without adding any pious phrases. Burayk's sympathies are, however, apparent in his report of the Russian occupation of Beirut in 1773, where he noted that they had erected a large cross over the city, thereby "raising their stature and exalting their reputation".[38] He also reported a prophecy that promised the overthrow of the House of Osman by some unnamed Christian hero in 1762, to be followed by the second coming of Christ in 1783.[39] Elsewhere, when describing Philemon the Patriarch of Antioch who was a Phanariot Greek from Istanbul, Burayk asserted that he was a *rajul 'Uthmanli*. This is one of the earliest references I have found for the application of the appellation "Ottoman" to someone who was not of the royal house or serving it. Burayk then went on to discuss the patriarch's poor table manners and faulty understanding of Orthodox traditions.[40] Clearly, Fr. Burayk did not think being an Ottoman was a good thing.

The difference in the degree of respect shown the sultan in the works of the two Christians authors reflects their differing worldviews. The integration of 'Abbud's Melkite Catholic community into a larger Ottoman commercial world created a cosmopolitan outlook that led him to be interested in the state of affairs outside his native Aleppo. His was a community that prospered under Ottoman rule and the author was seemingly willing to acknowledge that fact, even if he frequently commented on corrupt Ottoman officials in Aleppo. 'Abbud's political worldview was not unlike that of his Muslim contemporaries: local government officials were corrupt and tyrannical, but the sultanate itself was beyond reproach. The righteousness of a royal hierarchy in his worldview explains 'Abbud's derisory description of the French Revolution as regicide by the mob and his labelling of Napoleon Bonaparte as a "heretic" acting against God's natural order first in France and later in Egypt, where he challenged the sultan's authority.[41]

Esteem for the sultan as maintainer of the status quo for Christians is present in the history written by the Maronite Patriarch Istifan Duwayhi (d. 1704) as well. Educated in Rome, Duwayhi's worldview, like that of 'Abbud, recognised that the sultans protected his community and that the alternative would probably be worse.[42] In contrast, the parochial attitudes of Fr. Burayk reflected a society

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38 Mikha'il Burayk, *Tarikh al-Sham, 1720-1782* (Harissa, Lebanon: no publisher, 1930), 100.
39 Ibid., 57-8.
40 Ibid., 82-5.
41 'Abbud, *al-Murtadd*, 176-81.
42 Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 41-3.

where for him the differences between Christians and Muslims were stark. The memory of centuries of Christian subjugation by Muslim rulers coloured his historical imagination and he bore no goodwill towards any of them, with the notable exception of the 'Azm governors of his city whom he praised for their liberal attitudes towards the Christians, asserting that they were the only governors since the conquest of Damascus by the Muslims to treat the Christians of the city fairly.[43]

The Cult of Ibn al-'Arabi

Beyond the defence of Sunni Muslim from their enemies, the Ottoman sultans succeeded in creating another link to some of their Muslim Arab subjects through the promotion of the cult of Ibn al-'Arabi. One of the most distinctive features of the intellectual life of the Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire in the centuries following the conquest was the centrality of the writings of the mystic Ibn al-'Arabi in much of the discourse. Muhyi al-Din Ibn al-'Arabi was born in Spain, but settled in Damascus in later life. He died there in 1240 and was buried in the Salihiyya quarter, which was outside the city's walls on the slopes of Jabal Qasyun, which rises to the northwest of the city.

It is not readily apparent why the cult would resonate for some in the Ottoman centuries. Many scholars of Islam considered Ibn al-'Arabi to have been the most brilliant of the Sufi theosophists, but his writings are also extremely dense on account of the subtlety of his arguments as well as his intentionally obscure language. He was unquestionably controversial, as his writings were said to advance the concept of *wahdat al-wujud*, or the unity of being, although he never used that phrase in his voluminous writings. Greatly simplified, Ibn al-'Arabi proposed the existence of one reality, God, from which emanates the consciousness that all sentient beings share. Each individual is both separate from, but also part of, that larger consciousness, even if most are unaware of that reality. The quest for knowledge of one's existential nature can lead an individual back to the source of all consciousness that is God: in the process, both God and the seeker become aware of each other as the indistinguishable self.

Furthermore, the distinctions among religions wither away as one seeks what was for Ibn al-'Arabi the transcendent truth. God's consciousness, in the view of the Shaykh, as he was called by those who followed his teachings, cannot be circumscribed by one religion's rituals. Rather the rituals of all religions provide the foundation upon which the seeker of truth might begin to approach Her. For Ibn al-'Arabi, if God had a gendered nature, then it must be feminine in Her role as Creator.[44] Ibn al-'Arabi's Muslim critics argued that his vision of the universe promoted monism and collapsed the distinction between God and His creations. Furthermore, many Muslim scholars felt that Ibn al-'Arabi's religious relativism diminished the importance of the sharia and denied Islam's unique truth. As such, many Muslims, both then and now, have found Ibn al-'Arabi's writings to be heretical.

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43 Burayk, *Tarikh*, 62.

44 William Chittick, *Imaginal Worlds: Ibn al-'Arabi and the Problem of Religious Diversity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994).

Given the controversy surrounding him and the complexity of his vision, it is somewhat surprising that Ibn al-'Arabi would become a figure with cult status in the Ottoman period. Nonetheless, from their entry into the Arab lands, the Ottoman sultans served as the patrons and promoters of the cult of the Shaykh. Ibn Tulun wrote that one of the first things Sultan Selim did after conquering Damascus was to attend Friday prayers in the Umayyad mosque, the city's "cathedral mosque" and the reputed burial place of John the Baptist's head. That respect was to be expected from a ruler who proclaimed that he was the upholder of Islam. Soon after this, however, he surprised the ulama of the city by visiting the tomb of Ibn al-'Arabi, where he offered prayers over the derelict grave site, a clear indication that the saint had fallen into obscurity in the centuries following his death.

According to the Ottoman traveller and raconteur Evliya Çelebi, writing over a century and half after the event, Selim was troubled at that time over whether to pursue his Mamluk enemies to Cairo and hesitated to act. In this period of personal trial, Ibn al-'Arabi came to Selim in a dream and promised him Cairo if Selim would restore the saint's grave.[45] Although it makes a good story, there was an important political reason Selim might have wanted to honour the saint. Accompanying Sultan Selim to Damascus was the Ottoman legal scholar and chief judge of the empire (Şeyhülislam) Kemalpaşazade Ahmed (d. 1534), or ibn Kamal in the Arabic sources. Kemalpaşazade followed in a tradition of Ottoman scholarship that viewed Ibn al-'Arabi's writings as a potential bridge between the Ottoman dynasty's role as upholders of Sunni Islam and the various popular movements present in Anatolia that were tinged with Shia millenarianism.

The court scholars sought the absorption of the religious dissidents into the body politic of the empire by promoting the sultan as the "perfect man" (al-insan al-kamil) of the Sufi tradition. In many Sufis' understanding of the cosmos, there has to be such an individual who acts as the fulcrum between the perceived mundane physical world and the transcendent reality of God. The Prophet Muhammad fulfilled this role in his lifetime, but those who shared this belief held there must one such individual in every generation. Ibn al-'Arabi wrote that with the Prophet's death and the end of Prophecy, the mantle of "perfect man" had rested on the shoulders of God's saints (awliya), of whom Ibn al-'Arabi claimed to be the last.

Without saints, many Muslim scholars in the Sufi tradition felt that there had to be some line of descent, either spiritual or physical, that would provide the individuals who would fulfil the necessary function as the "perfect man". In promoting the sultan as that individual, Ottoman scholars based their claim on the works of Ibn al-'Arabi. In doing so, they sought to elevate the House of Osman as an alternative to the Shia imam, whom many in the empire believed was waiting to return to restore justice to the world at some future time, or was already present in the persona of Shah Ismail in Iran. By promoting the cult of Ibn al-'Arabi, Selim could present himself as the embodiment of that "perfect man". He could thus claim to be the promoter and protector of both the *zahir* (outer) and the *batin* (inner) traditions of Islam.[46] 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Sha'rani,

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45 Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi,* vol. 9 (Istanbul: Üçdal Neşriyat, 1985), 206.

46 Tim Winter, "Ibn Kemal (d. 940/1534) on Ibn 'Arabi's Hagiography," in *Sufism and Theology,* ed. Ayman Shihadeh (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), 137-57.

an influential Egyptian Sufi of the 17th century, seemingly conferred that role on the Ottoman sultans when he labelled Selim's son Süleyman as "*al-qutb al-zahir*", or the "visible axis of the universe", a clear reference to the "perfect man" tradition.[47]

Ibn Tulun did not provide the reason for Selim's actions in relation to the saint's tomb, but noted that he established a *waqf* for its maintenance and for the construction of a mosque over it. That mosque was completed while Selim was in Cairo and he prayed there as his last public act in Damascus before setting out to return to the capital. As evidence of the association between the House of Osman and the saint, Janbirdi al-Ghazali destroyed the dome of the newly constructed mosque as one of the first acts of rebellion against Süleyman in 1520. When Farhat Paşa restored Ottoman control in the city in that same year, he quickly moved to repair the dome. When Farhat died in 1522, he was buried in the grounds of the mosque, establishing a precedent for it to serve as the resting place of Ottoman governors who died in the city.[48]

From that point on, the mosque was known as the Salimiyya, not to be confused with the Sufi *tekke* in Damascus that bears that name today, whose construction was financed by Sultan Selim's grandson Selim II (1566-74). The original Salimiyya, known today simply as the Mosque of Ibn al-'Arabi, became a sacred space for Ottoman officials to perform public rituals. Ibn Tulun noted that following Selim's example, it was often the last place governors visited upon leaving the city for Istanbul for reposting. Although Süleyman would build a much grander mosque on the banks of the Barada River to serve as the starting point for the *hajj* out of the city, the mosque built by his father seems to have continued to hold a special place in the spiritual imagination of Ottoman officials and Muslim pilgrims alike. In recognition of this, Süleyman commissioned Sinan, the same architect who designed his larger mosque, to build opposite the mosque his father had built an *'imara* for the distribution of food to pilgrims who had come to visit the saint's tomb.[49]

The intellectual who was most closely associated with Ibn al-'Arabi in the Ottoman period was 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi (d. 1731). Al-Nabulusi was born in Damascus in 1641 in the al-Salihiyya quarter, not far from the mosque of Ibn al-'Arabi. He was a prolific scholar whose extant works number over 200. Most of these have not been studied by scholars and exist only in manuscript form, but their titles range from love poetry dedicated to beardless youths to a treatise on the proper care and propagation of olive trees.[50] They also include a history of the Ottoman dynasty. But al-Nabulusi's most famous works among his contemporaries were his treatises on the works of Ibn al-'Arabi. When Ibrahim al-Khiyari visited Damascus in 1669, al-Nabulusi was already an established scholar. As such, al-Khiyari sought him out both on his travels north and then again when he returned to Damascus on his way to Cairo and home.[51]

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47 Winter, "Attitudes toward the Ottomans," 200.

48 Ibn al-Himsi, *Hawadith al-zaman,* 3: 49.

49 Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 222-4.

50 Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufi Visionary of Ottoman Damascus: 'Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi, 1641-1731* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2005).

51 al-Khiyari, 1:123-5; 2: 135.

The Damascene chronicler Muhammad ibn Kannan, who referred to al-Nabulusi as "mawlana" (our master), repeatedly identified al-Nabulusi as the most learned of his city's many learned men. That sentiment was echoed by Muhammad al-Makki, who recorded al-Nabulusi's visit to Hims and his reverential reception by the Sunni establishment there.[52] Ibn Kannan noted when al-Nabulusi gave public lectures on the saint's writings in the Salimiyya mosque and who among the city's prominent men attended. These frequently included the Ottoman governor and chief judge in the city. When al-Nabulusi died in 1731, there was a large public funeral, which the Ottoman governor and chief judge attended. Two years later, his body was entombed in the Salimiyya mosque near the mausoleum of Ibn al-'Arabi.

The cult of Ibn al-'Arabi was not universally embraced by the Ottoman ulama, however. One of the earliest critics was Mehmed of Birgi (d. 1573). An Anatolian scholar, Birgili Mehmed denounced many Sufi practices as both innovations and impious. Birgili Mehmed, however, did not condemn mysticism outright, only its more unrestrained forms. In particular, he found fault with the writings of Ibn al-'Arabi, whom he said promoted the heretical idea of the "unity of being". One of Birgili Mehmed's students, Kadızade Mehmed (d. 1635), created a stir in Istanbul by demanding that the Ottoman Sultan Murad IV ban coffee and tobacco, prohibit music and dance and remove the study of mathematics and the natural sciences from the state-sponsored madrasas.[53] During the reign of Sultan Mehmed IV (1648-87), the Kadizadeliler, as the movement came to be known, was in the ascendancy and one of its most prominent promoters, Vanî Mehmed Efendi, served as the spiritual advisor to the sultan. Among the other abuses of what he considered to be "true" Islam, Vanî Mehmed condemned the popularity among the learned of the writings of Ibn al-'Arabi.

In 1692, al-Nabulusi wrote a stinging treatise against an unnamed Turkish (*min al-Arwam*) scholar who had written a critique of Ibn al-'Arabi for having said that Christians and Jews might enter paradise. Al-Nabulusi's essay is loaded with vitriol and makes much of the Turkish origins of the scholar, with the implication that he had an imperfect knowledge of Arabic and was, therefore, unqualified to speak authoritatively about the sources.[54] It is widely presumed that the target of his wrath was Vanî Mehmed or one of his students. Ibrahim al-Khiyari also recorded a disagreement with Vanî Mehmed, although his did not reach the level of the polemic found in the treatise by al-Nabulusi. Al-Khiyari had an audience with Vanî Mehmed in Istanbul, during which he praised the Ottoman scholar for influencing the sultan to close down the taverns of the city. After composing a praise poem in Vanî Mehmed's honour, al-Khiyari added that he had taken issue, however, with the Ottoman scholar's hard stance on coffee-houses.[55]

That such a disagreement could exist between two scholars comes as no surprise, given the possible difference in interpretation of a shared legal tradition

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52 al-Makki, *Ta'rikh Hims*, 123-5.

53 Madeline Zilfi, "The Kadızadelils: Discordant Revivalism in Seventeenth-Century Istanbul," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 45 (1986): 251-69.

54 Michael Winter, "A Polemical Treatise by 'Abd al-Gani al-Nabulusi against a Turkish Scholar on the Religious Status of the *Dhimmis*," *Arabica* 35 (1988), 92-103.

55 al-Khiyari, *Tuhfat al-udaba'*, 1: 164; 2: 74-6.

by Arabs and Ottomans.[56] Highlighting that gap in interpretation of religious law, al-Khiyari had written an ode in praise of the Nawfura coffee-house in Damascus earlier in his travelogue. Unlike taverns, which with their drawn shutters were dens of iniquity and sexual licentiousness, he praised coffee-houses for their open, airy spaces where a cultivated man could rest, talk with friends in leisure or contemplate the world as it passed him by. Al-Khiyari did not record Vanî Mehmed's response to his defence of the coffee-house. He also did not mention whether he had broached the subject of Ibn al-'Arabi's writings in his discussions with the Ottoman scholar. Al-Khiyari had previously visited the mosque of Ibn al-'Arabi and he reported praying over the saint's grave as well as composing a poem in his honour, acts which Vanî Mehmed would have condemned as heresy.[57]

Despite the essay by al-Nabulusi, on which side of the heated divide over Ibn al-'Arabi's writings a scholar might align himself seems to have had very little to do with his mother tongue. The eminent Ottoman scholar, Katib Çelebi, also disagreed with the students of Vanî Mehmed and defended Ibn al-'Arabi.[58] Furthermore, not all Arab ulama had problems with the stricter interpretation of Islam advocated by the Kadızadeli movement. Muhammad al-Ustawani, a scion of a family well-known in Damascus for its piety and scholarship and a long-time resident of the imperial capital, was a leading advocate of its extreme positions until his death in 1661. He even had the righteous temerity to denounce the leading jurist of the empire, Yahya efendi, for having written poetry.[59] Many of al-Nabulusi's contemporaries in Damascus were also wary of his admiration of Ibn al-'Arabi. He was removed from his post as mufti of Damascus after only a few months in response to the opposition of some of the city's Sunni elite, who found his rulings to be unorthodox.

Whether Selim had consciously sought that outcome when he refurbished the saint's tomb, the cult of Ibn al-'Arabi helped to promote the dynasty's legitimacy in the Arab lands and establish a bond between sultan and subjects. Understanding the political importance of an appeal to local traditions in gaining legitimacy, his son Süleyman would promote the cult of the jurist Abu Hanifa and the Sufi saint, 'Abd al-Qadir Gilani in Baghdad as counterweights to the Shia shrines in a move to reclaim for the Sunnis the spiritual geography of that city. But for some Arab scholars, the cult of Ibn al-'Arabi provided a strong spiritual/ideological link between themselves and the Ottoman sultans. As an indicator of this, the authors who expressed the strongest support for the House of Osman also professed reverence for the Shaykh.

The Egyptian chronicler of the Ottoman dynasty, al-Bakri al-Siddiqi, acknowledged that link in his biography of Sultan Selim I in which he highlighted Selim's construction of a mosque over the tomb of Ibn al-'Arabi and the rev-

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56 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Relations between the Syrian *'Ulama* and the Ottoman State in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Kate Fleet (Rome: Instituto per l'Oriente, 1999), 67-95.

57 al-Khiyari, *Tuhfat al-udaba'*, 1:135.

58 Halil Inalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), 183-5.

59 Marc Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 70-1.

erence the sultan paid to the saint as proof of Selim's religiosity. Al-Bakri al-Siddiqi added that the impious Mamluk sultan, whom the Ottomans had overthrown, had paid no homage to the saint whatsoever. In the author's view of the dynasty's history, inner faith and political legitimacy were intertwined, and he had earlier credited the intercession by a host of saints and angels with Selim's victory at Marj Dabiq.[60] A century and half later in Mosul, Yasin al-'Umari took the news of Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798 as a sign that the Ottoman Empire's end was near, but found some solace in the fact that the sad turn of events had been predicted by Ibn al-'Arabi.[61]

Conclusion

Many of the Arabic-speaking Muslim intellectuals of the cities of Syria, Egypt and Iraq viewed the Ottoman regime as their regime in the early modern period. There was no question in their public voice recorded for posterity that it was legitimate and I doubt whether any disapproval of the dynasty existed in private either. As in most cases only one copy of the works discussed here has survived, it is doubtful that the authors wrote with a wider public in mind, and so we can probably discount the possibility that they were seeking to curry favour with those in power. None of the works is dedicated to anyone, the usual sign that the author was seeking patronage. So why did they write? My personal guess is that they sought to impose some order on their universe by describing the most important events or personalities in their lives, either for posterity or for their own memory, a diary of sorts.

The authors' identification with the dynasty was more than a superficial one and they viewed its victories and defeats as personal gains or losses. Several took great interest in the intellectual developments in the capital: they did not view them as distant abstractions but rather as part of a larger conversation in two different languages but within one shared cultural outlook. I do not deny that Muslim Arab authors were proud of their position as heirs to an Islam their ancestors had articulated through the medium of the Arabic language. Indeed, all would have agreed with the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad that stated the language of paradise was Arabic.[62] But that pride did not prevent them from identifying with the vicissitudes of the Ottoman sultanate.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that that sense of connection did not fade in the modern period. Although Wahhabi ideas of Qur'anic literalism gained popularity in some Muslim intellectual circles in the 19th century, no major Arab scholar supported the Wahhabi call to overthrow the sultanate as illegitimate.[63] Neither, by the way, did most major Arab Muslim scholars recognise the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans' claim to the caliphate. Even when they did so, it came with the recognition that the sons of the House of Osman could not technically be caliphs because of their non-Arab origins. Necessity, the apologists argued, required that all Muslims must nevertheless recognise the sultan's claim

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60 al-Bakri al-Siddiqi, *al-Tuhfa al-bahiyya*, 57.
61 Khoury, *State and Provincial Society*, 164-6.
62 al-Khiyari, *Tuhfat al-udaba'*, 2:55.
63 Butrus Abu-Manneh, "Salafiyya and the Rise of the Khalidiyya in Baghdad in the early nineteenth century," *Die Welt des Islam* 43 (2003): 349-72.

to be caliph.[64] But even for those who did not, the Sunni Arab elite of the late 19th- and early 20th-centuries chose in the face of European imperial ambitions to take comfort, like their ancestors before them, in the House of Osman serving as their sultans and viewed their rule as legitimate.[65]

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64 Ibrahim Muwaylihi, *Spies, Scandals, and Sultans: Istanbul in the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire*, trans. Roger Allen (Plymouth: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008), 163-4.

65 Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Itzchak Weismann, *Taste of Modernity: Sufism, Salafiyya, and Arabism in Late Ottoman Damascus* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

# PART II

Becoming Ottoman in 16th Century Aintab

LESLIE PEIRCE

A generation after its surrender to Sultan Selim I in August 1516, the city of Aintab and the province of which it was the capital were busy adjusting to the new Ottoman presence and exploiting it as well. Istanbul demanded a radically new orientation for a northern Syrian province whose recent overlords had resided to the south, in Cairo, Damascus or Aleppo. But if the Ottoman conquest meant subordination to imperial policies, it did not mean wholesale domination by Istanbul. In the decades after 1516, the sultan's government was increasingly present locally in the persons of the governors, judges and soldiers it assigned to the province. More importantly, Ottoman practice depended heavily on the cooperation of provincial power-brokers, especially in the aftermath of conquest. Since tax revenue was arguably the central government's supreme desideratum from its provinces, local entrepreneurs, rural and urban alike, made good subjects. Thus Aintabans eager to gain advantage from the new regime's presence were a major force in the integration of Aintab city and province into the empire's economic, fiscal, legal and military networks. These networks were designed in and directed from Istanbul, but it was local actors who made them locally effective.

Aintab entered the Ottoman domains in a period when the empire was still "becoming". The process of absorbing Selim's huge conquests of 1514 and 1516-17 was far from immediate. Aintab may have been a relatively insignificant addition, but the Ottoman empire was the sum of its imperial relations with places like Aintab. The integration of Aintab into the sultanic regime becomes visible in about 1536 in government-sponsored documentation that accompanied the administrative consolidation of the region. The most important sources for this essay, which focuses on the years around 1540, a generation after the Ottoman conquest, are court records (*sicillat*) and the land and census surveys (*tahrir*) of 1536, 1543 and 1557.[1]

Despite this documentary evidence of imperialisation, there are some questions regarding Aintab's relation to the capital that are difficult to answer. The province was fitting into the empire administratively, but were its inhabitants becoming "Ottoman"? If so, how important was Istanbul to that process? More

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1 The court records for Anatolia were at the time of this research housed in the Milli Kütüphane (National Library) in Ankara. These records have now been moved to Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (BOA), Istanbul. In the used citations AS stands for Aintab Sicili; Sicil #161 covers September 1540 to May 1541, and Sicil #2 from May to October 1541.
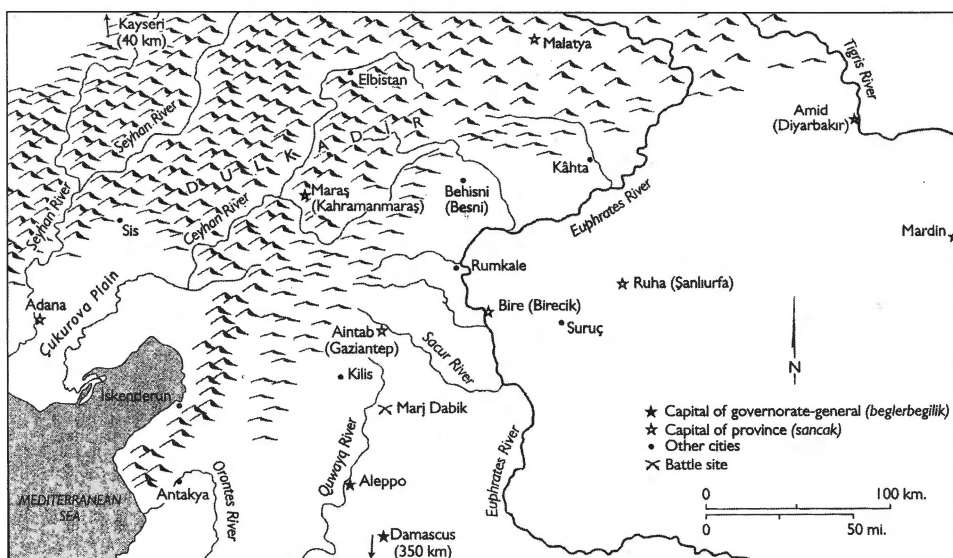
The greater Aintab (Gaziantep) region.
Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab.* (c) 2003 by the Regents of the University of California. Published by the University of California Press.

basically, how is local thinking about geographies of belonging perceptible to the historian? What were the forces that moulded political or cultural allegiance to sovereign authority? How did the conquest itself figure in attitudes towards the new Ottoman regime? This essay attempts to offer some answers. In doing so, it argues that what was important for Aintabans was the *regional* reintegration that was secured by the Pax Ottomanica – that stabilising effect, especially with regard to commerce and communications, of an empire in its heyday. In the mid-16th century, Istanbul was a distant although not remote horizon – the source of laws and policies that might or might not be domesticable to Aintab's needs, and at the same time the locus of appeal when local authorities mismanaged affairs or abused the province's residents.

Ottoman Regionalism

The Ottoman sultanate saw its empire as a collection of conquered regions, or so the term it used for "empire" – *memalik-i mahruse*, the well-protected dominions – implied. Regions were determined by physical geography and by the local economies, urban settlements, trade routes and communication links that geography supported. Several of the cities in the greater Aintab region were of ancient provenance, for example Aleppo (ancient Beroea). Itself an old city, Aintab at the time of the Ottoman take-over had long lain within regional networks that spanned northern Syria and central and eastern Anatolia. The parameters of the core Aintab region in its early Ottoman decades are suggested in Map 1. The inner core was defined by Aleppo, Ruha, Bire, Marash and Kilis, and the outer perimeter by Damascus, Amid, Malatya, Elbistan and the Çukurova plain.

An unexpected but useful measure of regional communication is crime and the networks of its prosecution. Animal rustling, for example, was apparently endemic in the greater Aintab region: the flourishing market in stolen animals

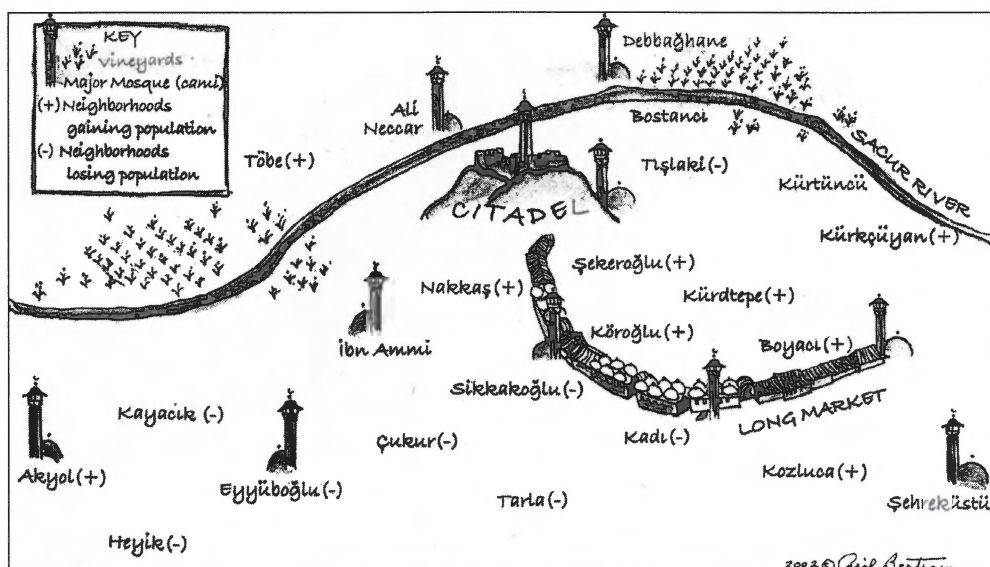The city of Aintab and its surroundings (1536-43) by Carol Bertram.
Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab*. (c) 2003 by the Regents of the University of California. Published by the University of California Press.

had as one of its centres the village of Kızılhisar in the Telbaşer sub-district of Aintab. The attempts by individuals to recover their stolen horses and donkeys, documented in the city's court records, show us how far this web of criminal enterprise extended. Bereft owners came to Aintab from as far away as Karaman in south-central Anatolia and Dayr al-Zor on the Syrian Euphrates. How did they learn the whereabouts of their animals?[2] There appears to have been something of an "information hotline" operating across villages and towns, supported no doubt by police and judicial authorities (the punishment for theft was severe). In addition, Ottoman legal policy gave a kind of definition to "criminal regionality" by specifying that a suspect's bail guarantor (*kefil*) was responsible for searching across seven judicial districts if the suspect were to go missing.[3]

Regions of course overlapped one another, and new political constellations could alter regional configurations. The Ottomans vacillated at first with regard to Aintab's administrative affiliation, attaching it originally to the governorate-general (*beylerbeyilik*) of Aleppo, but then transferring it to the Dulkadir *beylerbeyilik* sometime in the early 1530s. The latter's capital Marash, the former Roman/Byzantine frontier town of Germanicea, lay a day or two's journey north of Aintab, in the Anti-Taurus mountains. Aintab's more historical, and perhaps natural, regional association was southward, towards Aleppo, which was a rich domain, whereas Dulkadir, with a large tribal population, was not. In a massive *tahrir* survey of the *beylerbeyiliks* of Aleppo, Damascus, Diyabakır and Dulkadir dated 1526, Aleppo was the wealthiest and Dulkadir the poorest.[4] The impetus for Aintab's transfer to Dulkadir may have been to award this long-settled and sophisticated urban centre to an underdeveloped region.

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2 Cases involving missing animals include AS161: 40b, 89c, 97e, 162d, 177a, 181e; AS2: 227a.

3 Uriel Heyd, *Studies in Old Ottoman Criminal Law,* ed. V.L. Menage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 73, 112.

4 Tapu Tahrir Defteri 998, fols. 279, 292, 293-300, 408-9. The land census registers (*tapu tahrir*) are housed in the Osmanlı Başbakanlık Arşivi in Istanbul.

Aintab in the 16th century can be described as a critical node in the transitional zone between the mountain highlands of Marash and the agricultural plains of Aleppo. Agriculture dominated Aintab's rural economy. If not the largest revenue-producing staple of the region, grapes were perhaps the most popular – everyone, it seemed, wanted a vineyard or even a handful of grapevines. As Evliya Çelebi informs us in his voluminous mid-17th century travel memoir, Aintab's grape molasses (*pekmez*) was famous in the region because of its purity, its unusual solidified consistency and the wooden boxes it came in.[5] Although animal husbandry was an important activity, especially in the province's northernmost areas, the nomadic population registered in Aintab was not large: pastoral nomads crossing the province on their annual migrations, however, yielded revenues to the province in the form of a camping tax.[6] But as today, when Gaziantep, the modern city, is perhaps best known for its commercial and entrepreneurial talents as well as for its pistachio nuts and baklava, so in the 16th century Aintab was an important commercial centre. Many of its inhabitants were busy in manufacture and trade, and sometimes both. Evliya praised Aintab's quivers and *yemeni* slippers (the latter still today handmade with seven kinds of leather), but if the city's court records are any indication, the manufacture of and trade in textiles and textile dyes was a major occupation of urban and rural entrepreneurs alike.

Aintab's commercial success was facilitated by its location on or near trade routes to the east, west, south, northeast and northwest. Traders hired agents or travelled themselves (the alibi of an Armenian merchant suspected of murder was that "I travel on business, I am here today, gone tomorrow"). Overshadowed by the commercial hub of Aleppo, third city of the empire, Aintab was nevertheless a local, regional and trans-regional trading centre. In 1541, textiles from as far away as Damascus and Cairo were being bought and sold among leading merchants and officials of the city, as well as between city merchants and village chiefs.[7] Aintab sweets were marketed in Persia and India – at least according to Evliya Çelebi, notorious for exaggeration, who also claimed the province was famous "world-wide" for its fruits.[8]

But commercial success cannot be taken for granted, and we can imagine that after decades of disruption the province's inhabitants appreciated the enhanced security of roads that Ottoman overlordship provided. Recovery was signalled by the return of Venetian traders to Aleppo in the early 1530s, after a 15 year absence.[9] Süleyman's conquest of Baghdad in 1535 completed Ottoman control of the Fertile Crescent, adding more connections to an already rich trade network. Aintab could rightly be described as sitting at the crest of the crescent. However, even a huge and powerful empire like that of the Ottomans could not always guarantee safe passage, as Evliya makes clear for the bandit-plagued mid-17th century. Travelling to Aintab from the Çukurova, he was given the good news

5 Evliya Çelebi, *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi,* ed. Y. Dağlı, S.A. Kahraman and R. Dankoff (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınlari, 2005), 9: 96 (see also 2: 207).

6 See the law code (*kanunname*) for Aintab issued in 1536, in Hüseyin Özdeğer, *Onaltıncı Asırda Ayıntab Livası* (Istanbul: Bayrak Matbaacılık, 1998), 201-4.

7 AS 2: 54a, 52c.

8 Hüyla Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town: 'Ayntab in the 17th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 38-9.

9 Suraiya Faroqhi, "The Venetian Presence in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1630," in *The Ottoman Empire and The World-Economy*, ed. H.İslamoğlu-İnan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 326.

that "a great Aintab caravan" was coming and that it was fully armed and had many Janissaries guarding it.[10]

Frontier Mentality

An important trade route and one of the strands making up the fabled silk route was the ribbon of cities and towns that ran from the Mediterranean through Aintab eastward to Birecik (Ottoman Bire), Urfa (Ruha), Diyarbakır (Amid) and Mardin. It was not only Aintab's economic history, but its political fate as well, that was heavily influenced by this geography. Aintab was typically subordinate to regional powers located along this ribbon, as was its more important neighbour Dülük (Doliche), until the latter was destroyed by an earthquake in the late 14th century. When, more rarely, Aintab was controlled by a larger power in a more distant capital, such as the Byzantines or the Mamluks, this line became a frontier. As a fortified frontier city, Aintab was subject to sieges and not infrequently the object of deal-making, traded back and forth among contending powers. In sum, Aintab was a valuable holding to smaller regional powers and a frontier station to larger states, hence its kaleidoscopic political history.

By 1500, Aintab had amassed a century's worth of experience in balancing loyalties between the Mamluks, with their northern capital in Aleppo, and the powerful Dulkadir tribal principality centred on Marash and Elbistan. From 1500 onwards, the stakes in the region multiplied as two more powers moved in – the Ottomans from the west and the upstart Safavids from the east. Aintab now lay at the epicentre of a four-way rivalry. The response of some rural residents was to abandon their villages and seek shelter in nearby towns and cities with walls and/or citadels. However, by 1536 or so, when state-sponsored record-keeping yielded a sketch of Aintab a generation after the Ottoman conquest, the province had begun to enjoy the fruits of the Pax Ottomanica and of the wider Mediterranean-basin rise in prosperity.

Given historical hindsight, it is clear that Aintab province became a hinterland under the Ottomans, albeit a significant one. Aintab was not the capital of a governorate-general, as were Marash and Aleppo, nor did it have the distinction of its smaller neighbour to the immediate east, Bire, located at an important crossing of the Euphrates river, or of Ruha further to the east, a pilgrimage city. But in 1536, who could be sure that the Ottoman sultanate would hold on to Aintab for almost 400 years? Selim's and then his son Süleyman's control of the region was undermined by numerous challenges – from Mamluk loyalists, from the military and religious ambitions of Safavid Iran and from the kind of local and regional rebellions that had plagued the Anatolian peninsula for centuries. Would the Safavids manage to push the Ottomans out of the region? Would a Mamluk revival reorient Aintab southward? Or would a whole new power emerge to carve out its own domain? It was only in the later decades of the 16th century that the Ottoman sultanate fully secured Anatolia and the Arab lands, with the exception of the contested Caucasus-to-Persian Gulf frontier with Iran. At some point, Aintabans must have realised that their city was unlikely to revert to a frontier fortification, but just when this became a reasonable assumption on which to base

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10 Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname,* 9: 173 ("bir azîm Ayntab karbanı").

one's decisions is not certain. In the meantime, it made good sense to cultivate one's own garden, fertilising it with local and regional ties.

What *is* certain is that Aintab had acquired agility in shifting loyalties and adjusting to new sovereign regimes. The self-sufficiency it perforce evolved was an advantage as the province adjusted to Ottoman rule. As a frontier city, Aintab had been battered, but it was also an object of political desire and thus able to exercise substantial autonomy as contending powers battled among themselves. Aintabans could be proud of the urban amenities they had produced. In late medieval times the city was known as "little Bukhara", evoking the latter's abundance of learned men, and it was an apparent favourite of Evliya Çelebi. Whatever repute Aintab enjoyed was the result largely of local initiative, for only once in its past had the city been particularly favoured by a ruler. The minor Ayyubid prince, Melik Salih Ahmed (as he was locally known in Turkish), is remembered for having turned the city into a "little Damascus" during his mid-13th century governorship.[11] One still hears today that the people of Gaziantep prefer to invest locally and to avoid dependence on government monies. If so, this may reflect a long-standing habit reinforced by historical necessity.[12]

Aintab's Conquest

By 1540, the Ottoman conquest was an experience that roughly half the Aintab population had lived through and half knew as an event before their birth. Since some who had lived through it were children at the time, many must have grown up hearing about the conqueror-sultan, whose march southward halted for three nights in the province. What memory of the Ottoman advance remained a generation later? Was Selim recalled as a welcome victor or an unwelcome outsider? The Ottomans were Rumî, "Roman", and their capital – in official parlance Kostantiniyye – still bore many physical traits and ingrained habits of its past. Aintab, on the other hand, was "the little bride of Arabistan" or, in Evliya Çelebi's words, "Arabistan's well-ornamented bride".[13]

Documentary sources yield little trace of the actual events of 1516, perhaps because no blood was shed in Aintab. Defecting to the Ottomans, the Mamluk governor Yunus Beg is said to have handed over the keys to the Aintab citadel on 20 August. The following day, the sultan pitched camp "with great majesty and pomp".[14] There he proceeded to plan his next move – the battle of Marj Dabik on 24 August, a definitive Ottoman victory that heralded the fall of Cairo and the demise of the Mamluk sultanate five months later. Selim's conquests between August and January were the largest territorial acquisition in the empire's history.

Land surveys and court records shed much light on the after-effects of the Ottoman takeover – for example, the scramble for property as the economy picked

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11 Hulusi Yetkin, "Gaziantep Şehrin Eskiden Ne İsimlerle Anılırdı?", *Gaziantep Kültürü* 9 (1966): 57.

12 Leslie Peirce, *Morality Tales: Law and Gender in the Ottoman Court of Aintab* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 49.

13 The word for "little bride" in the common first phrase is *gelincik*, which also means poppy. For Evliya Çelebi's phrase, see *Evliya Çelebi Seyahatnamesi*, ed. Y. Dağlı and R. Dankoff (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003), 8: 318.

14 Feridun Beg, *Mecmua-ı Münşeat üs-Selatin* (Istanbul: 1264-65/1848-49), 1: 399, 427.
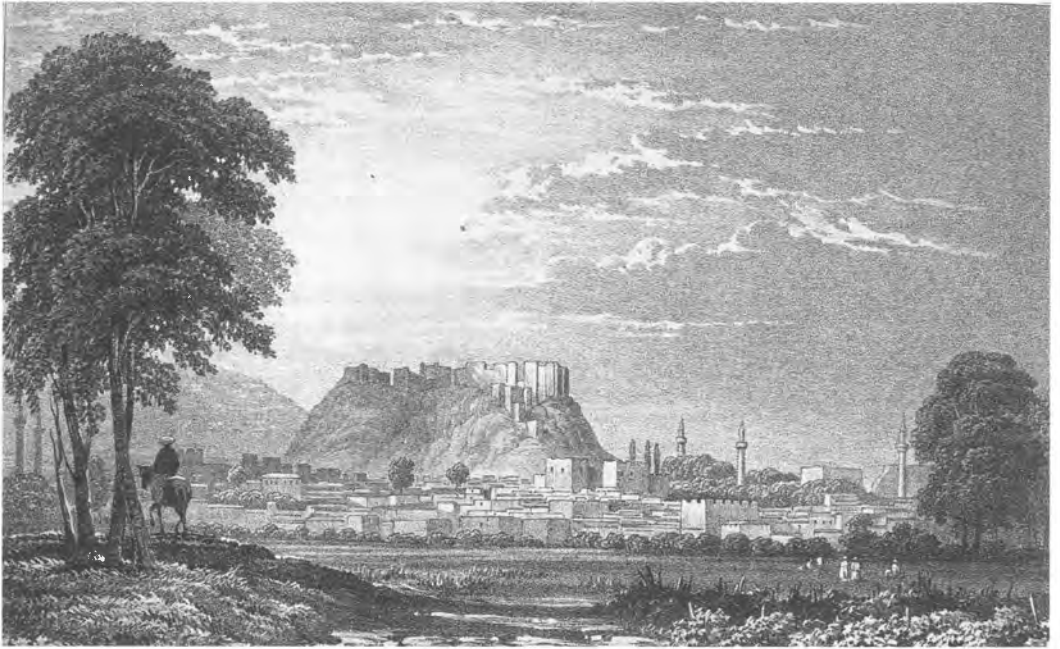
The citadel of Aintab.
Engraving by Vincent Germain, 19th century.

up, new tax assessments and shifting patterns in the uses people made of the court when a judge appointed from Istanbul took office in 1541 However, as the court records of 1540-41 suggest, the conquest itself was cited by the occasional Aintaban only as a means of dating events. In reporting the death of an elderly horse expert, it was said that he had "come and taken up residence in these parts around the time of the conquest [*feth*]", and in establishing the validity of a land claim, one witness stated that legal possession dated from "the imperial conquest [*feth-i hakanî*]". The Mamluks were now a pre-conquest past, "the time of the Circassians" (a reference to the ethnic origin of the later Mamluk sultans). Relying on archival sources, one might deduce that Ottoman administration was now business as usual, with the conquest itself receding into the past, along with the Mamluks.

Aintab's remembered history tells a different story about the conquest, one that casts light on the province's vision of its place in the empire. In legends about the conquest, Aintab claims credit for Ottoman success. Selim is the vanquisher of the Mamluk sultanate, but it is local miracle-working holy men who give him the victory at Marj Dabik. In a tale about Dülük Baba, who is usually represented in legend as a companion of the Prophet Muhammad, Evliya Çelebi makes him a protagonist of the events of 1516. As Selim marches through Aintab province, Dülük Baba gives him the good tidings of victory and even specifies the date. When the prediction turns out to be true, the sultan honours the saint (who has died in the interim) with a lofty tomb.[15] In another legend, the dervish sheikh of Sam, a large village close to Aintab city, works miracles with grapes and grapevines.[16] The marvels range from a single vine cutting that feeds the

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15 Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, 9: 359; in Evliya's version, Dülük Baba is still alive when the sultan returns.

16 Cemil Cahit Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Evliyaları* (Gaziantep: Islamî Hizmetler Vakfı, 1990), 16-20.

Ottoman soldiers to the appearance at a critical moment at Marj Dabik of a whole field of vines and the billhooks used to prune them, arousing panic in the Mamluk ranks and leading to Ottoman victory. These legends are a clear statement of reciprocal empowerment. Without Ottoman boldness and might, regional conflict may have continued, with Aintab yet again vulnerable to siege by one or other contending power. But the venerable frontier province, familiar with the local terrain as well as with the ways of conquerors, shows how dominions are won.

When exactly these stories took hold is uncertain, but it is likely that they joined the canon of Aintab's lore soon after 1516, for the two holy men prospered in the post-conquest years. Dülük Baba, or rather his shrine, and the sheikh of Sam, an actual contemporary of the conquest, were beneficiaries of Selim's and Süleyman's largesse. Selim may have ordered the enhancement of the existing shrine complex (*zaviye*) at Dülük, although it was his son who guaranteed its prosperity by endowing it with new revenues.[17] As for Sam, at some point during his reign Selim transformed the village and its revenues into a religious foundation (*vakıf*) entrusted to the sheikh and his descendents.[18] The Sam family would go on to construct a new madrasa, primary school and commercial building in 1548, no doubt with revenues from the foundation. It is quite possible that Selim actually met with the sheikh from Sam during his brief sojourn in Aintab, as it was the habit of travelling sultans to meet with local civic and spiritual leaders in order to gain local knowledge and to exchange respects.[19] In singling out these two holy men as miracle workers, legend may reflect the very real acknowledgement of their merit by the two sultans. The eruption of vines and billhooks on the field of Marj Dabik perhaps reflects another post-conquest development: by 1520 the battle site had recuperated as productive land.[20] It may not be going too far to suggest that the tale of the sheikh's marvel at Marj Dabik reflected a yearning for rural abundance disrupted by warfare, or an *ex post facto* appreciation of rural prosperity under the Pax Ottomanica.

These legends configuring the Ottoman conquest as a local victory prompt two speculations, both of which go to the question of how Aintab regarded its entry into the empire. The first concerns the city's voluntary surrender to Selim. History credits the initiative of the Mamluk governor Yunus, but he was unlikely to have ceded the city without the backing of its leading citizens, or some of them at least. One wonders if powerful figures in Aintab pressured Yunus Beg to embrace the Ottomans. The wily frontier city had long experience of negotiating with armies. Yielding to the advancing sultan was certainly a move that made good sense, as the Mamluks were by then too weak to either control or protect the province. Dülük Baba's prediction may reflect the calculation that the Ottomans would sooner or later prevail. The second question concerns how Selim was remembered. The legends do not explicitly assert admiration for him. They are primarily about the domestication of the conquest. Remembered histo-

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17 Tapu Tahrir Defteri 301, fols. 18-19, 396-99.

18 Özdeğer, *Ayintab Livası*, 377-8. See Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Evliyaları*, 43-4, on two documents in the hands of the present descendants of the sheikh corroborating these events.

19 There is a story of the sheikh curing the sultan's constipation by means of prayer, not grapes. This suggests they may have met more than once during Selim's three-day halt in Aintab (Güzelbey, *Gaziantep Evliyaları*, 44).

20 Maliyeden Müdevver Defteri 75, fol. 13b. The 1520 cadastral survey estimated the annual revenue to be 300 akçes, a moderate amount.

ry rendered Selim an admirer of Aintab, or at least of its holy men, for whose own memorials he showed a supplicant's gratitude. On the other hand, Selim may have been valuable to Aintab's self-esteem. He was the only Ottoman sultan to come to Aintab. Although some residents of the province no doubt turned out to watch Süleyman and his army as they crossed the southeast corner of the province on their return march from their victory in Iraq, the sultan did not stop at Aintab city. Indeed, no Ottoman sultan after Süleyman visited any of the lands taken by Selim in 1516 and 1517.

Costs and Benefits, Winners and Losers

Süleyman's conquest of Iraq in 1535 required many months of travel by the sultan, his grand vizier, Ibrahim, and the Ottoman army, numerous visits to cities and their leading citizens and numerous endowments to local shrines, citadels and public *vakıf* institutions. This long military campaign was a kind of reconquest or at least a reconsolidation of Selim's territorial gains in Anatolia and the Arab lands. It was natural that Aintab's integration into Ottoman networks intensified in these years, or rather that Ottoman networks made their way more intensively into recently acquired provinces. The Pax Ottomanica – that reign of security, prosperity and greater dependability of government – can be dated for Aintab to the 1530s. But it was always uneven, biased in the accessibility of its benefits and sometimes resisted. This time of prosperity was not permanent, and by the end of the century numerous economic and social stresses beset the region as well as other parts of the empire. Nevertheless, the years of this study were a honeymoon period for many. The Ottoman regime was fortunate in that the overall rise in productivity of the broader Mediterranean zone compounded its own efforts to maximise its gains in the domains conquered by Selim.

There are many examples of growth in Aintab province, some stimulated from Istanbul and some the result of local initiative in reconstituting former practices and connections and in devising new strategies to either cope with or exploit facets of Ottoman overlordship. The rapidity of recovery is strikingly evident in the rise in the province's estimated revenue per household – from 213 akçes in 1536 to 288 akçes in 1543. Let us now turn to some developments of the times: demographic expansion and agricultural productivity, rising urban revenues, the trickle-down process of sharing largesse and the prominence of local individuals in imperial service.

The resolution of political incertitude that Ottoman conquest secured seems to have sparked the resettlement of villages. The following court case in 1540 provides a chronology of flight from the land and return. In a dispute over a village vineyard, the current owner Haci Idris argued against the claim of Yakub:

> After Yakub planted the vineyard, the village went into decline. It's been about seven or eight years since the village started to prosper again after being abandoned, and the place was recultivated and then the vineyard reestablished. It's been 25 years since I took over the vineyard.

By Idris's calculations, Yakub abandoned his village in 1515 and the upswing in rural prosperity began around 1532 or 1533. Further proof of rural (re)settle-

ment was the recovery of *mezraa* lands – tracts devoted to agricultural production, encircled with boundaries and often linked to specific villages, on which settlement appears to have been forbidden. *Mezraa*s have been described as a kind of agricultural reserve, that is, land that went in and out of production according to demand. Agricultural expansion is revealed in several grants of title to *mezraa*s in 1540-41, where the land is described as "abandoned and in decline" and "suitable for cultivation".

Tahrir surveys estimated the number of rural households in the provincial sub-district surrounding Aintab city to have grown from 1,151 in 1536 to 1,500 in 1543, an increase of 35 per cent.[21] Aintab city too was expanding, but more in dimension than in population. The number of city households was estimated to have increased by a small margin, from 1,836 to 1,896: this comparative lack of urban population growth was probably caused by (re)migration to rural communities. What was apparent in the city was a willingness to move away from the cluster of districts protected by the citadel and to settle further out, closer to or along routes in and out of the city. For reasons that are not entirely clear, not all "inner city" districts lost residents. In fact, a cluster of neighbourhoods within the arc described by the Uzun Çarşı – the Long Market, an urban feature typical of many towns and cities – witnessed uniform growth. Perhaps artisans and traders chose to settle in this most active production and trading area, which was also closer to eastward routes in and out of the city.

Lesser population growth did not mean lesser urban revenue, at least as measured by estimated tax assessments. Aintab's rural revenues rose by 56 per cent between 1536 and 1543 and city revenues by 73 per cent.[22] Part of this dramatic increase of course was the greater ability of authorities to actually estimate and collect taxes. An example of the challenge in assessing productivity in a time of rapid growth is the market inspectorship (*ihtisab*), a post whose revenue rose as market activity expanded. Like many important posts, this was a tax farm. It was obviously becoming very lucrative in Aintab. The 1536 *tahrir* underestimated *ihtisab* revenue at 40,000 akçe per year, but the bidding wars for the post, recorded in court, suggested this estimate was low. The miscalculation was rectified in the 1543 *tahrir* survey, when the state's estimate of the post's revenue was an annual 136,000 akçes. Bidders for the inspectorship must have been delighted that Istanbul was slow to capitalise on the economic upswing. The local artisans and shopkeepers who enriched the market inspector and his assistants were not quite so lucky.

Tax farming put money in the pockets of more people than the tax farmer. In Aintab, the successful appointee or winning bidder for a tax farm contracted to collect taxes due to the state and turn them over to the relevant authority. The actual collecting of the taxes, especially for a large tax farm like the market inspectorship, was typically sub-contracted. For example, the tax farm for the medicine factory was awarded by the *muhtesib*'s office for 480 akçe a year (the sub-contractor and the *muhtesib* expected to earn something, so the actual amount exacted from the factory was presumably larger). Peasants and tribesmen

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21 Aintab province was made up of three sub-provinces: Aintab, Telbaşer and Nehrülcevaz. The 1536 survey did not include the latter two.

22 Özdeğer, *Ayintab Livası*, 133.

Panorama of Aintab. Postcard from the end of 19th century.
Irfan Dağdelen Archive

could join this game by collecting taxes from their own community – for example, two brothers from the tribe of Kazak won the bid for taxes on their tribe by offering 27,470 akçes a year. Thus the trickle-down effect of tax farming reached numerous settlements in Aintab province. Did the beneficiaries of this process recognise that their success was due in part to the Ottoman regime's tightening of the whole revenue assessment and collection enterprise? If they were anything like us, they probably complained about higher taxes.

Another development that softened the transition to Ottoman rule was the preponderance of local personnel holding positions of authority. As spokespersons for the sultanate or linked to it fiscally, these individuals acquired a stake in the success of the empire. The opportunities offered by tax farming were critical in creating an economic web that linked local investors to the imperial treasury. Others were linked to the military-administrative networks of the state. Aintab presents a somewhat different picture from the typical view of provincial government in which the state-appointed governor (*sancakbey*) and holders of military fiefs (*timar*) exerted authority over the city and rural districts respectively. The Aintab governor in 1540 does not come across in our sources as a powerful individual, although the governor-general in Marash was an imposing figure. More important in the life of the province than the *sancakbey* was the superintendent of crown lands (*hass emini*), Mustafa Çelebi. His local prominence derived from his authority over the extensive sultanic holdings in Aintab. Admittedly, there is no precise indication that Mustafa was a local man, but the evidence points in this direction. Certainly the superintendent was married to a local woman, Ayni̇şah, a wealthy individual who covered her husband's sizeable arrears to the state, which had grown to 20,000 akçes. As for *timar* lands, there were of course state-appointed timariots in Aintab, but significant rural property was in the hands of locals, for example Dulkadir chiefs,

loyalists of the former regime who had been pacified by the grand vizier, Ibrahim Pasha, with land grants. Even if these lands were eventually transformed by state authorities into crown land (*hass*), the transition period gave stature to the former local notables.

These stories of growth and the benefits that local people gained from them are the positive side of provincial integration into Ottoman systems of administration. But while Aintab benefited from revitalised communication networks, it was at the same time subordinated to a set of larger imperial interests. Here we examine two aspects of the limits to provincial autonomy, one in governance, the other in belief.

Already by 1540, it was clear to Aintabans that Istanbul was prepared to take over some functions that had traditionally been locally managed. A crisis erupted when the state appointed its own candidate to an important office – that of *sarraf*, or city treasurer.[23] The tax farm for the office of Aintab *sarraf* had been purchased by one Matuk ibn Sadullah the Jew (as he is named in the court record). However, the Aintab community refused to let him take up his duties, as we learn from an order issued by the governor-general in Marash, Ali Pasha, and recorded in the court register at the beginning of October 1540. Addressing himself to both the judge of Aintab and Mustafa Çelebi, superintendent of crown lands, Ali Pasha commanded them to facilitate Matuk's assumption of the office. It is worth quoting this order in whole for its echo of imperial authority:

> When this order arrives, let it be known that: The Jew named Matuk, who is the current *sarraf* of Aintab, has sent his agent to us, through whom he has informed us as follows: "I am the *sarraf* of Aintab, which position I hold as tax-farmer from the Head of the Aleppo Mint. But they do not permit me to act as *sarraf* over the revenues from royal lands and other occasional taxes; nor do they permit me to act as *sarraf* within the city proper. For this reason, I am unable to perform the functions delegated to me through the tax farm or to furnish the requisite remittances. I will be held accountable for this." Now hear! the aforementioned Jew is the *sarraf* in your area by virtue of the tax farm from the Aleppo Mint. It is not permissible for any other individual to act as *sarraf* there. It is imperative that you see to it that whatever revenues are collected from the royal lands and as occasional taxes are handed over to the aforementioned Jew, and that you do not allow anyone else to act as *sarraf* within the city of Aintab proper.[24]

The resistance Matuk faced in Aintab was probably less to him personally than to the loss of the post of *sarraf* to an outside appointment, that is, to the imperialisation of this office. At Istanbul's behest, the role of Jewish municipal financiers was growing in these years, an effect of the influx of European Jews into the empire in the aftermath of the Inquisition.[25] Matuk was already a familiar local figure, both as a holder of three large tax farms and as a trader in textiles and dyes. Perhaps it was the aggrandisement of his local power base that incited Aintab's non-compliance. Perhaps it was also the apparent displacement

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23 See Peirce, *Morality Tales,* chap. 7, for other aspects of imperial intervention.

24 AS 161: 33b.

25 Haim Gerber, "Jewish Tax-Farmers in the Ottoman Empire in the 16th and 17th Centuries," *Journal of Turkish Studies* 10 (1986): 143-54.

of an old Aintab family – the Sikkakzade, "the Coiners" – who had probably been functioning as city *sarraf*. Their fortunes would wane further over the next 100 years, until the city neighbourhood that had borne their name dissolved into other, newly-named, neighbourhoods.[26] In contrast, another of the three leading families of the city at this time – the Boyacızade, "the Dyers" – would flourish until the end of the empire. The scion of this more recently distinguished family, Seydi Ahmed Boyacı was in 1540 a successful entrepreneur who had adjusted well to the new regime.[27] It could be said that the Sikkakzade were a product of Mamluk times, the Boyacızade of Ottoman times.

If Istanbul's scrutiny of fiscal and economic matters circumscribed the scope of Aintabans' ambitions, tighter ideological controls subjected Aintab to religious preferences and imperial ambitions formulated in Istanbul. In particular, the contest with Safavid Iran required of Ottoman subjects not only political loyalty but also religions allegiance to the Sunni Islam of the sultanate. The losers here were people suspected of sympathy with the sectarian movement sponsored by the Safavid religious order that swept over regions in Anatolia and northern Syria from the mid-15th century on. Ottoman fears of this militant sectarian drive intensified with the transformation around 1500 of Safavid manpower into a political force that rapidly established a new state in Iran. It was the territorial advance of the first ruler, Ismail, that was the spark for Selim's campaigns into eastern Anatolia and the Arab lands. Safavid proselytising of the 15th century gave way to the declaration of Twelver Shi'ism as the state religion, but it was the heterodox teachings of missionaries in Anatolia that had taken root in the Aintab region and elsewhere. Followers were known as Kızılbaş, redhead or red-hatted, from the headgear of Safavid religious devotees.

In 1540, Aintab still had Kızılbaş loyalists, although what proportion of the population they constituted is hard to say, especially as some began to conceal their spiritual orientation. The case of a woman teacher, Haciye Sabah, who was accused of instilling Kızılbaş doctrines in her all-female classes, involved perhaps the most scandalous accusation and certainly the most unusual punishment – banishment – recorded in the court of Aintab for the years studied here. Ottoman strategies of persecuting Kızılbaş activists were more covert than overt, with accusations sometimes based on trumped-up charges. Although Haciye Sabah's neighbours charged her with Kızılbaş proselytising, the court sentenced her for the crime of illegal and immoral mixing of the sexes in her classes (the neighbours even spoke of orgies, presumably between the pupils and the male teacher she had hired and his two apprentices). With the city's religious authorities witnessing the legal action, the Aintab judge banished Haciye Sabah from the city. She did not go quietly, however. The teacher repeatedly asserted in court that she had been making a living for years with such classes. The implication of her words was that it was the climate of judgment that had changed, not her conduct, and that new rectitudes were being imposed.

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26 For a map of Aintab neighbourhoods in the 17th century, see Canbakal, *Society and Politics in an Ottoman Town,* 24.

27 On Seydi Ahmed Boyacı, see Leslie Peirce, "Entrepreneurial success in 16th-century Aintab: The case of Seydi Ahmed Boyacı," in *Provincial Elites in the Ottoman Empire,* ed. A. Anastasopoulos (Rethymnon: University of Crete Press, 2006), 115-32.

Conclusion

By 1540, the habit of thinking of one's location as a part of the Ottoman sultanate was no doubt increasing in Aintab. If nothing else, there was common awareness of who the sovereign power now was. Selim I's passage through the province was still alive in some memories, and was starting to enter local lore. Ottoman coins had joined the mix of currency passed around in Aintab's shops, and the Ottoman silver akçe was the standard by which most if not all transactions were recorded. The Pax Ottomanica eased the travails of pilgrimage, and pilgrims on routes south were beginning to see Ottoman monuments along the way, some of which provided services to travellers.[28] If not every taxpayer knew the destination of his or her taxes, the managerial elites of villages, tribes and urban neighbourhoods had some understanding of the economic and fiscal networks into which their constituencies fitted. If not clearly visible, Istanbul was clearly present in the form of imperial overlordship in its local manifestations.

This essay has argued that the revival and reinforcement of regional communications and trade routes that Ottoman victories secured worked to the economic benefit of the province as a whole and to significant numbers of its residents. The fact that it was largely local individuals who populated state-sponsored offices and made up their staffs enabled incomes to feed back into the local economy. This was especially true in the first decades of Ottoman rule, when imperial networks were not yet consolidated in the region. But by 1541, officials from Istanbul were starting to arrive in slowly increasing numbers. The judge who tried Haciye Sabah may have been the first who was appointed to the province from Istanbul, taking over the office from local legal experts who had been managing since Mamluk control of the provinces began to decline. The local courthouse was expanded, and the volume of cases heard at court began to rise. Almost simultaneously with the judge, a special agent arrived from Istanbul whose assignment was to collect overdue remittances from leading tax farmers. Among those arraigned in court were Mustafa Çelebi and the Sikkakzade brothers. The monies recovered by the agent were not substantial, suggesting that Istanbul was more interested in making the point that fiscal delinquency would be prosecuted. But if the judge brought a new stringency to Aintab's legal life, this worked to the benefit of some who had not fared as well under previous judges. Numerous women, for example, now began to use the court to challenge usurpation of their property by male relatives. As always, the people of Aintab worked to domesticate imperial institutions whenever possible.

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28 For new monuments in Aleppo, see Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, *The Image of an Ottoman City: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

Petitions and Accommodating Urban Change in the Ottoman Empire

NORA LAFI

In many societies, petitions are a means of communication between rulers and ruled. Since the 1980s, historians have tried to analyse the nature of this relationship and to answer linked questions, such as the emergence of public opinion, the existence of a civil society and the capacity of a society to develop forms of democracy. Petitions are indeed a very abundant archival resource, and also a very specific individual or collective expression of discontent, protest, opinion or need. As such, they are invaluable historical sources, both informative and reflective of the nature of the society that produced them.

From ancient times to the era of Byzantium, from medieval England to 18th century North America, or from 18th century Japan to present times, petitions have been crucial in shedding light on the whole governance context, as scholars have frequently shown.[1] In the Ottoman empire, petitions were also central features of the relationship between rulers and ruled.

In the Ottoman empire, communication between local societies and the central administration in Istanbul was codified during the period of the old regime on the basis of various medieval practices, themselves sometimes of ancient origin. In cases of conflict, or where generally accepted administrative processes had broken down, or in cases where new demands or problems had arisen, inhabitants were granted the right to write petitions either on an individual basis or as a group (professional, confessional, civic collective body). But this system of petitioning was more than mere recourse to remedies or adjustments. Rather, it was an integral tool in the functioning of the empire and in the definition of imperial power in the provinces. The petition was not just an exceptional tool, but a normal procedure, whose bureaucratic nature had been formalised over the course of the Ottoman centuries. Indeed, the central archives in Istanbul contain hundreds of thousands of such petitions from throughout the empire and spanning the 15th to the 20th centuries.

These petitions were registered by a specialised administrative bureau, whose consistency and importance grew as the empire set about constructing its bureau-

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1 For example, Tor Hauken, *Petition and Response: An Epigraphic Study of Petitions to Roman Emperors 181-249* (Athens: Norwegian Institute, 1998), 383; Lorraine Attreed, "The Urban Identity of Medieval English Towns," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 32, no. 4 (2002): 571-92; Mark Knights, "London's Monster Petition of 1680," *Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (1993): 39-67; "Petition of Merchants of Alexandria, 1792," *William and Mary Quaterly* 3, no. 3 (1923): 206-8; Luke Roberts, "The Petition Box in 18th century Tosa," *Journal of Japanese Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 423-58; Stephen Higginson, "A Short History of the Right to Petition Government for the Redress of Grievances," *Yale Law Journal* 96, no. 1(1986): 142-66.

cratic apparatus. Petitions were registered in *daftar*, and subjected to a whole administrative process that constituted the very essence of imperial authority. The petition cannot be likened to a bottle thrown into the ocean in the hopes of capturing the sultan's attention, and nor was it merely akin to a medieval supplicant's appeal to the sovereign in the hopes of gaining an exception. It was rather an act of codified administrative communication whose role is pivotal to an understanding of the very essence of the Ottoman empire and the relationship between centre and peripheries.

This codification had a multifaceted heritage dating from the period from the 16th to the 18th centuries, an era that in administrative terms constitutes the Ottoman old regime. However, during the Tanzimat era and, for cities, the period of municipal reform during the second half of the 19th century, when both the whole administrative system and the very foundations the organisation of society itself were reordered, these old practices were, paradoxically, used intensively to negotiate the accommodation of the new administrative system with local configurations. At the very moment of its reform, the old system was the object of strong collective investment, which reveals both the importance of the old channels of communication and of the mediation process for accommodating the new.

Based on sources from various cities of the empire, especially the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) archives in Istanbul, this chapter sets out to explore the evolving relationship between the central administration and urban elites. Specifically, it seeks to discuss the way in which local urban notables, and the urban civic sphere they embodied, managed to prevail upon the empire to take their privileges and prerogatives into account in its drafting of urban administrative modernity. The main focus will be on understanding the stakes in the reform process, and, according to local context, the range of conflict, mediation and accommodation it gave rise to, all of them pivotal to understanding the relationship between Istanbul and the provinces in a period of deep redefinition.

The Centrality of the Old Regime Petitioning System

Petitions were common in ancient administrative systems. Their origin is surely to be found in the second millennium BCE, and as early as in the 7th century BCE they were common in many parts of the Middle East.[2] In Roman administrative practice, they were a central feature and were the object of very complex legal and theoretical elaboration.[3] In the Roman administrative framework, petitions were central to the regulation of the relationship between cities and the empire.[4]

In many different cultural contexts from ancient times to the present, petitions have generally been a way of regulating relations of power. In the Ottoman empire specifically, petitions were also a Byzantine heritage. In imperial Byzantine prac-

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2 For example, Dennis Pardee, "An overview of Ancient Hebrew Epistolography," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 97, no. 3 (1978): 321-36.

3 Tor Hauken, "Structure and themes in petitions to Roman Emperors," in *La pétition à Byzance*, ed. Denis Feissel and Jean Gascou (Paris: Association des amis du CHCB, 2004), 199.

4 Graham Burton, "The Roman Imperial State, Provincial Governors and the Public Finances of Provincial Cities, 27BC-AD 235," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 53, no. 32 (2004): 311-42. See also Wilhem Liebenam, *Die Stadtverwaltung in Römischen Kaiserreiche* (Leipzig, 1900), 577.

tice, petitions had been precisely codified and were a very important channel of administrative and social communication. Denis Feissel has illustrated how the petition was the starting point of a complex bureaucratic process that, in the case of one petition to the emperor, led to the promulgation of an edict.[5] There was in Constantinople a whole bureau for petitions, which dealt with complaints from throughout the empire, from both individuals and collective bodies, including urban or professional groups. Rodolphe Guilland and later Rosemary Morris have shown how this bureau was important in the definition and negotiation of the relationship between the imperial apparatus and *milieu* and the rest of society.[6]

In the medieval Arab Muslim world, again under the possible influence of ancient and Byzantine practices, petitions were also a crucial tool. Stern, for example, studied their importance during the Fatimid period.[7] And in general, in medieval times individuals and collective bodies had recourse to petitions against the abuses of a ruler. Such petitions were also the subject of established administrative treatment.

The elaboration of the Ottoman administrative apparatus drew on both the administrative heritage of the Byzantine empire and the Islamic procedures encountered during the various phases of Ottoman expansion.[8] Discussions on the nature of the early Ottoman state have been renewed during the last decade. A series of new studies have appeared, focusing mostly on the way in which the dynasty consolidated its power through alliances and by inserting itself into existing societies.[9] In this regard, Karen Barkey has illustrated the importance of notions such as mediation, brokerage and network.[10]

A whole new interpretive panorama on the construction of the Ottoman state has been opened up by recent research, and this has led to new interpretations on the evolutions that occurred during the 17th and 18th centuries. Current Ottoman studies are focused on precisely these issues of mediation, accommodation, negotiation and adaptation, which are at the very heart of Ottoman imperial power. One of the great advances in our understanding of the functioning of the Ottoman state arising from this recent research is that these notions, which in no way precluded conflict, were not just an anthropological posture, but also played a role in the construction of the bureaucratic apparatus itself. Ottoman imperial power

5 Denis Feissel, "Pétitions aux Empereurs et formes du rescrit dans les sources documentaires du IVe au VIe siècle," in *La pétition à Byzance*, ed. Denis Feissel and Jean Gascou (Paris: Association des amis du CHCB, 2004), 33-52.

6 See Rosemary Morris, "What did the EPI TON DEÊSEÔN actually do?", in ibid.: 125-40 and Rodolphe Guilland, "Etudes sur l'histoire administrative de l'empire byzantin: le maître des requêtes," *Byzantion* 35 (1965): 97-118.

7 S.M. Stern, "Three Petitions of the Fâtimid Period," *Oriens* 15 (1962): 172-209.

8 Norman Itzkowitz, *Ottoman Empire and Islamic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press; 1972), 117. See also, as a contribution to the debates on the relative weight of the Byzantine and medieval Islamic heritages in Ottoman state building, Mehmed Fuad Köprülü, *Some Observations on the Influence of Byzantine Institutions on Ottoman Institutions* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basimevi, 1999), 195.

9 Heath Lowry, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 197. See also Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: The Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994). Herbert Adams Gibbons, *The Foundation of the Ottoman Empire; A history of the Osmanlis up to the Death of Bayezid I (1300-1403)* (London: Routledge, 2007 [1916]). 384. Virginia Aksan and Daniel Goffman (eds.), *The Early Modern Ottomans: Remapping the Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 316.

10 Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference. The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 342. See also Halil Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age* (New York: Praeger, 1973), 258.

was the fruit of the progressive sedimentation resulting from thousands of micro-mediations. The result was an old regime, with a particular nature.

At all stages in the development of the empire, petitions were a central feature. In a word, they were one of the main vectors of mediation and accommodation, at all scales. And as a communication tool between centre and the periphery, they were not only important in leading to mutual adjustments, but also in defining the very relationship between the centre and the outlying provinces and the very nature of the empire. They were also the starting point of a precise administrative procedure. We now know that from early in the development of the organisational structure of the empire, the bureau of petitions in Istanbul was central to the decision-making process and in the daily work of the imperial administration.

For the 16th century, Fatma and Ramazan Acun, who worked on *ahkam* registers, specifically that published by Ilhan Şahin Feridun Emecen,[11] have shown the causal link between complaints and decisions, and how *hüküm*, or edicts, issued by the *diwan* and later confirmed by the sultan, were the result of an administrative process that began with a petition.[12] As early as the 16th century, at the most central level of the imperial administration, a good part of daily decision-making was in response to petitions. The Ottoman bureaucracy was born not simply as a pyramidal organisation, but also as a system of direct linkages between individuals or local organisations and the centre. As early as in the 1950s, Lajos Fekete suspected that petitions were more than an exception to the rule in Ottoman administrative practice.[13] But later, with the work of Georg Majer[14] and Halil Inalcık[15] and the new questions about Ottoman administrative history, it is clear that greater prominence has to be afforded the role of petitions.

The growth of the bureau of petitions in Istanbul is a good indicator of the development of the imperial bureaucracy. Far from eclipsing the role of petitions, this development, which led to what I call the age of the Ottoman old regime, revolved around petitions. Starting in the 18th century, probably at the beginning of the 1740s, petitions began to be treated separately and no longer along with the other affairs recorded in the *ahkam*. The bureau of petitions established a register of all the petitions received, a *daftar*, in which the nature, origin and content of the complaints was noted, as were the various stages of the bureaucratic, administrative and political response. These registers are well known. Not as generally appreciated is the fact that they shed light on another dimension: the hundreds of thousands of dossiers spanning the centuries, which give evidence of the treatment of each petition. Such treatment made up a large part of the daily work of the Ottoman central bureaucracy. Each dossier contains the original peti-

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11 *Osmanlılarda Divan-Bürokrasi-Ahkam, II, Bayezid Dönemine Ait 906/1501 Tarihli Ahkam Defteri* (Istanbul, Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı, 1994) (BOA A.DVN, nr.590).

12 Fatma Acun and Ramazan Acun, "Demand for justice and response of the Sultan: Decision making in the Ottoman Empire in the early 16th century," *Etudes balkaniques* 2 (2007): 125-48.

13 Lajos Fekete, *Die Siyâqat-Schrift in der türkischen Finanzverwaltung. Beitrag zur türkischen Paläographie* (Budapest: Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, 1955), 910.

14 Hans Georg Majer, *Das osmanische 'Registerbuch der Beschwerden" (Şikâyet Defteri) vom Jahre 1675* (Vienna: Osterreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1984).

15 Halil Inalcık, "Şikâyet Hakkı: 'Arz-i Hâl ve Mahzar'lar," chapter in his *Osmanlı'da Devlet, Hukuk, Adâlet* (Istanbul: Eren, 2000), 201: 49-71.

tion, sometimes a translation, and often the annotations, drafts and comments and all the administrative actions spawned by it, from the enquiries it provoked to the imperial edict it gave rise to. This was the core of Ottoman governance practice. My research into the archives of this bureau of petitions at BOA in Istanbul[15] shows how the *daftar* were the spinal cord in a highly articulated body. What happened at the beginning of the 1740s, based on the evidence I have been able to examine, was only a reorganisation of the bureau, but with the earlier spirit remaining. And often, the archives of the former bureau were transferred to the new dossiers.[17]

This organisational structure had parallels at many other levels of the Ottoman system. As Michael Ursinus has illustrated, at the provincial level complaints were also sent to a special division of the local administration.[18]

As for urban governance, what is important is that not only individuals were allowed to sign petitions, but also constituted bodies, such as confessional communities and guilds, and for cities, the notables who embodied urban civic interests. There are numerous petitions in the Istanbul archives from notables in hundreds of cities of the empire.

This system lent flexibility to the imperial organisation and allowed for negotiation.[19] It also permitted better circulation of information. As for urban civic and political life, petitions are both a reflection of the local balance of urban factions and an instrument of Ottoman governance. Jane Hataway, Linda Schatkowski and Herbert Bodman have examined the importance of factions in shaping urban and provincial conflict in Ottoman times, but also in the design of the Ottoman balance.[20] The example of petitions makes possible further interpretation: *sikayet* were the main instrument for regulating the relationship between urban factions and the imperial sphere. Ottoman governance of urban factions was achieved both by choosing a pro-imperial faction and through negotiations, often via petitions, to secure the submission of other factions to this order.

In the Ottoman old regime, petitions were also used to defend local privileges against the central power. This was particularly important in times of change, for example when a new tax was introduced.[21] In addition, petitions recalled previous agreements and sought adaptation of the proposed change to local conditions, thereby constituting a very local form of Ottomanity. In some domains of public

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16 BOA, A.DVN Series. *Bab-ı Asafi Diwan Hümayan Sicilleri Ahkam Defterleri.* See the catalogue *Başbakanlık osmanlı arşivi rehberi*, Istanbul, BOA, 2000, 558pp., pp. 23-4. *Ahkam* are to be found at pp. 24-31.

17 To be found at BOA under the name Antik.

18 Michael Ursinus, *Grievance administration (Şikayet) in an Ottoman Province:The Kaymakam of Rumelia's Record Book of Complaints of 1781-1783* (London: Royal Asiatic Society and Routledge, 2005), 190.

19 On these notions in an Ottoman context, see Gabor Agoston, "A Flexible Empire: Authority and its Limits on the Ottoman Frontiers," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 9, nos. 1/2 (1993): 15-31; Sevket Pamuk, "Institutional Change and the Longevity of the Ottoman Empire, 1500-1800," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 35, no. 2 (2004): 225-47.

20 Jane Hataway, *A Tale of Two Factions. Myth, Memory and Identity in Ottoman Egypt and Yemen* (Albany: SUNY, 2003), 295. See also Linda Schatkowski Schilcher, *Families in Politics: Damascene Factions and Estates of the 18th and 19th centuries* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), 248. See also Herbert Bodman, *Political Factions in Aleppo (1760-1826)* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1963), 160.

21 For example, Süleyman Demirci, "Complaints about Avâriz Assessment and Payment in the Avâriz-Tax System: An Aspect of the Relationship between Centre and Periphery. A Case Study of Kayseri, 1618-1700," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 46, no. 4 (2003): 437-74.

administration, the negotiations surrounding petitions and edicts contributed to the fashioning of jurisprudence.[22]

Collective petitions could be the result of the deliberations of confessional, professional or urban civic bodies, usually in the hands of notables. They were indeed often the expression of a form of local urban civil society to the imperial authority, which in turn fashioned its presence in the city accordingly.[23] Chronicles, generally the civic annals of the circle of urban notables in charge of many aspects of urban governance, often took good note for future reference of the writing and sending of a petition to the sultan.[24] Petitions, as Eunjeong Yi has illustrated, were also common in the negotiation of the conditions governing guilds.[25]

In the case of Aleppo, thanks to intense research in recent decades, we now have a quite precise historiographical perspective on the urban situation. For the 17th century, Charles Wilkins has recently put forward some important interpretations regarding guild self-government, one of the privileges afforded constituted social bodies in urban settings.[26] This privilege also often needed to be defended by means of a petition, for example, against the fiscal demands of a new governor.

Aleppo is also the city Margaret Merywether studied. She has noted, for the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, the intimate relationship between local urban notables and imperial office, the same family being able to serve as both *naqib al-ashraf* and as imperial figures in various parts of the empire. Petitions were also a frequent and effective means of preventing, mediating and resolving conflicts.[27] For the same period, Bruce Masters has copiously illustrated the role of local notables as chambers of mediation.[28] Petitions were always crucial in this process.

The case of Aleppo further illustrates the fact that the Ottoman petitioning system had various overlapping scales. One could petition either the local representative of the empire or the sultan in Istanbul if the issue related to the activities of the local representative. It was also possible to bring the petition in person to the capital city, either as an individual or as the representative of a collective group.

The study of the Aleppo *daftar* for the years 1155-64 heg. and of a number of original petitions and related administrative dossiers illustrates the bureaucratic channels petitions necessitated and supported.[29] The BOA archives in

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22 For example, for the negotiation of the prerogatives of the local *qâdi*, Ronald Jennings, "Limitations of the Judicial Powers of the Kadi in 17th Century Ottoman Kayseri," *Studia Islamica* 50 (1979): 151-84. See also Isik Tamdoğan-Abel, "Les modalités de l'urbanité dans une ville ottomane d'après les registres des cadis," Thèse de doctorat, Paris, Ehess, 1998.

23 On the concept of civil society in an Ottoman context, Suraiya Faroqhi, "Civilian Society and Political Power in the Ottoman Empire: A Report on Research in Collective Biography (1480-1830)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 17, no. 1 (1985): 109-17.

24 For example, Ahmed b. Abi Diaf on the notables of Tunis sending a petition to Istanbul. On chronicles as a decentred source of information, Bruce Masters, "The View from the Province: Syrian Chronicles of the Eighteenth Century." *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 114, no. 3 (1994): 353-62.

25 Eunjeong Yi, *Guild Dynamics in 17th Century Istanbul. Fluidity and Leverage* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 306: 41.

26 Charles Wilkins, *Forging Urban Solidarities. Ottoman Aleppo 1640-1700* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 323.

27 Margaret Meriwether, *The Kin Who Count: Family and Society in Ottoman Aleppo (1770-1840)* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), 278.

28 Bruce Masters, "Power and Society in Aleppo in the 18th and 19th Centuries," *Revue du Monde Musulman et de la Méditerranée* 62, no. 1 (1991): 151-8.

29 BOA daftar Halep: Bâb-i Âsafi Divan-ı Hümayun Sicilleri Halep Ahkam Defterleri, 295pp., A.{DVNS.AHK.HL.d.00001. All petitions attached to this register can be found in BOA, A. {DVN. ŞKT. There is no specific classification: petitions are classified in the order of their arrival in the office at the time of

Istanbul reveal that this kind of work was replicated for hundreds of cities and villages.[30]

Confrontation with Administrative Modernity

When, at the turn of the 19th century, the first modernist reform impulses changed the panorama of debates about governance in the empire, new stakeholder issues and interests had to be confronted. In general during the reform period, there was a strong centralising impulse[31] and a new spirit abroad among representatives of the central power.[32] However, these reform impulses were not a new feature *per se* in the empire. The old regime, or classical age, had also witnessed numerous reforms, themselves fashioned and adapted through a process of accommodation and mediation in which petitions played a great role. This time, however, something else was at stake: the very organisation of society. Yet even the new logic had to confront the inertia of old practices.[33] The classic top-down, East-West vision of the origins and development of the reform impulses has been much discussed in recent decades. Yet one might also say that reform was as much the result of local-central accommodation and design processes as of the importation of outside ideas. There is indeed a pressing necessity to understand the modernisation process in the empire by using new tools.[34]

The Tanzimat was, of course, not just a Westernisation, a notion which itself has become the object of profound critical examination.[35] We now know that internal factors, more complex circulation models and accommodation processes were part of the reform process.[36] Interpretations also take another dimension into account: the persistence of the old regime. According to Arno Mayer, old factors and social phenomena still helped to shape society even when the formal or legal landscape had changed.[37] And the study of petitions, as in the case of urban reform, shows how an old communication channel between Istanbul and the peripheries of empire was instrumental in shaping urban administrative moderni-

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their redaction. The only existing classification is that made for a sample of such documents in the 19th century by archivists like Cevdet: BOA Cevdet Belediye.

30 BOA, A.DVN. ŞKT. Classification per year, all zones together. Examples: BOA, A.DVN. ŞKT.2136: petitions of the bakers of Edirne, 1786; for the year 1177h, BOA, A. {DVN. ŞKT.666, 43: petitions of the urban notables of Kütahya, BOA, A. {DVN. ŞKT., 666,1: petition of the merchants of Aleppo; BOA, A. {DVN. ŞKT. 666, 42: petition of urban notables of Rhodes; BOA, A. {DVN. ŞKT.666,3: petition of the notables of Antalya.

31 Stanford Shaw, "The Central Legislative Councils in the Nineteenth Century Ottoman Reform Movement before 1876," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 1, no. 1 (1970): 51-84.

32 Serif Mardin, "The Mind of the Turkish Reformer, 1700-1900," *The Western Humanities Review* 14 (1960): 413-36.

33 On this subject: Stanford Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789-1807* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1971), 535.

34 On the general context of such studies: Dipesh Chakrabarti, *Provincializing Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 320.

35 For a general panorama of the reforms: Kemal Karpat, "The Transformation of the Ottoman State, 1789-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (1972): 243-81. For a discussion of the concept of Westernization: Shirine Hamadeh, "Ottoman Expressions of Early Modernity and the 'Inevitable' Question of Westernization," *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 63-1 (2004): 32-51.

36 Nora Lafi, "Mediterranean connections: The circulation of municipal knowledge and practices at the time of the Ottoman reforms, c.1830-1910" in *The Other Global City*, eds Shane Ewen and Pierre-Yves Saunier (New York: Palgrave, 2008), 242: 35-50.

37 Arno Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old-Regime. Europe to the Great War* (New-York: Pantheon, 1981), 368.

ty. This latter included the introduction of new rules, such as representation.[38] But this modernity was more than the centrifugal spreading of a new rationality. The reforms also implied a new kind of communication with provinces and local societies in response to more complex geopolitical stakes, including preservation of sovereignty over threatened provinces. To this end, the establishment of a new equilibrium with local notables was crucial, a requirement that had also been essential in the old Ottoman regime.

Municipal Reforms and the Persistence of Petitions

The established narrative scheme for the implementation of municipal reforms in the empire is again a top-down, West-East one.[39] Reforms were supposed to have been introduced from Europe to Istanbul, a city whose important Christian community was supposed to ease the process of "Europeanisation". From there, reforms are thought to have spread throughout the empire.[40] This simplistic narrative is definitely no longer acceptable. Not only does it give a false idea of the reform process, but it stems from an inaccurate understanding of the functioning of the empire and of local urban governance in the provinces. Cities in the Ottoman old regime were long believed to be unburdened by forms of organised local power emanating from the local society. This assertion has by now been dismissed in the historical literature, and it is now accepted that cities were indeed ruled by a class of merchants, notables, members of the guild elite and sometimes nobles, in conjunction with representatives of the imperial power.[41]

So, the first element in the reinterpretation of the urban reforms is that they were no mere importation into an empty landscape. Rather, one should consider the impact of the proposed reforms on the existing landscape, itself the result of centuries of mediation between the central power, its representatives, who were themselves often urban notables from another city and not just members of the bureaucratic caste, and local notables. We have seen how petitions were central to this mediation, and they remained so during the reform era.[42]

As Albert Hourani stressed, the urban reforms were both a challenge to the relationship between the central power and the notables and a response to the loss of important provinces to European colonial powers.[43] They were meant to establish a new relationship, so the proposed framework needed to be accepted local-

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38 Roderic Davison, "The Advent of the Principle of Representation in the Government of the Ottoman Empire," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle-East: the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Richard Chambers and William Polk (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 427.

39 As illustrated, for example, in Roderic Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 479.

40 Steven Rosenthal, "Foreigners and Municipal Reforms in Istanbul: 1855-65," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11, no. 2 (1980): 227-45 and idem, *The Politics of Dependency: Urban Reform in Istanbul* (Westport: Greenwood, 1980), 220.

41 For an overview of this subject, see Nora Lafi (ed.), *Municipalités méditerranéennes. Les réformes urbaines ottomanes au miroir d'une histoire comparée (Moyen-Orient, Maghreb, Europe méridionale)* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz ZMO Studien 21, 2005), 365.

42 The BOA petition resources for the period of reform are as rich as for the previous period. See, for example, the series classified by Cevdet at the turn of the 20th century, BOA, Cevdet Belediye (C. BLD). The most valuable source on the reforms in general is Osman Nuri Ergin, *Mecelle-i Umûr-i Belediyye* (Istanbul: Municipal editions, 1995 [1st edition 1914-1922]), 8 vols.

43 Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and Politics of Notables," in Polk and Chambers, *Beginnings of Modernizaton*, 41-68.

ly. The municipal reforms were in no way a wave of administrative and political modernity radiating out from Istanbul, but must be understood as occurring in a more complex and dynamic context.

Local notables were certainly not passive towards the Porte. They did not hesitate to have recourse to old communication channels like petitions. And there was still a bureau in Istanbul to receive them.[44] During the modernisation reforms, the bureau of petitions ran as it had during the old regime. From every corner petitions came in, protesting against the brutal nature of the changes and asking for notables to be able to retain a central role in the new system. The actual reforms were implemented using the communication channels of the old regime. All told, Ottoman modernity was an evolution of the previous system at least as much as it was an importation. The 1877 law, the result of 25 years of mediation, was more the result of a long process than an experiment in centralised control.

It was my work on the petitions from the notables of Tripoli that first led me to these conclusions. These notables collectively petitioned the sultan to protest against the conditions attaching to the creation of the municipality. They were part of the old regime institution, and they demanded to be included in the new one. My focus then turned to this negotiation process for other cities.[45] And as Elisabeth Thompson, who showed the existence of chambers of negotiation between notables, the guilds of Damascus and the empire, "debate about the Tanzimat centered not on vague ideologies but on bargains struck on very specific issues".[46]

What study of the archives of the bureau of petitions in Istanbul reveals is that petitions acted as the vectors of these bargains. In Aleppo too, petitions helped fashion what Bruce Masters has dubbed the local political economy.[47] In 1860, a time of both great tension and reform, many petitions reached Istanbul, influencing, even structuring, decision-making processes.[48] Every step or decision was an attempt to accommodate a petition, individual or collective, whether the petition was a protest against violence, contested the form of the new institutions or denounced the corruption the implementation of the reforms made possible. Just as with the old regime, petitions were an expression of the constant dialogue between the local civic sphere and the central administration. Many of the petitions from Tunis, for example, illustrate this dimension. But in a city already partly under the influence of foreign consuls (who opposed Ottoman modernisation), the classical form of dialogue through petitions did not culminate in full implementation of reform: old regime institutions survived, and the modern municipality never managed to include all the old urban elites.[49]

However, during this process many interesting petitions were sent to Istanbul, and dealt with there by the imperial bureaucratic apparatus, and to the local representatives of the empire. One by the guild of the cap (*chechia*) manufacturers

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44 Şikayet, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul: ADVN series.

45 Lafi, *Municipalités méditerranéennes,* 365.

46 Elizabeth Thompson, "Ottoman Political Reform in the Provinces: The Damascus Advisory Council in 1844-45," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (1993): 457-75.

47 Bruce Masters, "The Political Economy of Aleppo in an Age of Ottoman Reform," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 53 (2010): 290-316.

48 For example: BOA (1278 s 09 1) ref A. MKT.UM: dossier 539 n.48.

49 See Nora Lafi, "Les pouvoirs urbains à Tunis à la fin de l'époque ottomane: la persistance de l'Ancien régime," in Lafi, *Municipalités méditerranéennes.*

illustrates the negotiation of adjustments to modernising reforms, both political and economic.[50] In all cities of the empire, as the petitions in the Istanbul archives show, such procedures were part of a process of accommodating the reforms to local situations. These facts necessitate abandonment of old interpretive models about the diffusion of administrative modernity, and call for this process to be read as a negotiated one. Petitions were not only form of protest. They were part of a consolidated administrative dialogue and the expression of articulated local civic interests, and their role was integral to the Ottoman imperial scheme, even during the reforms.

Petitions, their administrative treatment and their role in decision-making processes were highly Ottoman method in nature. This communication channel had been functioning for centuries as part of the Ottoman old regime. It was the specific elaboration of various heritages, themselves the subject of diverse evolutions over time and in no way a block of inherited medieval practices ready to supplanted by an imported modernity. The adoption of such a revised perspective on the character and evolution of the Ottoman old regime invites us to resist simplistic notions of imported reforms and to refine our understanding of Ottoman urban modernity. In the case of cities in the age of reform, it is evident that not only was the empire *in* the city, as Hanssen, Philipp and Weber have argued, but also that the empire *was* the city, in the sense that the negotiated new urban situation was also a new expression of the Ottoman imperial project.[51] The urban civic elite, comprising notables, guilds, merchants, members of confessional communities and sometimes nobles, took part along with other groups like military castes or rural landowners, in constant negotiations, and thus in shaping the very administrative, bureaucratic and ideological form of the empire.

Adopting such a perspective, made possible by the extraordinary abundance of petitions in the archives, allows us to discuss and challenge views of the Ottoman empire as a static apparatus, and also opens the way for a revision of prevailing views on public opinion, civil society and their form of expression in the imperial context.

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50 Archives nationales de Tunis, Série H, Carton 72, dossier 859, document n.6, 1872-77.

51 Jens Hanssen Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber (eds.), *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Beirut: Orient Institute, 2002), 375.

Contesting the Imperial Centre: Political Elites in Smyrna and their Rivalry with Istanbul

VANGELIS KECHRIOTIS

Smyrna has been studied not only in the context of the Ottoman empire but also within the framework of eastern Mediterranean.[1] It has been argued that within the context of British or French economic expansion in the eastern Mediterranean, which promoted connections between the port cities and their hinterland, "port cities developed as opulent and cosmopolitan outposts of [the] European bourgeoisie".[2] However, it is also important to trace the ways in which local elites, both Muslim and non-Muslim, "became political", that is, tried to employ, negotiate or resist state institutions to their advantage. In a period when there were so many political projects regarding imperial territories, these elites proceeded to form alliances according to their own interests. In certain cases, different factions within the urban groups made different choices, and this is exactly the case with the Greek community in Smyrna. Both the upper mercantile elite and the mostly professional middle class made their cultural and political choices by establishing their own cultural agencies. More important, however, were their attempts to translate their social and cultural blossoming into political influence by openly voicing their demands.

Daniel Goffman, writing about the 17th century, argues that:

> Smyrna was formed in the midst of an upheaval, as European companies and merchants in search of goods and markets centered at the port a commercial network ... The town quickly became a cosmopolitan city acting like a magnet upon commercially sensitive communities and establishing itself as a rival to Istanbul for the people and products of its expanding hinterland.[3]

In the 18th century, the western coasts of Asia Minor, and especially Smyrna, attracted Greek Orthodox migrants from the Aegean islands and the Peloponnese as a result of wars, natural disasters or opportunities for a better life. These groups were fairly easily distinguished from the indigenous population, which was mainly Turkish-speaking and predominantly rural. This immigration accelerated from the 1770s, but took on a more systematic character after the 1830s, when the

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1 Reşat Kasaba, Çağlar Keyder and Faruk Tabak, "Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities and their Bourgeoisies: Merchants, Political Projects and Nation-states," *Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* X, no. 1 (1986): 121-36.
2 Ibid., 122.
3 Goffman Daniel, *Smyrna and the Levantine World, 1550-1650* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 145-6.

Greeks took advantage of the Tanzimat and concessions granted by the Ottoman empire to European powers.

However, it was not only the Greek Orthodox population but the whole city that grew rapidly during that period. As a result, the old organisation of the city into ethno-religious neighbourhoods gave way to new arrangements in which the guiding criterion tended to be social status rather than ethnic affiliation, thereby transforming the old Eastern lay-out of the city into a more modern one. This change enhanced contacts among different communities, contacts that had already been promoted by the commercial and social interactions in the bazaars and places of recreation. At the beginning of the 20th century, this transformation had reached a peak. In his travel account, the French journalist Gaston Deschamps describes the Greeks of Smyrna as belonging to semi-autonomous communities. He was surprised to find out that they felt very much at home and, even though they also evoked, when necessary, the authority of the church, which after all was the legitimate head of the population, they tended to consider the Hellenic consul as "their natural patron".[4]

However, it was not only the Greek populations that enjoyed such laxity. In the circumstances of intense commercial activity and ongoing immigration, people could be granted the status of protégé or even become subjects of a foreign power, frequently switching from one nation to another, according to the circumstances. This flexibility has been linked to a specific "levantine" culture considered typical not only of Smyrna, but also of other urban centres of the eastern Mediterranean. Studying the developments in the same region during the 19th century, Reşat Kasaba has even argued for the development of a "civil society" in Western Anatolia. For this purpose, he has provided a useful description of the three elements necessary for such a development: the space, the construction of self-images and access to resources.[5] The term "cosmopolitanism" has also often been employed to describe this specific urban phenomenon. However, as the description has been applied to Alexandria and Istanbul as well as Smyrna, it is important to bear in mind that the term has been invested with diverse meanings. It may refer simply to a "plural city", where communities live side by side but not really together, or to the articulation of "communities of interest", which create a common denominator for all the inhabitants.[6]

My aim is to discuss a particular aspect of urban life among the Greeks of Smyrna that related to the administration as it is mirrored in the correspondence of the local metropolitan authorities with the patriarchate. Based on this mate-

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4 Gaston Deschamps, *Sur les routes d'Asie* (Paris: A.Colin, 1894), 151.

5 Reşat Kasaba, "Economic foundations of a civil society: Greeks in the Trade of western Anatolia, 1840-1876", in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism,* ed. Dimitris Gonticas and Charles Issawi (Princeton: Darwin Press, 1999), 80.

6 Robert Ilbert, 'Alexandrie cosmolpolite?' in P.Dumont et Georgeon (dir), *Villes Ottomans à la fin de l' Empire* (Paris: Harmattan, 1992), 171-85. Recently a literature on Smyrna has appeared that builds upon similar assumptions: Carmen Smyrnellis, *Une société hors de soi. Identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles,* Collection Turcica, vol. X (Paris: Peeters, 2005); Hervé Georgelin, *La fin de Smyrne : du cosmopolitisme aux nationalismes* (Paris: CNRS, 2005); Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *A World in Flux: Public Space and Urban Culture in Nineteenth-Century Izmir/Smyrna* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming 2011); Feryal Tansuğ, "The Greek Community of Izmir/Smyrna in an Age of Transition: The Relationship between the Ottoman Center-Local Governance and Izmir/Smyrna Greeks, 1840-1866," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, May 2011.

Smyrna in the 19th century.
Engraving by Joseph Schranz (1803-72).

rial, the argument is made that Smyrniot society could claim economic and even cultural autonomy in relation to Istanbul at several levels, including the relations of the large Greek Orthodox part of the population with their administrative and spiritual centre.

Smyrna: Reform and Transformation at the End of the 19th Century

The Tanzimat period resulted in crucial developments for the administration of the patriarchate. This centuries-old institution underwent a process of secularisation, or rather laicisation, with the establishment of a new council, the Mixed National Council (Μικτό Εθνικό Συμβούλιο), dominated by lay members, which, from then on, would curtail the authority of the Holy Synod. At the same time, the patriarch himself was recognised as the leader of his nation (*millet-başı, εθνάρχης*). This inconsistency indicated the hybrid nature of the reforms. In other words, the Ottoman state undertook a project to secularise the structure of society, but retained the only available form of organisation of the population, namely organisation into religious communities.

During the reign of the Sultan Abdulhamid II, Smyrna managed to largely avoid entanglement with the capital's rule. It has been argued that both the administration of Kamil Pasha and the pluralistic socioeconomic structure of the city were an impediment to authoritarian policies.[7] More particularly, it has been claimed that the political suppression the regime instigated did not have an impact

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7 See S. Ferit Eczacıbaşı's memoirs in Yaşar Aksoy, *Bir Kent, Bir İnsan, İzmir'in Son Yüzyılı, S. Ferit Eczacıbaşı'nın Yaşamı ve Anıları* (Istanbul: Dr. Nejat F. Eczacıbaşı Vakfı Yayınları, 1986), 82.

on the non-Muslim and foreigner communities, who enjoyed social prosperity and actually ruled the city.[8] This was why the regime that followed after 1908 had such difficulty in curtailing this assertiveness.

Since Smyrna was always such an important centre, the governors (*vali*) sent there were expected to contribute to the social development of the city, but also deal with its complexity.[9] Thus, the most significant figure in the constitutional movement of the 1870s, Midhat Pasha (1822-84), during the one year he spent there (1878) after he was ousted from the office of Grand Vizier, encouraged Muslim intellectual life in the city. Similarly, Kamil Pasha (1833-1913), who was appointed there in 1895 (again so as to be kept away from Istanbul) and governed the city for 12 years, left his imprint on city life.[10] It is important to stress that, rather like the governors appointed there, the Greek-Orthodox metropolitans elected to the local seat tended to be *persona non grata* with the Ottoman administration, occasionally for the patriarchal circles as well, and their appointment placed them at a safe distance from the centre of developments, Istanbul. Moreover, those appointed metropolitans in Smyrna recognised that this "honour" would put their abilities to the test. Even if they survived the ordeal, the conflicts they would have to endure would make it practically impossible for them to be included in the list of candidates for the patriarchate. Thus, they actually had to accept that this would be the highest office they would achieve.

When Patriarch Dionysios V resigned in 1890, and both the Holy Synod and the Mixed Council took the decision to declare the church under persecution, the measure of closing down churches, which had never before been taken in the Orthodox church, was criticised by many local metropolitans, among them Vassilios of Smyrna. His attitude should not be perceived as paradoxical.

Vassilios (1834-1910) was born in Zagoritsani, near Kastoria, in Western Macedonia and was of modest social origins. When he was 13, he was sent to Istanbul where, after changing patrons several times, he worked at the patriarchate as a protege of Archdeacon Paisios, who later became metropolitan of Smyrna. There, Paisios's patron, Patriarch Germanos IV, who recognised Vassilios's talents, removed him from the Fener patriarchal school (*Megali tou Genous Scholi, Mekteb-i Kebir*), where he had been studying, and enrolled him in the theological seminary of Halki (*Heybeliada Ruhban Okulu*). In 1870, after serving as metropolitan in Aghialos (present-day Primorsko, Eastern Macedonia) for five years, Vassilios was invited to assume the directorship of the Halki seminary. This coincided with a period when the whole Orthodox church was embroiled in the controversy between the Greek majority, which dominated the patriarchate's administration, and a Bulgarain minority, which opted for an independent church. Vassilios, who was among those urging moderation, did not participate in the patriarchal assembly of 29 August 1871 where the Bulgarian bishops who joined the exarchate were condemned. He was thus accused of being pro-Bulgarian by his opponents. It is probable that Vassilios did have some affinity with Slavic culture, given his birthplace. Eventually, he had to quit his position at the seminary, but was invited to

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8 Ibid., 81.
9 Ziya Somar, *Yakın Çağların Fikir ve Edebiyat Tarihimizde İzmir* (İzmir: IBB Kent Kitaplığı, 2001), passim.
10 Yaşar Aksoy, *Bir Kent,* 83.

A market place in Smyrna (1870).
Photo by Sandor Alexander Svoboda (1826-96).

return in 1873, remaining until 1876, when he returned to Aghialos. In 1884, he was appointed to Smyrna. His election to this position may have been owing in part to the personal network of his ex-patron Paisios, who had served there from 1853 to 1857.

In 1902, after a series of minor controversies over community foundations, a major dispute broke out regarding the election of the community administration in Smyrna. This was a clear attempt by the Council of Elders, the traditional administrative body of the community, to claim and exercise authority beyond

that stipulated by even the Organic Regulation of 1888, and thus overwhelm the recently emerged authority of the Central Committee that mostly represented non-Ottoman Greeks. Based on the distinction between Ottoman Greeks and the rest of the Orthodox community, the Council of Elders claimed hegemony over both administrative and religious affairs. This claim was perfectly consistent with the laws of the Ottoman state and the 1862 general regulations (*Nizamname*) of the patriarchate, and met with the wholehearted support of both. The Ottoman political context after the Greek-Ottoman War of 1897 and the restrictions imposed by the Ottoman authorities on the nationality of Greek Orthodox inhabitants, who until then could hold both Hellenic and Ottoman documents, encouraged such claims.

It was precisely in 1902 that Metropolitan Vassilios was invited to join the Holy Synod in Istanbul. Probably Vassilios, who had been involved in the community conflict, was called to Istanbul with the purpose of being temporarily removed from the scene in the hopes that the change to the political landscape in Smyrna would open the way for settling the conflict. Vassilios had been invited to join the synod as early as March 1900, but had requested exemption for health reasons. After an initial rejection, the Holy Synod accepted his plea, but Vassilios would not be permitted to refuse the invitation a second time. In the meantime, in 1901, the patriarchal throne had been assumed by Joakim III, the most prominent Greek Orthodox patriarch of the late Ottoman period, and in the past a personal friend of Vassilios. Their relations would deteriorate following Vassilios's stay in Istanbul. After all, Joakim III's enthronement in 1901 was accompanied by an attempt to bridge the divisions with the Hellenic state that had arisen during his first tenure as patriarch (1878-84). This approach took the form of emphasising ecumenism, which was central to his ideology, combined with the efforts to highlight the Byzantine Orthodox heritage as the main cultural reference point for both the patriarchate and Hellenism as a whole.

Vassilios returned to Smyrna in 1905. One of the issues causing frustration was the delays in the payment of various dues by the metropolitan authorities to the patriarchate. At the beginning of 1908, Vassilios informed the patriarchate that he had duly paid his contribution to the national treasury (*Εθνικόν ταμείον*) and the theological seminary at Halki. In reply, he was told that the contributions of the priests under his jurisdiction for the years 1905-06 and 1906-07 had been delayed and amounted to 2,800 kuruş.[11] Several subsequent letters reminded him not to further delay payment.[12] We learn later on, however, that Vassilios himself owed money. After many warnings, the metropolitan was asked to pay 7,770 kuruş in overdue contributions to the theological seminary within 15 days, failing which an exarch[13] would be sent to resolve the issue.[14] The metropolitan did not comply with the demand, although 2,800 kuruş that the priests of the *sancak* owed as contributions to the seminary were collected. There were other instances of dis-

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11 Correspondence of the Greek-Orthodox Patriarchate of Constantinople (Codex), A'/ 82, 4, 734, 29 Jan. 1908.

12 Ibid., 176, 2668, 1 Apr. 1908.

13 An exarch was an emissary sent by the patriarchate to take over the administration of a local church in cases of emergency.

14 Codex A'/ 82, 246, 3610, 14 May 1908.

Orthodox church in Smyrna. Postcard, beginning of 20th century.
Irfan Dağdelen Archive

putes related to the remittance of income. For instance, normally, the petition for
a firman for building a new church or school was made through the patriarchate,
so that the latter could collect the relevant fee. However, in some cases the peti-
tion was instituted by the local ecclesiastical authorities in Smyrna, "despite the
orders and the repeated admonitions of the Church". As a result, the patriarchate
demanded the share intended for the national treasury, namely 800 kurus.[15]

Challenges to the Cultural and Political Hegemony of the Patriarchate

In March 1908, a new person entered the scene when Vassilios's application
to appoint young Iakovos as his assistant was finally accepted by the patriarchate,
after two years of rejections on the grounds that Vassilios had not followed legal
procedure and that Iakovos had not completed the necessary five years after grad-
uation from theological school.[16] Iakovos was ordained bishop of Christoupoli.
However, after the unfortunate case of the bishop of Elaia Agathangelos, who
had been dismissed by Vassilios without compensation, this time the metropolitan
was compelled to guarantee he would pay a salary to his assistant even if he was
dismissed.[17]

Soon after, an unusual incident, described as a scandal, led to the intervention
of the patriarchate. The board of the evangelical school, the best-known Greek
school in Anatolia and under British protection, decided to abolish as a holiday
the Monday after Pentecost, which is known as the day of the Holy Spirit, thereby

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15 Codex A'/ 83, 6052, 481, 28 Oct. 1909 and ibid., 9192, 553, 9 Dec. 1909.
16 Codex A'/ 79, 14 June 1906, 194.
17 Codex A'/ 82, 12 Mar. 1908, 126.

"instigating ... a scandal in the consciousness of the faithful people and offering a bad example to ... lower schools in the city and the suburbs. The Metropolitan is asked to take measures so that such a mistake is not repeated again"[18].

Later, the patriarchate intervened when Bishop Iakovos of Christoupoli, assistant to the Metropolitan Vassilios, used on the day of the apostle Jacob the liturgy composed by apostle himself instead of the usual liturgy composed by the Byzantine patriarch and scholar Chrysostomos, "causing thus the amazement of the congregation". Vassilios was asked to bring his bishop back into line.[19] In a second letter, replying to an obviously defensive epistle from Vassilios, the patriarch stated that the problem was not that the liturgy was uncanonical, since it was used once a year in Jerusalem and had also been used on the island of Zante. Rather, as the patriarchal letter continued:

> ... since there is a formula of the Great Church, which bears the approval of the supreme ecclesiastical authority, none of the bishops is allowed to perform contrary to what is defined by this formula and respected by everybody. Moreover, the change of this or that in the formula is not the task of one among many but of the supreme ecclesiastical authority in charge. The prevalence of the opposite principle of permission and freedom regarding the order of formula could lead, as Your Sacredness can easily understand, to many absurdities.[20]

After the Young Turk Revolution of 1908, the patriarchate, wishing to protect its privileges,[21] set about reorganising its archives. Accordingly, the provinces were requested to send copies or the originals of the *berats* (authorisation documents) which they might find in their archives.[22] For the orphanage of Smyrna, for instance, no firman could be found in the patriarchate, so the metropolitan was requested to check whether there was a firman in his archives in Smyrna.[23] Meanwhile the financial position of the patriarchate had become all the more dire in this period. A circular, sent in June 1909, pointed out that the national treasury was in a deplorable state owing to extraordinary circumstances, namely the simultaneous reduction or suspension of certain incomes. Consequently, the patriarchate could no longer meet even the necessary current expenses. In response, it had been decided that a special voluntary fund-raising campaign be conducted in the parishes in the provinces under the supervision of the bishops and the Elders.[24] In Smyrna, this initiative triggered a fierce reaction, a development that deepened the divide with Istanbul.

When Vassilios died in 1910, the patriarch sent an exarch, Sofronios, to collect all his belongings, sell them and bring the money to the patriarchate. The distrust of Iakovos, Vassilios's former assistant, and the attempt to assert control from the centre, became clearer during Vassilios's funeral service. Iakovos was accused of

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18 Ibid., 317, 4868, 20 June 1908.
19 Ibid., 461, 8238, 28 Oct. 1908.
20 Codex A'/ 83, 151, 2942, 4 May 1909.
21 For the challenges that the new regime entailed for community autonomy, see Vangelis Kechriotis "The Modernisation of the Empire and the 'Community Privileges': Greek responses to the Young Turk policies" in *The State and the Subaltern. Society and Politics in Turkey and Iran*, ed. Touraj Atabaki (London: IB Tauris, 2007), 53-70.
22 Codex A'/ 82, 411, 7273, 22 Sep. 1908.
23 Codex A'/ 84, 357, 10317, 19 Nov. 1910. This was a rather awkward request, since the orphanage was under the direct jurisdiction of the patriarchate.
24 Codex A'/ 83, 255-56, 3178, 4 June 1909.

allowing clergy from other confessions or faiths to participate in the ceremony. The patriarchal letter condemning this practice argued that, "in similar ceremonies of the Church, it is possible for clergy of different confessions or faiths to attend but they may not be allowed to read prayers as if they were participating in the ceremony".[25] A few months later, the patriachate reminded the recipient of the case of Vassilios's funeral and expressed surprise that, despite all the reprovals, the same practice continued. The latest incident involved the senior Archimandrite (*proto-syngelos*) Chrysostomos, who had attended the funeral of a former professor at the evangelical school, one Weber, a British national, in a Protestant church and had read prayers along with the Protestant minister and Anglican priest,[26] an action that the patriarchate strongly disapproved of. However, the subsequent explanations provided by the new metropolitan, Chrysostomos, were considered satisfactory.[27]

Shortly afterwards, this same Chrysostomos ordained a new Bishop of Trallis and also appointed him as his assistant. However, the new bishop was to become involved in another incident. From Chrysostomos's archive we learn that the American John Mott, who had given a lecture in Smyrna, was welcomed by the metropolitan to the city. Mott informed the metropolitan that an international Christian conference was to take place at Robert College in Istanbul. Chrysostomos asked the patriarchate for permission for the bishop of Trallis to attend: "being well educated and having studied the texts of foreign theologians, I am sure that he would deservedly represent the community here".[28] The Holy Synod did not give its permission.[29] Nevertheless, the bishop of Trallis travelled to Istanbul and attended the lecture without waiting for an answer and neither did he apologise even when the refusal arrived.[30] It is well documented that the new metropolitan had been at odds with Patriarch Joakim III since the time he had served at the patriarchate.

Metropolitan Chrysostomos and the New Regime

When Metropolitan Vassilios passed away in 1910 after a long illness, old rivalries between different fractions of the community were reignited. The issue at stake was the election of the new metropolitan. Another issue was whether Bishop Iakovos had the right to serve as a *locum tenens,* since he had not received relevant instructions from the patriarchate. It was claimed that he could do so *ipso jure*, since according to the regulations a metropolitan had the right to appoint his deputy in cases where he was incapable of discharging his duties, and this is what had happened with Vassilios.[31] However, it was claimed, this status ended with the

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25 Codex A'/ 84, 91, 2644, 17 Apr. 1910.

26 Ibid., 319, 9486, 19 Oct. 1910.

27 Codex A'/ 85, 128, 2646, 15 Mar. 1911.

28 *Το Αρχείον του Εθνομάρτυρος Σμύρνης Χρυσοστόμου* (The Archive of the Martyr of the Nation Chrysostomos of Smyrna); *Τόμος Δεύτερος, Μικρά Ασία Μητροπολίτης Σμύρνης Α' 1910-1914* (Second volume, Asia Minor, Metropolitan of Smyrna 1910-1914) (Athens: MIET (Cultural Foundation of the National Bank), 2000), 7 (20 Apr. 1911).

29 Codex A'/ 85, 128, 2646, 15 Mar. 1911.

30 Ibid., 182, 3232, 25 Apr. 1911.

31 "We are informed that the Patriarchate had hesitated to appoint Iakovos, since two Bishops before, one of Elaia and one of Xanthoupoli, had been dismissed arbitrarily by the Metropolitan Vassilios. Therefore, the Patriarchate had asked for a guarante." This guarantee, however, *Amalthia* claims, did not mean that he had an *ipso jure* right to the metropolitan throne, which allowed him to chair the ecclesiastical court or the community assemblies. *Amalthia*, 'Αυτοδικαίως' (Ipso Jure), 24 Feb. 1910.

latter's death and no further instruction had been issued by the Holy Synod.[32] In the meantime, a committee sent by the *ex officio* appointed administrative boards was sent to visit the patriarch in support of Iakovos's candidacy. According to the very influential newspaper *Amalthia*, the committee members tried to compensate for their lack of legitimacy by inviting Aristidis Pasha Georgantzoglou, a deputy in the Ottoman parliament, to accompany them. The Smyrniot deputy, it was claimed, accepted the invitation out of "politeness" towards the Smyrniots, since he knew that his presence did not bestow legitimacy. Moreover, his position as deputy prevented him from favouring one party in the population. Additionally, the party this delegation represented had strong reservations during elections about Georgantzoglou, believing that his authority as an Ottoman official probably made him more attached to the state than to the interests of the Greek Orthodox population. Eventually, the support of the "generous" deputy was not enough to overcome the reservations of the patriarch, who indicated that "the expressed request was hardly suitable for serious people, who are aware of the commands of the administration and the needs of the church".[33]

At the same time, there was apparently mounting discontent with the patriarchate, which resulted in a large part of the local population supporting a candidate of their own. A campaign to collect signatures was organised. *Amalthia* attempted to counter this discontent by seeking to convince Smyrniots that the "national centre" was taking care of this extremely important issue.[34] Moreover, it argued:

> ... if it were about lay offices, or the election of notables by the people, the situation, despite all the debauchery, would be justified ... All the demagogic and ochlocratic elements would have their reasons, since, unfortunately, the people are always divided between the right-thinking and the easily convinced and deceived... But what is the purpose of these indecent and unholy goings-on in the election of the Metropolitan?

It concludes: "If the real [*sic*] Smyrniot people were asked ... one and only one voice, sincere, unbiased, disinterested, patriotic would shake Fener, and this voice would be in favour of Drama Metropolitan Chrysostomos"[35].

This is the first time the name of Chrysostomos of Drama appears. It becomes clear that Sokratis Solomonidis, the editor of *Amalthia*, despite his bitterness towards Joakim III for the support he eventually gave to the opposing fraction in the community controversy, would not withdraw his support from the patriarchate as the political centre of the Greek Orthodox community, a position that was not always shared among the representatives of the Hellenic state. However, the candidate he wished to support did not enjoy the latter's protection. Thus, the case in question perfectly demonstrates the distinction we need to make in regard to such disputes between support for institutions and support for individual office-holders in them.

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32 *Amalthia*, 'Ὑπάρχει διαταγή;' (Is there an order?) 19 Feb. 1910. *Amalthia,* 'Η Επιτροπή' (The Committee), 11 Feb. 1910.

33 *Amalthia,* 'Η Επιτροπή' (The Committee), 11 Feb.1910.

34 *Amalthia*, 'Τα άγια τοις αγίοις' (The most sacred among the sacred), 3 Feb. 1910.

35 Ibid.
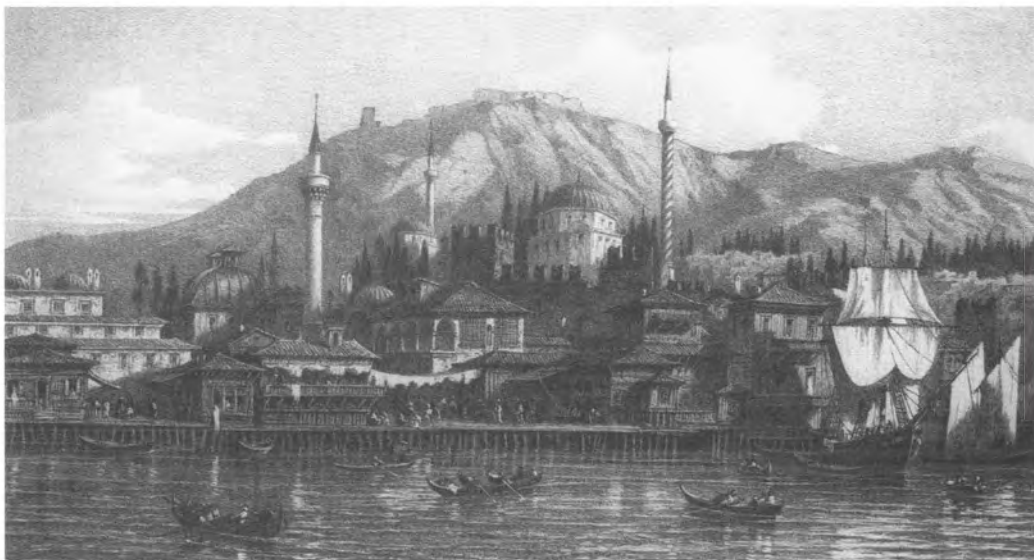
The harbour of Smyrna.
Engraving by Thomas Allom (1804-72).

Eventually, *Amalthia,* despite the active support provided to Iakovos by both the Elders Council and the Central Committee,[36] achieved its purpose. The instructions issued by the patriarchate stipulated that young bishops were to be excluded from candidacy and called on the congregation in Smyrna to have faith in the decisions of the Holy Synod. The fact that, despite these instructions, Iakovos insisted on his candidacy revealed "a childish stubbornness on the part of otherwise serious citizens which defames the dignity of our community before the supreme authorities of the nation".[37]

It seems, however, that already by that time the Drama metropolitan was considered *persona non grata* by the Ottoman authorities as well. The Greek Smyrniot community reacted with fury at the reluctance of the Ottoman government to provide the *berat* necessary for Chrysostomos's appointment. This was seen as an attempt by the Hakki cabinet, the first controlled by the Young Turks, to interfere in the religious affairs of the community, "an intervention prohibited by the regulations of the Church not only with regard to state authorities of a different religion but even to the Christian states", since the selection of metropolitans is achieved through "the implantation of the holy spirit" (*sic*).[38] However, even the local authorities were reluctant to accept the new metropolitan.[39]

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36 They even sent a letter to the patriarchate indicating that Iakovos was the appropriate person for this office. *Amalthia* mocks this initiative, since it derived from individuals who felt indebted to Iakovos for having appointed them. However, they had been authorised only to deal with current affairs "and they have no right to interpret the public sentiment in Smyrna". *Amalthia,* 'Δια τον σμυρναϊκόν θρόνον' (On the Smyrniot), 8 March 1910.

37 Ibid.

38 *Amalthia,* 'Μέχρι της θρησκείας' (Even in religion), 22 Mar. 1910. The Ottoman government asked for a cancellation of the election, which was considered an insult to the Orthodox faith itself and beyond both the "national regulations" and the rule of law. It is mentioned, however, that the minister of justice was not of the same opinion. This proves, according to *Amalthia,* that he was aware of the authority the state could exercise over the different religious communities, which gave rise to the hope that the problem would eventually be resolved.

39 It was claimed that the *vali* of Aydın had asked the minister of domestic affairs to prevent Chrysostomos from coming to Smyrna for the sake of public order. *Amalthia,* 'Ο μητροπολίτης Σμύρνης' (The Metropolitan of Smyrna), 3 Apr. 1910.

Despite the earlier tensions over the candidates for the metropolitan see, Bishop Iakovos, together with the Council of Elders and the Central Committee had no other choice left but to accept the *fait accompli*. They, thus, telegraphed the patriarchate urging it to act swiftly and asking for the issuance of the *berat* so that the new metropolitan could be among his congregation for the Easter holiday.[40] The patriarchate was even accused by *Amalthia* of not promptly reacting to the allleged violation of the "national regulations" and it concludes:

> The Smyrniot people are protesting not against the impediments and caprices of the government, but against the ineffectiveness of the Great Church of Christ in dispelling the various rumours and in eliminating with due action the intrigues and the slandering of the enemies of the Church and the nation against its elected leader.[41]

Bulgarians also waged a campaign against Chrysostomos through *Veste*, the organ of the exarchate in Istanbul.

Amalthia considers all these accusations an honour for Chrysostomos: "If the government lets the Bulgarians grow unrestrained in their demands and their deviousness to the point of grabbing Eastern Rumelia and the railways from the Ottoman empire, this does not mean that men who are aware of their rights should remain with their arms still". The government should place no faith in slanderers, but "place greater trust in the hierarchs, since they know how to defend the rights of the Church and the nation, and they will know how to do their duty towards our common motherland, which overlaps with the defence of the national rights of the Greeks in the Ottoman empire".[42]

The criticism of the patriarchate turned to fury as time passed, with only Chrysostomos, helped by Aristidis Pasha Georgantzoglou, trying to settle the issue, with no assitance from the church authorities, who are accused of "coldness", which is attributed to "personal antipathies". The newspaper concludes: "Let us hope that … this won't lead to expressions of justified protest against the National Centre for its negligence in an issue related to the dignity of our fellow Smyrniots".[43] Eventually, the *berat* was issued and the new metropolitan was welcomed with great enthusiasm, despite his instructions to community authorities to avoid a pomp and ceremony.[44]

At this point, some brief biographical information about the new metropolitan is called for. He was born in Trallis (*Triglia*) in the province of Bursa. His hometown was almost exclusively Greek Orthodox. The ambitious Chrysostomos was sent to Istanbul and enrolled in the Halki seminary in 1884. When he graduated, he was appointed archdeacon in Mytilini and then followed Constantinos (the later Patriarch Constantinos V) to Efesos when the latter became the metropolitan there. When Constantinos moved to Istanbul as *locum tenens* for the throne, Chrysostomos once more followed him. Upon the election of Constantinos as

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40 Amalthia, 'Ο μητροπολίτης Σμύρνης' (The Metropolitan of Smyrna), 5 Apr. 1910.
41 *Amalthia*, 'Η Σμύρνη παραπονείται' (Smyrna is complaining), 6 Apr. 1910.
42 *Amalthia*, 'Οι Βούλγαροι και ο Μητροπολίτης μας' (The Bulgarians and our Metropolitan), 29 Mar. 1910.
43 *Amalthia*, 'Το βεράτιον του Μητροπολίτου' (The *Berat* of the Metropolitan), 30 Apr. 1910.
44 *Amalthia*, 'Η υποδοχή του Μητροπολίτου' (The welcome reception of the Metropolitan), 3 May 1910, *Amalthia*, 'Η άφιξις του Μητροπολίτου Σμύρνης' (The arrival of the Metropolitan of Smyrna), 11 May 1910.

patriarch, Chrysostomos was appointed senior archimandrite (*protosyngelos*) in the patriarchate. At this stage, he was only 30. In this position, he made a name for his eloquence and his rhetorical abilities. These were also the years of mounting tension between the exarchate and the patriarchate, an episode that helped to shape Chrysostomos's priorities. His biographer, Christos Solomonidis, claims that Joakim III, who returned in office in the spring of 1901, valued the senior archimandrite's capabilities. Charmed by his talent, Joakim III, it is claimed, suggested that Chrysostomos take over the metropolitan see of Drama (in Eastern Macedonia). Chrysostomos himself is said to have preferred Drama to being part of the patriarchate. However, it would also be reasonable to assume that he was sent away by Joakim III, who was a personal enemy of Constantinos V. These personal differences would later be paralleled by ideological ones: the metropolitan's nationalist activities would be rejected by Joakim III, while the patriarch's views were denounced by Chrysostomos.[45]

When, in 1910, Chrysostomos became the metropolitan of Smyrna, his appointment occurred, as we have seen, despite the constant attempts of the patriarchate and the Ottoman authorities to prevent it. Very soon, the new metropolitan would vindicate all the objections to his appointment. The issue that once more particularly vexed the patriarchate was the decrease in income. The Holy Synod sent a representative of the board of the National Philanthropical Foundations (*Εθνικά Φιλανθρωπικά Ιδρύματα*) in Istanbul with a circular to the metropolitan authorities and community authorities of northwest and western Asia Minor, where the most prosperous Greek Orthodox communities were to be found. His task was to collect contributions to the philanthropical foundations.[46]

A few months later, in a stern letter of reprimand addressed to Metropolitan Chrysostomos, requests were made for more information on the imposition of new taxes and collection of money in Smyrna. The reason for the anxiety of the patriarchate became apparent in a letter sent a month later. In it, the patriarchate condemned the attitude of the community in Smyrna and of the metropolitan personally. It seems that as soon as Chrysostomos had been told of the purpose of the representative's visit, he convened the assembly of the community, which decided to prohibit the collection of funds for the Istanbul foundations on the grounds that the community in Smyrna had its own hospital and orphanage to support. The patriarchate demanded from the metropolitan and the community authorities that any prohibition on the collection of money be withdrawn.[47]

This exchange demonstrates the reciprocal nature of the struggle for authority. On the one hand, there was the patriarch's desperate attempt to make up for lost incomes from Macedonia with higher contributions from the wealthy communities of western Asia Minor. On the other, there was the attempt by Smyrna's community elite to cut off contributions to Istanbul both to enhance the autonomy of the community and to enable the construction of buildings and establishments that would reinforce the community elite's position as a semi-bureaucracy. Ac-

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45 Christos Solomonidis, *Ο Σμύρνης Χρυσόστομος* (Chrysostomos of Smyrna) (Athens: no publisher, 1993), 97.
46 Codex A'/ 85, 233, 4758, 26 May 1911.
47 Ibid., 521-2, 10224, 23 Nov. 1911.

cordingly, while they refused to send money to Istanbul, they imposed new taxes on members of the local community.

The same trends were evident on other occasions as well. When the Smyrna branch of the ministry of education requested information about the schools, Chrysostomos seemingly refused to oblige, and the patriarchate urged him to abide by the patriarchal circulars (whose content is unknown to us).[48] In another letter, Chrysostomos requested the patriarch to intervene with the government to reinstate the old registry system for community schools Under the old system, the Elders could directly submit relevant information to the authorities, but the new system obliged them to submit the information to local district representatives known as *muhtar*s. The request was refused and the patriarch urged "the Metropolitan and the Elders to take full care that the *muhtars* regularly and in time receive the relevant notices of all registry acts and notify the authorities, according to the rules".[49]

Chrysostomos was determined to defend the autonomy and welfare of his community. Upon his arrival in Smyna, he had initiated a series of projects. He ordered the demolition of the old metropolitan palace, a decision welcomed with enthusiasm by *Amalthia*. The old building is described in very dark colours:

> Who among the Smyrniots who visit the miserable and foul-smelling building of the community does not feel sadness, disappointment and embarrassment, a kind of humiliation, that the centre of the community is in such a lamentable condition? ... the action of the Metropolitan started with the surroundings. Maybe this beginning is symbolic. The decay of many years calls for an immediate remedy.[50]

Indeed, the symbolism of this decision was intentional. To a visiting journalist, Chrysostomos remarked that just "as a general has first to control the battlefield he will have to battle over by placing everybody in their proper positions, so I have to set up the Metropolitan offices in a manner worthy of the large community of Smyrna in accordance with its needs and significance".[51]

The metropolitan, however, needed to find the money for such a project. This was not expected to be too difficult, though. *Amalthia* noted that in Drama, Chrysostomos had managed to economise to the tune of 37,500 liras in order to build schools and nursing homes. It should not, thus be difficult for him to find 1,000-1,500 liras needed to build the new palace. Apart from his efficiency in fund-raising, however, what made the community very optimistic about the future was the character of the new metropolitan. As Christos Solomonidis pointed out: "Vassilios lived a monk's life and the metropolitan palace had been transformed into a monastery. He did received but few friends and the offices were closing earlier. Chrysostomos opened the doors of the metropolitan building and organised it in the best way".[52]

What is particularly interesting here is the underlying assumption that Vassilios's character was inappropriate to Smyrna and its populace. In a city of vivid

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48 Ibid., 505, 4 Nov. 1911.
49 Codex A'/ 86, 339, 4696, 16 July 1912.
50 *Amalthia*, 'Η Μητρόπολις' (The Metropolitan building), 13 May 1910.
51 Ibid.
52 Solomonidis, *Chrysostomos of Smyrna*, 87.

social activity, where ceremonies and displays of material wealth that recognised and celebrated traditional hierarchies affected all aspects of public life, a detached, solitary character could not play the role of national leader expected of him. Chrysostomos, by contrast, with his sociability, his promptness in resolving social problems combined with his vanity, seemed perfect in this role. This contrast offers strong indication of the specific cultural and social attitudes that had developed among Greek Smyrniots.

Thus, a series of projects were initiated in this period. The new metropolitan showed a particular interest in education. Soon after his arrival, he visited all the schools of the region.[53] He considered the old building at the evangelical school unsuitable and urged the school board to commnece the necessary works immediately without concern for money, promising that the community would support them.[54] New buildings were also planned for the central girls school[55] and the school in Bornova.[56] In additon, the community was called on to contribute to and support the creation of a music school. It was said to shameful that the Greek Orthodox community, the most numerous in the city, had not supported the establishment of such a school, when the other communities – Turkish, Jewish, Armenian – already had their own.[57]

Significantly, the community in Smyrna was not the only one at odds with the patriarchate during all these years. In 1906, an exarch was sent to Ayvalık (Kydonies) to settle the dispute there between the Elders Council and the metropolitan of Efesos, Joakim. Joakim resided in Smyrna, so the community of Ayvalık, a quite prosperous one, was detached from his authority. The conflict would eventually lead to the founding of the metropolitan see of Kydonies, "which was not irrelevant to the safeguarding and the promotion of the community interests of Kydonies, the value of the city and the interests of the Christian communities around here".[58] Not coincidentally, a few years earlier the region had been upgraded administratively from *kaymakamlık* to *mutaşeriflik*.[59] A patriarchal letter sent upon the occasion of the exarch's visit described the resentment of the Holy Synod at the ingratitude of the community, despite all the efforts the former had made on its behalf. Thus, the Elders Council was urged to provide the regular contribution due to the patriarchate up to the establishment of the exarchy.[60]

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53 *Amalthia*, 'Επισκέψεις μητροπολίτου' (Visits by the Metropolitan), 29 May 1910. He participated in the end-of-year celebrations at the German Greek school of Gianniki, which took place in the stadium of the Apollon sports club, *Amalthia*, 'Εξετάσεις Γυμναστικής' (Gymnastics demonstration), 29 May 1910; visited the model girls school of Diamantopoulos, *Amalthia*, 'Πρότυπον παρθεναγωγείον' (Model Girls School), 5 June 1910; and the school at Bornova, *Amalthia*, 'Ο μητροπολίτης εν Βουρνόβα' (The Metropolitan in Bornova), 7 June 1910; and the branch of the evangelical school in Shinadika quarter, *Amaltiha*, 'Σχολή συνοικίας σχοινάδικων' (The school in Shinadika quarter), 7 June 1910.

54 *Amalthia*, 'Ο Μητροπολίτης και η Ευαγγελική Σχολή' (The Metropolitan and the Evangelical School), 27 May 1910.

55 *Amalthia*, 'Ανέγερσις Κεντρικού Παρθεναγωγείου' (Building of a Central Girls School), 19 May 1910.

56 *Amalthia*, 'Ο μητροπολίτης εν Βουρνόβα' (The Metropolitan in Bornova), 17 June 1910.

57 *Amalthia*, 'Σμυρναϊκή Ηχώ' (Smyrniot Echo), 26 May 1910.

58 See *Τα κατά την ανακήρυξιν της Μητροπόλεως Κυδωνιών* (On the proclamation of the Metropolitan See of Kydonies) (Kydonies, 1908), 3.

59 Archive du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères (Nantes), No. 98, *De la Circonscription Administratif à Aivaly*, Blanc (Smyrne) to Constans (Constantinople), 8 Juillet 1907.

60 Codex A'/ 80, 472-3, 16 Nov. 1907.

A similar problem arose in the town of Aydın, where the community had dismissed its metropolitan. The Holy Synod, in expressing its disapproval of this "riotous movement" (*ἔκτροπον κίνημα*) urged the community to effect a reconciliation with the metropolitan.[61] Later on, the community was strongly reprimanded for dismissing individuals appointed by the church, which was supposed to be the only authority entitled to take such steps. Instead, the community was instructed to forward its complaints through the legal channels, and the patriarchate would consider them "as it had always done".[62] In addition, the local canon (*πρωτοσύγγελος*), Chrysostomos, who had been appointed by the community in the metropolitan's place, was ordered to present himself in Istanbul or face dismissal.

The crisis escalated when it became known that the metropolitan had sent a condemnation (*ἐπιτίμιον*) – one step short of excommunication – of the Elders Council.[63] In order to offset the effect of such a document on the patriarchate, the Elders sent their own letter in response, a letter that enraged the Holy Synod "for its inappropriate and disrespectful style and misleading and slanderous content".[64]

The community strife in Aydın coincided with the Young Turk Revolution, and might be related to it. However, this political conjuncture could have different impacts depending on particular circumstances. In the case of Aydın, it led to the overall challenging of ecclesiastical authority. Indeed, the patriarchate, in trying to appease the community and reconcile it with its metropolitan stated that "great harm can be caused by similar divisions and disputes in the present difficult times, which demand the undisturbed unity of all and close cooperation between the congregation and its pastor".[65] In the community affairs of Smyrna, the new political conjuncture had the opposite effect.

The most interesting aspect, however, is the issue of the use by Chrysostomos of the double-headed eagle as the emblem of the church of Smyrna. This was considered to be the exclusive symbol of the patriarchate.[66] Chrysostomos's response was impressive. First, he claimed that the double-headed eagle was not his invention but appeared on the official correspondence not only of his metropolitan see, but of all the other sees. Moreover, in the codices he found in the archives of the two most ancient churches, Agia Fotini and Agios Ioannis the Theologian, the Byzantine double-headed eagle, holding the globe and a sceptre and surrounded by the name of Anthimos or Grigorios (who later became Patriarch Gregorios V), was used in exactly the same manner as the patriarchal seal.[67] Furthermore, no metropolitan sees was using any other emblem:

> Since the beginning ... not only as an indication of their dependence on the Patriarchate ... but also for deeper historical reasons, as this sacred double-headed eagle emblem is full of historical memories, and comprises the external bond binding the Metropolitan Sees and local churches with the Ecumenical Patriarchate and with the older Byzantine world of the fallen great Empire

61 Codex A'/ 82, 378-9, 8 Aug. 1908.
62 Ibid., 412-13, 23 Sep. 1908.
63 Ibid., 445, 17 Oct. 1908.
64 Ibid., 500, 10 Dec. 1908.
65 Codex A'/ 83, 501-2, 6 Nov. 1909.
66 Codex A'/ 85, 10084, 506, 5 Nov. 1911.
67 The Archive, 24, Chrysostomos to the Patriarch. 4 Dec. 1911.

of our Nation, in no case should it be removed by the churches and particularly the cathedrals, which is the seat of the See of the Metropolitan of each province, who within his own province is a small Patriarch, and even if this is not so, is the only representative of the Patriarch and gathers in his hands the authority and everything that the Patriarch enjoys in Constantinople, apart from the right to sanction Metropolitans and patriarchal monasteries.[68]

Chrysostomos even suggested that the other metropolitan sees should discard all the emblems that had been lately introduced on metropolitan seals, such as birds and animals, mitres and batons, open holy books or blessing hands. He concluded: "Only when the time has been completed and the expected messiah of our nation appears, the true successor of the Byzantine Emperors, can and must the double-headed eagle be removed from the headings or the seals of the Patriarch and the Metropolitans".[69]

Conclusions

The post-*Tanzimat* period was marked by the systematic efforts of the central administration to impose its control over areas of the periphery, which had achieved a degree of autonomy. However, as became clear during the Hamidian period, the Ottoman government was unable to efficiently suppress the insolence that a city such as Smyrna could risk demonstrating on various occasions. The same was also true for the central administration of the Orthodox church, which, as we've seen with respect to community conflicts in Smyrna, had enormous difficulty in implementing its authority. One could assume that, in a way similar to the appointment as *valis* in Smyrna of figures who constituted a threat to the regime, those appointed as metropolitans in Smyrna knew that this "honour" was aimed at challenging their abilities and checking their ambitions. Thus, they had to accept that their careers would go no higher. By the same token, they had less to lose by being uncooperative. As a result, it is not surprising that it was so difficult for the regime that emerged after 1908 to curb the political and social self-confidence of city elites that had acquired a political and cultural identity of insolence and autonomy.

This claim to a certain autonomy, however, refers not only to Istanbul: it also concerns Athens. It has been argued that as a result of their education, the Greek Orthodox population was unfamiliar with the history and geography of the empire they lived in, whereas they were very well informed about Greece. As a result, they tended to see themselves as a part of the Hellenic state. The education these children received was definitely Greek. However, the link between this education and loyalty to the Hellenic state was neither an immediate nor a necessary one. As I have shown elsewhere, the Smyrniot community claimed a cultural autonomy from both Istanbul and Athens.[70]

Relations and interactions between ecclesiastical authorities in the provinces and the capital give us an insight into the balance of power in the broader society,

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68 Ibid., 25.
69 Ibid., 26.
70 Vangelis Kechriotis, "The Greeks of Izmir at the End of the Empire: A non-Muslim Ottoman Community between Autonomy and Patriotism," PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2005.

although such general conclusions, of course, vary according to circumstance. It is also important to trace the personal, professional, family and other networks that might have played a role in the making of certain choices. However, it is only through a comparative approach that one can challenge simplistic undifferentiated assumptions about the attitudes of groups belonging to the same ethno-religious communities scattered about the empire. Among other things, such case studies reveal the inconsistencies and omissions of nationalist historiography.

# Istanbul and the Aegean Islands: Imroz in the mid-19th Century

FERYAL TANSUĞ

The history of the social and economic lives of Greek Orthodox Christians on the northern Aegean islands of Limni (Limnos), Imroz (Imbros/Imvros),[1] Bozcaada (Tenedos), Semadirek (Samothrace) and Taşöz (Thasos) under Ottoman rule, and their relationship with the Ottoman local administration and central government has yet to be told. This population came under Ottoman rule in the years following the conquest of Istanbul and passed under the rule of Greece during the Balkan wars of 1912-13. The Greek Orthodox Christians of Imroz and Bozcaada islands were exceptions to the forced Greek and Turkish population exchanges agreed to in January 1923,[2] as the negotiations leading to Lausanne Treaty (24 July 1923) were still going on. These people, along with the Constantinopolitan Greeks, were thus left within the boundaries of the nascent Turkish republic in the remapping of the geopolitical boundaries of the dissolved Ottoman empire.

Recent works have generated renewed interest in the political and social history of Imroz and Bozcaada under Turkish rule from 1923 to the 2000s. Relying on oral narratives and written records, these recent studies have questioned the deterioration of the lives of native Greek inhabitants and the peaceful multi-religious coexistence on the islands until 1964. They have also challenged the clash of two nationalisms – Greek and Turkish – that turned the residents of the islands into suffering refugees in a "hostile host-state which reluctantly offered them citizenship, and an indifferent mother nation which relegated them to the *geopolitical margins of purity*".[3] Most of the sociological, anthropological and historical studies of these two islands have focused on the post-1923 period, ignoring Ottoman rule. This chapter aims to analyse the relationships of the Greek islanders with the Ottoman local administration and central government in the early years of Tanzimat reform. By focusing on the Ottoman past of Imroz, this study seeks to shed light on a silent aspect of its history.

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1 The ancient Greek names of the islands are Ἴμβρος "Imvros" – generally transcribed as "Imbros" – and Τένεδος "Tenedos" (Bozcaada). The Turkish state changed the name of Imvros to Gökçeada by government decree on 29 July 1970. In the Ottoman Turkish documents, the names of the islands were written as "Imroz" and "Bozcaada". In this chapter, I follow the Ottoman usages for the smaller Aegean islands in the 19th century (Imroz, Bozcaada, Limni, Semadirek, etc.).

2 The Convention for the Exchange of the Orthodox Christian and Muslim Populations between Greece and Turkey was signed on 30 January 1923.

3 Georges Tsimouris, "Reconstructing 'home' among the 'enemy': The Greeks of Gökseada (Imvros) after Lausanne," *Balkanologie* 1, no. 2 (2001): 4.
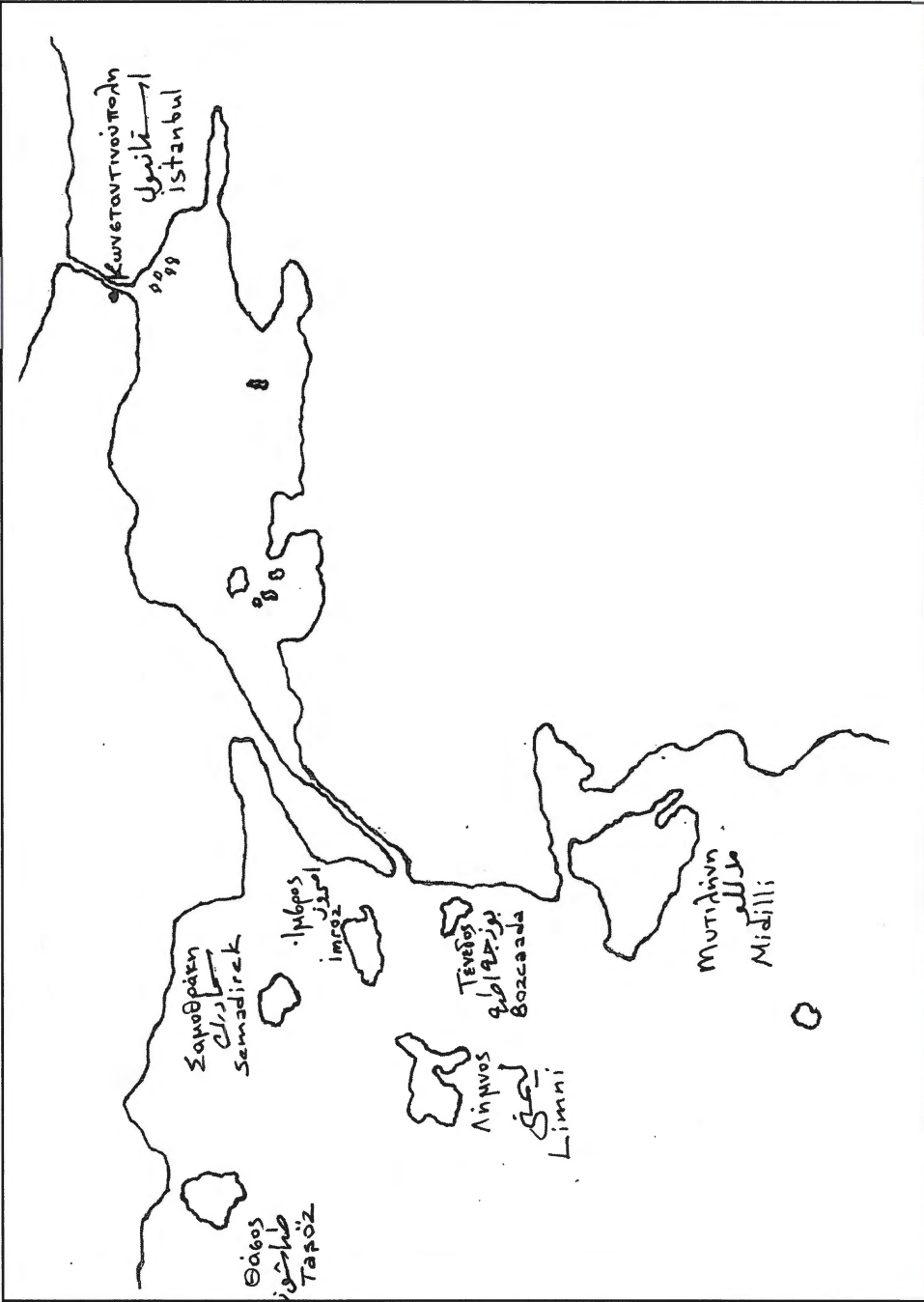
Imroz and other islands in the north Aegean region. Map: Angelos Dourlaris

The archival records uncover the relationship between the central government and local administration of the islands and Greek islanders between 1840 and 1864. By analysing the correspondence between the central government and local administration of these two islands as well and the islanders' petitions of complaint, one can gain an understanding of how the central government perceived these two small and overwhelmingly Greek Orthodox Aegean islands on the outer peripheries of the capital. Did the Ottoman government control and monitor local administration and social order in accordance with its integration endeavours of the 19th century? Or did it perceive these islands simply as a source of income, as taxpaying units, without addressing communal and social issues?

As a result of the turbulent social and political events of the 18th and first two decades of the 19th century, the Ottoman state had to develop and apply policies to accommodate the interests and demands of its non-Muslim subjects in order to maintain its legitimacy. How did a Muslim imperial administration establish and maintain legitimacy and obedience in these Greek islands in an age of Ottoman reform and following the Greek revolt and founding of the kingdom of Greece in 1830? These questions can help us to understand the relations between the islanders and the Muslim local administrators and central government.

Before the Ottoman ascendancy, the Aegean islands were inhabited by Venetians, Genoese, Crusaders and Byzantines. They fell under Ottoman control during the reign of Mehmed II between 1453 and 1456 through the policy of *istimalet*,[4] and the sultan granted Imroz – Limni and Taşöz – to the Italian Gattulisi family (who also ruled Mytillini) as an annual fief.[5] Soon after, between 1457 and 1479, control of the islands rotated among the Papal forces, Venice and the Ottomans and they came under definite Ottoman rule only in 1479. After the fall of Constantinople, Imroz had surrendered under the leadership of Mihail Kritovoulos, a leading islander and subsequently chronicler to Mehmed II.[6] Kritovoulos convinced the Imvrians, who were attempting to flee the island after learning of the conquest of Istanbul, not to do so. The sultan, for his part, agreed to maintain the status quo by leaving the island under the administration of a local person, in return for taxes and loyalty.[7] As to Bozcaada, when the Ottomans first dominated it in 1456 and again in 1479, there was no local autonomous rule. It had been a vacant and dormant island since the 1381 war between Venice and Genoa. However, the Venetians used Bozcaada occasionally to observe the Ottoman navy during the Ottoman-Venetian wars of 1463 and 1479.[8] Once Ottoman rule there was firmly established in 1479, a castle was built and settlers were exempted from the imperial tax (*tekalif-i divaniye*).[9] By the 16th century, a garrison and a small

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4 This was Ottoman policy of "accommodation", that is, taking over the Balkans by persuasion and assurances of good treatment. Halil İnalcık, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottoman," in Halil İnalcık, (Istanbul: Eren Press, 1998), 196-8. For the application of *istimalet* policy in the Aegean islands, see Heath W. Lowry, *Fifteenth Century Ottoman Realities, Christian Peasant Life on the Aegean Island of Limnos* (Istanbul: Eren Press, 2002), 1, 3-4, 10, 42-5.

5 Lowry, 6.

6 Mihail Kritovoulos, *Kritovoulos, the Conquest of Istanbul*, 2nd ed., transl. Karolidi (Istanbul: Kaknüs, 2007), 23 .

7 Ibid., 15.

8 Cengiz Orhonlu, "Bozcaada," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 6: 318.

9 *Tekalif-i divaniye* was the imperial tax levied in cases of need, especially during long campaigns. Its amount was determined by the Porte and announced through firmans. Mustafa Akdağ, [Struggle of the Turkish

Christian community is known to have been present on the island.[10] Under the Ottomans, Limni, Imroz, Bozcaada, Semadirek and Taşöz initially came under the administration of the *sancak* of Gelibolu.[11] During the 17th century, possession of Imroz was again contested by the Venetians and Ottomans as part of their struggle to dominate the Mediterranean.[12] Similarly, the Venetians attacked Bozcaada in 1657, but before long the Ottomans had taken it back. The island was regularly attacked by Russia in the recurrent wars with the Ottoman empire in the 19th century, although Russia was never able to retain control of Bozcaada as a result of these campaigns.[13]

After the Ottoman conquest of Rhodes in 1522, in order to rule all Aegean islands uniformly, the administrative organisation of the Aegean islands was reorganised and the province (*eyalet*) of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid was established in February 1534 under the rule of the *kapudan pasha*.[14] From this time on, the Aegean islands remained part of this *eyalet*. With the conquest of the islands of Sakız (1565) and Kıbrıs (1571), Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid was enlarged, by the end of the 16th century comprising the *sancak*s[15] of Gelibolu, Eğriboz, Biga, Sığla, Rhodes, Karlıili, İnebahtı, Kocaeli, Sakız, Nakşa and Mehdiye ve Mezistre.[16] With the foundation of Kingdom of Greece in 1831, the Ottomans lost the Sporades and Cyclades islands and Evia and reorganised the administration of the remaining islands.[17] There was further, and radical, change in 1849, during the Tanzimat period, in the administrative organisation of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid. The *kapudan pasha* lost his authority to a governor-general (*muhassıl*),[18] *kaymakam* (district chief) and *müdür* (director), all of them appointed by the centre. Rhodes became the local administrative hub (in following years alternating with Midilli and Çanakkale). In addition to Rhodes, Sakız, Midilli, İstanköy and Kıbrıs constituted *sancak*s of Cezayir-ı Bahr-ı Sefid. Initially, Limni and Bozcaada were excluded from this *eyalet*, retaining their status as separate *kaymakamlık* (district governorships). However, bureaucratic problems meant they were subsequently also added to Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid.[19]

People for Subsistence and Order: The Celali Revolts] (Ankara: Barış Yayınevi, 1999), 48-50.

10 Orhonlu, "Bozcaada", 318. According to *Tahrir* register no. 75 (925/1519) of Gelibolu Sancağı, Imroz, Limni, Taşöz, and Semadirek islands were under the administration of Gelibolu Sancağı; Bozcaada was registered in *Tahrir* Notebook no. 702 (1009/1600-1601) under the *sancak* of Gelibolu. All five islands were under the *sancak* of Gelibolu in *Tahrir* Notebook no. 724 (1009/1600-1601).

11 Feridun M. Emecen, "Ege Adaları'nın İdari Yapısı" [Administrative Structure of the Aegean Islands] in *Ege Adaları'nın İdari, Malî ve Sosyal Yapısı* [Administrative, Economic and Social Structure of the Aegean Islands] ed. İdris Bostan (Ankara: Stratejik Araştırma ve Milli Etüdler Komitesi [SAEMK], 2003), 9, 19.

12 Feridun Emecen, "Imroz,", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 22: 236. Venetians threatened Imroz and Tenedos during the long Ottoman siege of Crete in 1655. They again attacked Imroz in 1698 after the conquest of Crete, but were forced to withdraw by the Ottomans under the leadership of Mezemorta Hüsayin Pasha. Ibid.

13 Orhonlu, "Bozcaada", 318.

14 Emecen, "Ege Adaları'nın İdari Yapısı," 12, 14; İdris Bostan, "The Establishment of the Province of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid," in , ed. Elizabeth Zachariadou (Rethymnon: Crete University Press, 2002), 240-51.

15 *Sancaks* is a subdivision of a province or a sub-province.

16 Emecen, "Ege Adaları'nın İdari Yapısı," 15-16.

17 Cevdet Küçük(ed.), (SAEMK: Ankara, 2002), 80-9.

18 *Muhassıls* were the salaried tax officials, who replaced the semi-independent tax farmers (s) by providing direct tax collection. They were appointed by the centre and possessed great authority to stamp out abuses and the influence of district governors and local notables. Halil İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri" [The Application of Tanzimat and Social Responses], XXVIII, no. 112 (1964): 628.

19 Ali Fuat Örenç, "Ege Adaları'nda İdari Yapı (1830-1923)" [The Administrative Structure in the Aegean Islands (1830-1923)] in *Ege Adaları'nın İdari, Malî ve Sosyal Yapısı* [Administrative, Economic and Social Structure of the Aegean Islands] ed. İdris Bostan (Ankara: SAEMK, 2003) 36-7.

As a result of these changes, *kaymakamlık*s of Bozcaada, Limni, Midilli, Sakız, Sisam, Rhodes and Cyprus were created under the province of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid, while from 1849 the neighbouring islands belonged to them as *müdürlük* (directorship).[20] Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid became a *vilayet* in 1867 in accordance with the 1864 provincial organisation regulations. For the period of this study, Imroz was a *müdürlük* under the *kaymakamlık* of Bozcaada, but also had a *kaymakam* in the year 1852.[21] In terms of the 1867 provincial regulations, Imroz, Bozcaada, Semadirek, and Limni fell under the *sancak* of Biga.[22] However, correspondence to the *mutasarrıf*[23] of the *sancak* of Biga suggests that Biga was already superior to the *kaymakam*s of Imroz and Bozcaada before the 1867 regulations.

Conventional Greek and Ottoman Turkish historiographies have provided a monolithic portrayal of Greek Orthodox Christians under Ottoman rule. Greek historiography describes the Aegean islands under Ottoman rule as completely autonomous units.[24] Ottoman historiography, while acknowledging the economic privileges enjoyed by the islanders – to make them adapt to Ottoman rule and to guarantee tax income and their loyalty – rejects the idea of autonomous islands.[25] Ottoman historians often suggest that the Aegean islands fell under various ad hoc administrative and economic regulations and enjoyed tax exemptions depending on their peculiar products, low population and limited economic resources. However, this did not indicate autonomy, but was rather the result of the application of the *hass* and *vakıf* systems. When islands were classified as *hass* or *vakıf*, their revenues belonged directly to their ruler, *sancak beyi*, or to the *vakıf* institution (the determined amount of tax being forwarded by them to the Porte). Islands such as Imroz[26] were exempted extraordinary taxation by the Porte and their tax level took account of their peculiar economic and demographic conditions.[27]

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20 Ali Fuat Örenç, *Yakın Dönem tarihimizde Rodos ve Oniki Ada* [Rhodes and the Dodecanese] (Istanbul: Doğu Kütüphanesi, 2007), 67. The population of Imroz comprised 2,505 males in 1831. In the 1840 census, there were six villages on the island: Agridiya (Tepeköy), Ayathodori (Zeytinliköy), Gliki (Bademliköy), Shinudi (Dereköy), Panayia (centre) and Kastro (Kaleköy). The total male population was 2,815. Ottoman year books (*salname*) give us information about the population of the islands in the 19th century: in 1885, the population of Imroz was 9,456 and registered as Christians; and the population of Tenedos was around 3,667, of whom 601 were Muslim men, 613 Muslim women, 1,292 Christian men and 1,161 were Christian women. *Cezair-i Bahr-ı Sefid Salnamesi* [The Year Book of the Aegean Islands](Sakız: Cezair-i Bahr-ı Sefid Matbaası), 250, 255.

21 BOA, A.AMD, n. 27/29, 12 Safer 1267 (17 December 1850) .

22 Örenç, *Yakın Dönem tarihimizde Rodos ve Oniki Ada*, 111-12.

23 *Mutasarrıf* is a *sancak* governor. Providing security and collecting taxes were the primary duties of the *Mutasarrıf*, as was the repair of public and religious places. Ali Fuat Örenç, "*Mutasarrıf*," *İslam Ansikopedisi*, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı*, 31: 377-9.

24 Jeanne Z. Stéphanopoli, *Les Iles de l'Egée, leurs privileges* (Athens: n.a, 1912) quoted in Cevdet Küçük, "Ege Adalarında Türk Egemenliği" [Turkish Sovereignty in the Aegean Islands] in *Ege'de Temel Sorun* [The Basic Problem in the Aegean], ed. Ali Kurumahmut (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1998), 76-8.

25 Küçük, "Ege Adalarında Türk Egemenliği," 75-8. The Ottoman government responded to the work of Stéphanopoli and rejected Greece's claims by writing the book La Veritésur les *'Îles de La Mér Egée' Et Leurs privileges* (Constantinople, 1912), quoted in ibid., 77.

26 Before the founding of the Kanuni Sultan Süleyman Vakfı after the conquest of Rhodes (1522), the revenues of small islands such as Imroz and Taşöz were included in the hass of the sultan or sancakbeyi. Cevdet Küçük, "Giriş" [Introduction] in *Ege Adaları'nın Egemenlik Devri Tarihçesi* [History of Sovereignty in the Aegean Islands] ed. Cevdet Küçük (Ankara: SAEMK, 2001), 36; Emecen, "Ege Adaları'nda Malî Yapı," 68. *Hass* refers to tax revenues and the administration of a region belonging directly to the sultan or governor. In 1556, the revenues of Imroz belonged to Sülaymaniye Vakfı. Küçük,"Giriş," 36; Emecen, "Ege Adaları'nda Malî Yapı," 71.

27 Küçük, "Ege Adalarında Türk Egemenliği" 75-8, "Giriş," 33-66; Emecen, "Ege Adaları'nda Malî Yapı," 82-90; Vahdettin Engin, "Ege Adaları'nda Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Malî Uygulamaları (1839-1923)" [Otto-

However, some recent studies have viewed such arrangements as amounting to communal autonomy or as semi-autonomous self-contained structures in regions where non-Muslims were a majority, such as the Balkans, and where they coexisted with Muslims elsewhere in the empire.[28] Regarding the relationship between islanders and central administration, some works on the Aegean islands have documented the islanders' communications with the local administration and central government through the governor of the Aegean islands, *kapudan pasha*, both in the first decades of the 19th and earlier centuries.[29] By developing ad hoc systems, the Ottoman empire managed to establish and maintain its legitimacy in places like Janina, Moschopole, Souli, Himara, Bosnia, Herzegovina and Serbia, all of which had self-governing bodies elected from local leaders and weak ties with the imperial centre.[30] In the Aegean islands, the Ottomans also accommodated local conditions and needs by developing flexible policies towards various religious communities. In this way, the Ottoman state was able to provide social and economic order and secure a regular influx of tax to the imperial centre.

From the micro-level of established community practice to the macro-levels of communal and religious organisation, including the church, the Ottomans accepted what was there and designated agents to act as intermediaries across boundaries.[31] Drawing on Islamic law's *zimmi* pact, the Ottoman empire established the *millet* system as a means of accommodating the diverse ethno-religious communities within the Islamic empire. However, Islamic regulations were not enough to generate tolerant and peaceful relations, and the appointment and maintenance of local non-Muslim leaders, with a status equal to that of Muslim *qadi,* as intermediaries between state and communities was necessary for non-Muslims.[32] From the earliest years of conquest, the Ottomans tried to be effective rulers by establishing an advanced administrative system capable of communicating with provinces and of responding to the reports of local administrations. At the micro-administrative level, the imperial centre sought to achieve this through the *qadi* courts,[33] and through religious and lay leaders in regions with a non-Muslim majority, including the Aegean islands. Thus the sanctioned authority of the Orthodox church included rights to rule its community.[34] Religion played a central role in

man Economic Implementations in the Aegean Islands in the Tanzimat Period] in *Ege Adaları'nın İdarî, Malî ve Sosyal Yapısı* [Administrative, Economic and Social Structure of the Aegean Islands] ed. İdris Bostan (SAEMK: Ankara, 2003), 91-114; Ömer İşbilir, "Ege Adaları'nda Sosyal Yapı," in ibid., 120-1.

28 Bruce Masters, "Semi-autonomous forces in the Arab provinces," in *The Cambridge History of Turkey*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge University of Press, 2006), 186-206; Dina Rizk Khoury, "The Ottoman centre versus provincial power-holders: An analysis of the historiography," in ibid., 135-56; Fikret Adanır, "Semi-autonomous provincial forces in the Balkans and Anatolia," in ibid., 157-85.

29 *Doceuments de Travail du* CETOBAC, ed. Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein, no. 1, Les archives de l'insularite ottomane, (Paris: CETOBAC, 2010).

30 Fikret Adanır, "Semi-autonomous provincial forces in the Balkans and Anatolia," 159-60.

31 Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference, The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 150.

32 Karen Barkey, "Islam and Toleration: Studying the Ottoman Imperial Model," *International Journal of Politics and Culture* 19 (2005): 17.

33 Rhoads Murphy, *Exploring Ottoman Sovereignty: Tradition, Image, and Practice in the Ottoman Imperial Household* 1400-1800 (London and New York: Continuum, 2008), 264.

34 . N.J. Pantazopoulos, *Church and Law in the Balkan Peninsula During the Ottoman Rule* (Thessaloniki: Institute for Balkan Studies, 1967); Halil İnalcık, "The Status of the Greek Orthodox Patriarch under the Ottomans" in Halil İnalcık, *Essays in Ottoman History* (Eren Press: Istanbul: 1998), "The Policy of Mehmed I toward the Greek Population of Istanbul and the Byzantine Buildings of the City," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol. 23 (1969-79), 229-49.

the islanders' worldview,[35] so their religious leaders or "despots",[36] had a strong voice in mediating with the local Muslim administration and central government. For a time, the interests of the Porte and of the community leaders coincided. This system persisted until the 18th century, but subsequently deteriorated as a result of the financial burdens stemming from the recurrent wars with Russia and the misuse of their power over communal affairs by Greek Orthodox civil and religious leaders. The Tanzimat regulations eroded the privileges and benefits of the community leaders, and affected not only their relations with the islanders, but also transformed or reformed the islanders' relationships with the Muslim local and central administration. We know little about the relationships of the islanders on Imroz with their local leaders, religious and civil, with Muslim local rulers and with the central government. In short, we don't know how strong their ties were with the Ottoman imperial administration.

The existence of communal autonomy encouraged the emergence of a strong local leadership, civil and religious. Studies of areas such as the Balkans and Arab lands have generally focused on the nature of imperial rule and the relations with various ethnic and religious communities through local elites. The Ottomans incorporated leaders of diverse groups into administrative roles and extended protections and claims over non-Muslim subjects. However, studies of Ottoman centre-periphery relations have focused primarily on Muslim notables, whereas their non-Muslim counterparts (*kocabaşı*) have been neglected.[37] Religious and lay leaders of the islands in the pre-Tanzimat period constituted a power group outside the Ottoman mechanism for maintaining coherent relationships between islanders and the Porte. In dealing with the relationship of imperial rule to the Greek islanders, the relationship between religious rulers and *kocabaşı* and representatives of local administration and central government should be analysed. In the Greek islands, not only state-recognised religious leaders appointed by their patriarchs and lay leaders, *kocabaşı*s, selected by the people served as interlocutors, but also *müdür*s, *kaymakam*s and *qadi*s played a role in local administration.

Administrative Centralisation

Centralisation was the crucial tool by which Ottoman sultans maintained and strengthened their political power. The growing power of the landed notables

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35 Andreas Moustoxydis and Bartholomew Koutloumousianos, *A Historical Memorandum Concerning Island of Imbros* (Istanbul: Gokceada-Imbros Protection, Solidarity and Sustainable Development Association, 2010 [Constantinople: A. Koromela & P. Paspalles Printers, 1845]), 178-82, 184-6; Hrisostimos Kalaycis, *Οι εκκλησιές και τα ξωκλήσια της Ίμβρου: Η θρησκευτικότητα και η λαϊκή παράδοση του νησιού* [Churches and Country Churches of Imros: Religiosity and Public Traditions of the Island] (Athens: Eteria Meletis Tis Kathimas Anatolis, 2007); Melitonos Karas, *Ή νήσος Ίμβρος: Συμβολή εις την Εκκλησιαστικήν Ιστορίαν* [Imroz Island: A Contribution to the Ecclesiastical History] (Thessaloniki: Patriarhikon Idrima Paterikon Meleton, 1987); Sofia N. Papageorgiou. *Ίμβρος, η Ιστορία ενός Ελληνικού Νησίου* [History of a Greek Island] (Athens: Sillogos Pros Diadosin Ton Ellinikon Grammaton, 1994), 152-5.

36 "Despot" (δεσπότης) means master, ruler. It derives from the verb "despozo" (δεσπόζω), to rule, to dominate. Ioannou Stamatakou, *Leksion Arheas Ellinikis Glosses* [Dictionary of Ancient Greek] (Athens: Ekdotikos Oikos Petrou Dimitrakou, 1949), 252.

37 Johann Strauss, "Ottoman Rule Experienced and Remembered: Remarks on some Local Greek Chronicles of the Tourkokratia," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography,* ed. Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 214.

(*ayan*s) in the 18th century, the Serbian revolt of 1804, the Greek revolt of 1821 and Mehmed Ali Pasha's semi-independent rule and successful reforms in Egypt were some of the challenges to Ottoman centralisation and imperial rule. By the 1840s and early 1850s, political and social turmoil had abated and the central government was struggling to implement the Tanzimat reforms, as well as deal with the costly Crimean war (1853-56).

The Tanzimat era can be seen as a struggle by the Ottoman empire to integrate itself into the Western world, but by developing its own values and political system. Key to this undertaking was the re-establishment of strong centralisation, which required integrating the peripheries into the centre politically and economically. The correspondence consulted for this chapter suggests that in the islands the central government attempted to do this by controlling local officials in the interests of social order. The centre regularly instructed local authorities and superior local rulers to monitor the actions of the Greek community leaders, the *kocabaşı*s, as well as of the *müdür*s, *kaymakam*s and *mutasarrıf*. These communications indicate how the central government perceived these Northern Aegean islands. Before analysing this correspondence, an overview the functions of the newly established Tanzimat institutions is required.

In the pre-modern Ottoman empire, the *meşveret*, "the consultation council of the Porte", was crucial in decision-making. The Meclisi Vala-yı Ahkam-ı Adliye, in short the Meclisi Vala (Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances), was established in the Tanzimat era to replace the *meşveret* tradition.[38] Initiated in 1838,[39] the Meclisi Vala began its work only in 1841, due to the organisational confusion during the early Tanzimat years. As an organisation, it was a compromise between the Ottoman *meşveret* and the Western form of legislature.[40] It was responsible for preparing the Tanzimat laws and regulations, and was also a special administrative court for trying administrative staff acting contrary to Tanzimat regulations.[41] Additionally, it was charged with executing the new penal code of 1840,[42] which reaffirmed the equality before the law of all the people of the empire, regardless of religion, and guaranteed a trial before any imprisonment, a provision also contained in the

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38 Halil İnalcık, "Decision Making in the Ottoman State," in *Decision Making and Change in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Caesar E. Farah (Kirksville MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press at Northeast Missouri State University; Lanham MD: University Pub. Associates [distributor], 1993), 12. According to the Islamic sources, *meşveret* was an obligation even for the sultan. In extraordinary cases, viziers, dignitaries, commanders and ulema gathered in meetings to share the responsibility. Ibid.

39 *Roderic Davison, Reform in the Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 28.

40 İnalcık, "Decision Making in the Ottoman State," 13; The Meclisi Vala served for 15 years as the main legislative organ, responsible for preparing and executing the Tanzimat regulations. The Meclisi Vala-yı Ahkam-ı Adliye was founded with the support of Mustafa Reşid Pasha in 1838 as part of the Tanzimat reforms, with the idea that a special unit was needed to organise and apply the reforms. It underwent some organisational changes, being reorganised as Şura-yı Devlet in 1868. Mehmet Seyitdanlıoğlu, *Tanzimat Devrinde Meclisi Vala 1838-1868* [The Meclisi Vala During the Tanzimat, 1838-68] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994), 35-7; Musa Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları* [The Social and Economic Structure of Anatolian Cities during the Tanzimat Period] (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1991), 185-90.

41 Çadırcı, *Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Anadolu Kentlerinin Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapıları*, 190; Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey, 1808-1975* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 78.

42 . Ekrem Buğra Ekinci, *Osmanlı Mahkemeleri, Tanzimat ve Sonrası* [The Ottoman Courts: The Tanzimat and After] (Istanbul: Arı, 2004), 126.

Gülhane imperial edict of 1839.[43] Writing in 1840 to the Meclisi Vala, the *muhassıl* and *qadi* of Imroz confirm that they have received the Tanzimat principles and 1840 penal code, and give the assurance they will observe the new rules.[44]

Large provincial councils (*büyük meclis*) were founded in the provincial centres and cities and small provincial councils (*küçük meclis*) in the districts. They included both Muslim and non-Muslim members, in order to provide representation to non-Muslims in local administration.[45] The large provincial councils served both as a unit to implement the Tanzimat regulations and as a court to enforce the 1840 penal code, except in cases of murder and theft, which had to be referred to the Meclisi Vala in the capital. The small councils for the districts prepared reports (*mazbata*) and sent them to the provincial centre or to the Meclisi Vala. [46] In accordance with the regulations, the province of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid, largely composed of non-Muslims, in 1849 established a general provincial council (*genel meclis*) and smaller councils under the control of *müdür*s. Indeed, the Aegean islands had a tradition of local councils going back to earlier centuries: 12 members elected by islanders made up the *demogerondia* council, which dealt with municipal duties and religious and educational issues on the islands. The Porte permitted the *demogerondia* system to ensure the effective administration of the islands.[47] Most of the documents consulted for this chapter are the *mazbata* of these councils and notes of the Meclisi Vala to the *müdür, kaymakam* of the islands and to the governor of the Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid.

Local Administration, Control and Social Order

Much of the correspondence passing between the Meclisi Vala and the *müdür*, *kaymakam*, *mutasarrıf* and provincial governor dealing with islanders' petitions of complaint is available. Unfair treatment of islanders by *kocabaşı*s, *müdür*s and *kaymakam*s sometimes led to disturbances and gave rise to petitions by the islanders and responses from the Meclisi Vala. Islanders mostly complained about their civil and religious leaders.

The Imvrians were in conflict with the *sandık emini* (treasurer) of the island about the administrative status of Imroz in 1850. In a document from that year, the

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43 Davison, , 44.

44 Cevdet Adliye (C.ADL) Classification of the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives] (BOA), n. 275/2, 4 Cemaziyelahir 1256 (3 August 1840).

45 Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 48-9; İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri," 626. Until the middle of the 19th century, it was not unusual for the Ottoman central government to hold meetings with the ayans in times of need. This kind of general assembly was not a representative body with selected delegates from each province. Ibid., 47.

46 Ekrem Buğra Ekinci, *Osmanlı Mahkemeleri, Tanzimat ve Sonrası*, 130; İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri," 627.

47 Örenç,"Ege Adaları'nda İdari Yapı (1830-1923)," 38. Küçük, "Ege Adalarında Türk Egemenliği," 75. For the *demogerondia* of Sakız island in the 18th century, Dilek Dal, "XVIII. Yüzyılda Sakız Adası'nın Etnik Yapısı ve Ortodoks-Katolik Reaya Arasındaki İlişkiler" [Ethnic Composition of Sakız Island in the 18th century and Relations between Orthodox Christian and Latin Subjects] *Tarihin Peşinde, Uluslararası ve Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi* [The Pursuit of History. International Periodical for History and Social Research] 1 (2009): 57. Melitonos Karas mentions that in Imroz the *demogerondia* first operated during the rule of Mahmud II. It was responsible for collecting taxes and determining the amount to be collected from islanders. Karas, Ή νήσος Ἴμβρος: Συμβολή εἰς τὴν Ἐκκλησιαστικήν Ἱστορίαν, 53.

islanders petitioned the central government for separation from Bozcaada and to become *kaymakamlık*.[48] It was the *sandık emini* of Imroz, Legofet,[49] who reported the islanders' wish to petition the centre. The Meclisi Vala refused Legofet's demand for becoming a *kaymakamlık*. Moreover, some islanders petitioned the central government as representatives of the people (*reaya*) and advised them that it was Legofet who had instigated the petition from the islanders to change the administrative status of Imroz. Furthermore, they complained that Legofet and his friend Laskari were oppressing the islanders and sought his dismissal. The Meclisi Vala noted that the two parties' statements were contradictory and that both would have to be heard by the court in the capital. Although in its first response, the Meclisi Vala noted Imroz's suitability to become a *kaymakamlık*, it finally decided that the island should remain a *müdürlük*.[50] However, *mazbata* of Imroz council written in 1852 indicate that there was a *kaymakam* on Imroz by that time.[51]

In some of their correspondence, Imvrians express their unhappiness with their *kocabaşı*s (or *çorbacı*s as they were dubbed in the 19th century). *Kocabaşı*s were responsible for collecting taxes, including *cizye* (pool tax),[52] and elected by the people.[53] They gained excessive power from the late 17th century and during the 18th century, a trend that coincided with growth in power of the *ayan*s. The duties of the *kocabaşı*s, as district representatives, changed in the 19th century in that, in addition to collecting taxes, they were expected to be trusted persons who were responsible for meeting needs of the people.[54] In a series of exchanges between 1850 and 1853, the *kocabaşı* and *sandık emini* of Imroz, Kostaoglu Dimitri, and his friend, Laskari, collected extra tax from the poor and prevented islanders from selling their produce in the proper season at a reasonable price. Dimitri and Laskari bought this produce below value and engaged in other inappropriate behaviour. In response, the people mounted a petition, which was referred to the Meclisi Vala. That body requested the *kaymakam* of Bozcaada to investigate the complaint to establish whether Dimitri had behaved inappropriately and whether the people had good cause to accuse him.[55] The *kaymakam* blamed the despot for the problem in a report sent to the centre on 20 January 1853. He wrote: "Although the people were happy with Dimitri, the bishop of Imroz exiled him, since he harboured spiteful feelings about Dimitri. The bishop even imprisoned

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48 BOA, Sadâret Âmedî Kalemi Defterleri (A.AMD), n. 27/29, 12 Safer 1267 (17 December 1850).

49 The name of the *kocabaşı* and *sandık emini* was written as Kosta oğlu Dimitri in all documents except this one. In the Greek petition of the islanders, it was written as Logothetis (Λογοθέτης). In Ottoman Turkish it was written as Legofet, which can be read as Logofet as well. In this work, the author prefers Legofet.

50 BOA, A.AMD, n. 27/29, 12 Safer 1267 (17 December 1850).

51 BOA, Meclis-i Vâlâ Riyâseti Belgeleri (MVL), n. 115/27, 18 Receb 1268 (8 May 1852).

52 *Cizye*: The pool tax was imposed on non-Muslims of the empire in accordance with the zimmi pact in Islamic law for their protection.

53 "Kocabaşı," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansikopledisi*, 26: 141. Traditionally, tax farmers (*mültezim*) or collector of pool taxes (*cizyedar*) collected this tax. However, they also collected other, illegal taxes under various names. Consequently, under the Tanzimat reforms, poll tax was to be collected according to the *maktu* system — the amount of tax was determined by the central goverment. This information was sent to the *muhassıls*, who would instruct the *kocabaşı* to collect the set amount, which was classified into three types – rich, intermediate and poor – according to the person's wealth and ability to pay. İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri," 631.

54 "Kocabaşı," 141.

55 BOA, Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası, Sadaret Evrakı Mektubi Kalemi (A.MKT), n. 27/ 69, 17 Şevval 1266 (26 August 1850).

him unjustly for a week in the bishopric and then exiled him to Ahi Çelebi district in Edirne province".[56] However, the Meclisi Vala did not find the *kaymakam* persuasive about the despot's malice, since he was known for his good deeds in Imroz over 16 years.[57] The Meclisi Vala also noted that Dimitri had oppressed the islanders for 30 or more years and had been acting contrary to the liturgy of the Orthodox church. However, Dimitri, in denying these accusations, petitioned both the patriarchate in Phanar and the Ottoman government for his early release. The Meclisi Vala saw Dimitri's punishment as a necessary form of discipline, but asked the provincial governor to make a detailed investigation, since Dimitri had denied the accusations in his petition.[58] While this document indicates the continuing authority of the Orthodox clergy in the Tanzimat years[59], it also shows the application of the principle of the rule of law in this period, according to which no one could be punished without a public trial. Thus, while Dimitri had been exiled on the order of the despot and had complained about the latter's authority to do so, he petitioned the central government in accordance with Tanzimat rules. The Meclisi Vala suggested that the Greek patriarch consider his release, since his period of exile had run its course.[60]

Another document, dated 25 February 1853, is a petition from Yorgi, Hristo, Kuli, Ruli (---)[61] and İstirati about the same *Kocabaşı* Dimitri. They claim that they had sent a complaint petition to the *kaymakam* of Bozcaada. However, since the latter was a supporter of Dimitri, he disregarded their complaint, passed regulations that made it more difficult for them to conduct their trade and even delaying their permits to travel to Istanbul for their work.[62] The Meclisi Vala wrote to the *mutasarrıf* of Biga that it was necessary to follow up on their petition by meticulously investigating the issue and reporting his findings to Istanbul.[63] In other correspondence from the Meclisi Vala to the *kaymakam* of Imroz, the latter gathered Dimitri's friends and relatives and made them prepare a report on Dimitri's good behaviour and had also seized the seals[64] of certain people by force.

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56 BOA, Mektubi Kalemi, Umum Vilayet (A.MKT.UM), 188/43, 9 Rebiülevvel 1269 (20 January 1853).

57 Although the Meclisi Vala wrote to the *kaymakam* about good reputation of Bishop Neofitos III of Imroz (November 1836-1853), there were complaints about Neofitos' administration, especially after 1848, when he stopped keeping regular community records. The patriarch and synod sent a letter to him regarding the social disorder and scandals on the island and invited him and leading islanders to act in respectful ways. After him, Ionnakis I was the metropolitan of the island (10 January 1853 and 20 December 1863). Karas, ῾Η νῆσος ῾Ίμβρος: Συμβολή εις την Εκκλησιαστικήν Ιστορίαν, 175-6.

58 BOA, (A.MKT.UM), 188/43, 9 Rebiülevvel 1269 (20 January 1853).

59 BOA, Hariciye Mektubî Kalemi Belgeleri (HR.MKT), 57/99, 3 Cemaziyelevvel 1269 (12 February 1853).

60 "The general/national ordinances of the Greek *millet*" (1862), prepared under pressure of the Ottoman government after the announcement of 1856 reform edict, diminished clerical authority and gave more voice to laymen. The new regulation was ratified by the government in 1863. Alexis Alexandris, *The Greek Minority of Istanbul and Greek and Turkish Relations* 1918-1974 (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992), 33.

61 Note on Greek names in Ottoman-Turkish documents: In some Ottoman documents, the rendering of non-Muslim names differs from current common usage. In such cases, I have provided current usages in parenthesis. Thus, *Angelo* in Ottoman Turkish will be followed by (*Angelos*). If a name has no equivalent in modern colloquial Greek, it is marked (---).

62 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 129/75, 16 Cemaziyelevvel 1269 (25 February 1853).

63 Ibid.

64 *Mühür/mühr* (seal): Everyone in government circles or among the public in the Ottoman empire had a personal *mühür*. It was used in petitions or letters after the author's name. Mübahat Kütükoğlu, "Mühür", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansikopledisi*, 31: 530-1. Seals were used by local notables in their communications

In addition, the *kaymakam* had broken into a church and forced open a coffer in an attempt to take the seal. The Meclisi Vala noted that through such conduct he had forfeited the confidence of the people and bitterly warned the *kaymakam* to refrain from such inappropriate actions.[65] Finally, in the grand vizier's note (*emirname-i sami*), it says that the patriarch was suggesting Dimitri's release, since the latter regretted his recent actions.[66]

There were apparently regular conflicts between *kocabaşı*s and islanders. For instance, the *müdür* of Imroz, Ahmed Efendi, wrote to the central government seeking promotion on account of his role in solving the problems between the *kocabaşı*s and the people. The Meclisi Vala answered, however, that it had heard nothing about the *müdür*'s interventions. On the contrary, there had been complaints about him. "Thus, your dismissal would be appropriate. However, since you have newly begun your duties, you would be placed in a disadvantageous situation if you are dismissed."[67] In deciding to forgiving his conduct just this once, the Meclisi Vala advised him to avoid further unfortunate actions and discharge his duties in good manner.[68] Such examples show that the central government considered the complaints of Greek islanders and initiated investigations into the actions of both their fellow Orthodox Christian *kocabası*s and the Muslim *müdür*s and *kaymakam*s.

Another *müdür* the islanders petitioned about was Cemal Ağa, who was dismissed from his position for inappropriate conduct. In the same petition, the islanders complained of their *kocabaşı*s as well. Meclisi Vala instructed the new *kaymakam*, Fazlı Ağa, and new *müdür* of the island, Necip Efendi, to investigate these complaints about the former *müdür* and *kocabaşı*.[69] However, a few months later, the islanders complained about the new *müdür* of Imroz, Necip Efendi, who was sent a warning letter by the grand vizier. The *kaymakam* of Bozcaada reported later to the Meclisi Vala that, despite the warning and his own continuous advice and notices, Necip Efendi persisted with his unfair and unacceptable treatment of the islanders. Fazlı Ağa sought the advice of the Meclisi Vala about what to do.[70] Island leaders also petitioned the Meclisi Vala about Necip Efendi's wrongdoings:

> He is an unfair ruler. When he is faced with a conflict, he does not investigate the issue properly. Sometimes he imprisons and even claps people in irons without trial and without proving their guilt, so that he is acting contrary to Tanzimat principles. He withdrew the gendarmes appointed by the central government to the villages in accordance with Tanzimat regulations, and has destroyed the safe climate the state created.[71]

with the central government, and can be seen as an indication of civic life. Nora Lafi, *Esprit civique et organisa-tion citadine: caractères de l'ancien régime urbain dans l'Empire ottoman et signification des réformes mod-ernisatrices*, Thèse pour l'habilitation à diriger des recherches, Berlin, 2011, 27-30. In the complaint petitions or letters consulted for this study, the theft of other people's seals was viewed as unethical or corrupt behaviour. This response indicates the importance of *mühürs* in official correspondences in rural regions as well, including the small Aegean islands.

65 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 133/46, 2 Receb 1269 (11 April 1853).

66 BOA, HR.MKT, n. 65/85, 28.Muharrem 1270 (31 October 1853).

67 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 73/68, 7 Zilkade 1267 (3 September 1851).

68 Ibid.; BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 72/17, 28 Şevval 1267 (26 August 1851).

69 BOA, A.AMD, n. 27/29, 12 Safer 1267 (17 December 1850).

70 BOA, Letter of Kaymakam Fazlı Ağa, MVL, n. 105/107, 13 Zilhicce 1267 (9 October 1851).

71 BOA, Petition of the islanders, MVL, n. 105/107, 7 Zilhicce 1267 (3 October 1851).

If Necip Efendi retained this position, they concluded, the islanders would suffer more, and they humbly requested a change of *müdür* in Imroz.[72] The *Kaymakam,* in his next petition to the Meclisi Vala on 8 December 1851, added that Necip Efendi had embezzled more than 3,000 guruş and owed local tradesmen a similar amount. The islanders hated him and were offended by these actions and omissions. The *kaymakam* therefore recommended his dismissal.[73]

The islanders also wrote letters of appreciation to the Meclisi Vala when they approved of their local administrators. In the *mazbata* of 1852, for instance, members of the council of Imroz, expressed their gratitude regarding *Kaymakam* Fazlı Ağa. In doing so, they clearly were aware of the Tanzimat reforms: "Kaymakam Fazlı Ağa watches over the Tanzimat principles: he avoids offending against new regulations and acts justly, protecting people from oppression and injustices. He tours the island to provide security and acts in accordance with Islamic (*şer'i şerif*) and Tanzimat law".[74]

However, a year later the islanders complained to the Meclisi Vala about Fazlı Ağa for his actions noted earlier in support of the exiled *Kocabaşı* Dimitri. As a result of these actions, according to the Imvrians, there was no longer any security on the island.[75] Addressing the *mutasarrıf* of Biga, the Meclisi Vala noted that the Greek patriarchate had sent the islanders' letter of complaint about Fazlı Ağa and that these complaints should be investigated impartially (*himaye ve garazdan 'āri olarak*) and the result sent to the Meclisi Vala.[76]

Furthermore, when the central government was persuaded by the findings of an investigation, it dismissed local rulers, as happened in Bozcaada in 1861, when the *kaymakam*, Ali Bey, was discharged for improper conduct.[77] In another instance, the Meclisi Vala notified the director of the pious foundation of Istanbul in 1861 that its director in Bozcaada was extorting the produce of the islanders, who petitioned in protest to the *mutasarrıf* of Bozcaada. The Meclisi Vala instructed the director of the foundation in the capital to investigate and to take steps to prevent such abuses.[78]

As these examples indicate, the central government intervened in response to the Greek islanders' complaints of injustice with respect to both their co-religionist *kocabaşı*s and Muslim local rulers. It did not hesitate to dismiss officers in either category when their actions ran counter to the general will of the people and the Tanzimat principles. Islanders, too, framed their complaints in accordance with these Tanzimat principles, since they were clearly aware of the new regulations and the rights they sought to protect.

Another problem in Imroz was attacks by pirates, referred to as *deniz hırsızı* ("sea robbers"). Local rulers wrote petitions and memorials – *tezkire* – to their

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72 Ibid.
73 BOA, MVL, n. 245/68, 13 Safer 1268 (8 December 1851), 25 Safer 1268 (20 December 1851).
74 BOA, MVL, n. 115/27, 18 Receb 1268 (8 May 1852). For illustration see next page.
75 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 131/46, 2 Receb 1269 (11 April 1853).
76 Ibid.
77 BOA, Mektubi Kalemi Meclisi Vala (A.MKT.MVL), n. 133/100, 15 Rebiülahir 1278 (20 September 1861).
78 BOA, Mektubi Mühimme Kalemi (A.MKT.MHM), n. 235/71, 16 Rebiülevvel 1278 (21 October 1861).
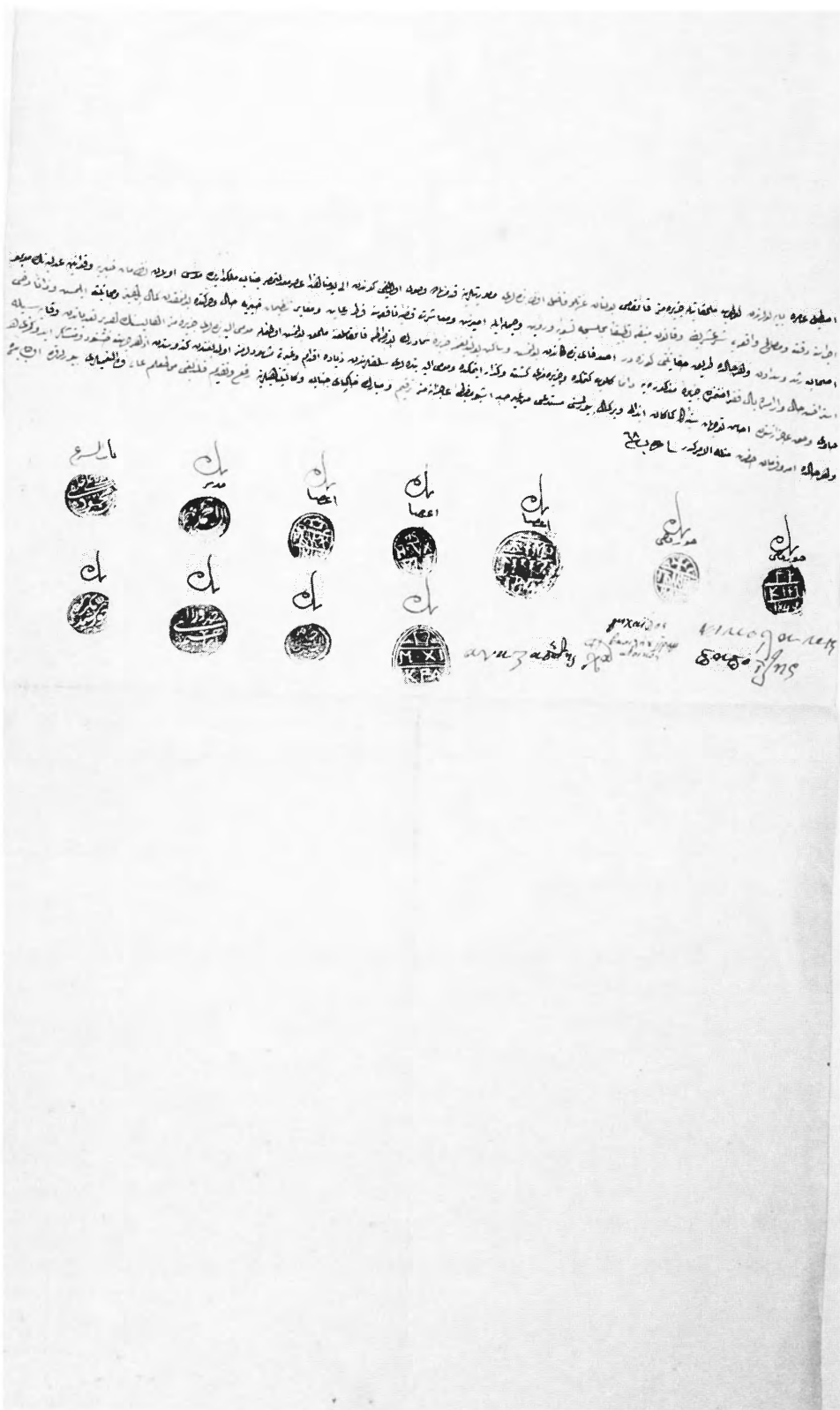
Example of *mazbata*. This one tells about people's gratitude regarding Kaymakam Fazıl Ağa. MVL 115/27

superiors, and local councils wrote *mazbata*s to the Porte about the pirate problem and sought the help of the central government.[79] The latter intervened by dismissing local rulers when they did not deal with the problem effectively or could not prevent the escape of the captured pirates, as happened in the case of *Müdür* Hacı Mehmed Aga. He was dismissed in 1861, after the central government found him complicit in the escape.[80] The Imvrians also encountered banditry (*eşkiya*). Bandits occasionally broke into houses in the villages, stealing money and valuables. In such cases, the council of Imroz took detailed statements from the victims and sent them to the Meclisi Vala. The *kaymakam*s also reported to the Meclisi Vala to confirm the council reports.[81] These measures further illustrate the attempts by the centre to address disturbances to the social order and peace of the island.

In the mid-19th century, the Imvrians suffered from poverty and high taxes, about which they complained to Sultan Abdülmecid (r. 1839-61) during his visit to the islands in 1850. On that occasion, *Kocabaşı* Kostaoğlu Dimitri and the islanders presented their complaints to the sultan in person. In return, the sultan gave Dimitri a gift of a *kidari* (a turban-like headgear) and a watch and promised help. Consequently, in 1850 the tax on Imroz was reduced from 100,000 to 50,000 guruş. The sultan ordered the construction of a quay in Kastro, and allowed the islanders to gather as much salt as they needed from the salt lake of the island.[82]

When the island experienced natural disasters, such as earthquakes and floods, the islanders obtained help from Istanbul. There was a major earthquake in Imroz in November 1859. The *kaymakamlık* of Bozcaada and Limni informed the centre of this disaster and about the destructive flood in Limni. Many people lost their homes in Imroz. The Meclisi Vala wrote to the governor of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid that government would provide financial help to the poor,[83] and requested him for information about the number of people affected and those most in need of help.[84] The governor sent the necessary information in a notebook and the Meclisi Vala confirmed its arrival to both the governor and the minister of finance. The Meclisi Vala learned from the register that some people had already repaired their houses without government help, but still wanted to benefit from this aid to the tune of 90,000 guruş. Since the centre could not afford excessive expenditure, the government decided to send 50,000 guruş for the most disadvantaged people,[85] stressing that the distributions were to be made to the poorest people according to need. This episode shows how central government gave attentive consideration to petitions from local rulers and sent help to the Greek islanders.

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79 BOA, MVL, n. 235/19, 27 Muharrem 1267 (2 December 1850); A.MKT.UM, n. 23/22, 9 Ramazan 1266 (19 July 1850); A.MKT.MVL n. 134/22, 18 Rebiülahir 1278 (23 October 1861); HAT n. 575/ 28134A, 29 Zilhicce 1253 (26 March 1838; HAT n. 575/28134, 23 Rebiülahir 1253 (27 July 1837).

80 BOA, A.MKT.MVL, n. 134/22, 10 Rebiülahir 1278 (15 September 1861); A.MKT.MVL, n. 134/49, 24 Rebiülahir 1278 (29 September 1861).

81 BOA, MVL, n. 252/4, 1268 Şevval 15 (2 August 1852).

82 Karas, Ή νήσος 'Ίμβρος: Συμβολή εις την Εκκλησιαστικήν Ιστορίαν, 53.

83 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 369/82, 7 Rebiülevvel 1276 (4 October 1859).

84 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 374/35, 2 Rebiülahir 1276 (29 October 1859); A.MKT.MHM, 12 Zilkade 1276 (1 July 1860).

85 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 115/27, 22 Şevval 1276 (13 May 1860).

Prior to the 1839 imperial edict, an imperial order of 1838 abolished all traditional taxes in the name of the sharia, excepting the sheep tax (*ağnam resmi*) and *cizye* head tax levied on non-Muslims.[86] As is well known, the Ottoman government completely abolished the *cizye* in the 1856 reform edict,[87] but the sheep tax continued to exist, as is evidenced by a case on Imroz in 1860. From correspondence between the Meclisi Vala and the *mutasarrıf* of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid, we learn that *Kocabaşı* Atanaş and his friends Angelo (Angelos) and Anlos (---) had, by spreading gossip, prevented people from paying their sheep tax and *canavar* tax, the latter being a tax levied on non-Muslim pork producers.[88] The *kocabaşı* and his friends interfered with *Müdür* Mustafa Ağa's attempt to gather these taxes. The Meclisi Vala noted that since they aimed to harm the treasury, they should be interrogated, and if found guilty, punished under the relevant article of the penal code.[89] However, noting that this article was very harsh and likely to unsettle the order in the society, the Meclisi Vala decided that imprisonment should be limited to one month.[90] The *kaymakam* of Bozcaada was duly informed of this decision and clearly advised that the local administration should act in accordance with the decision of the centre.[91] Such documents show the concern of the central government for the collection of taxes and for the maintenance of social order and peace.

Conclusion

Greek islanders consented to Ottoman rule from the very beginning, due to the *istimalet* policy. In Ottoman understanding, differences were to be tolerated in the interests of peace and order and continuity of production. This would ensure a stable tax base and, by extension, a powerful army and imperial welfare.[92] It was the duty of a Muslim ruler to avoid corruption, provide justice and take good care of his tax-paying subjects. Traditionally, the sultan's main duty was to preserve order, or *nizam*, and prevent disorder by every possible means.[93] Accordingly, religious or civil community leaders were expected to maintain interethnic and religious peace. Community leaders strove to maintain peaceful relations across communities, since they knew that outbreaks of violence would be punished by the state.[94] The execution of the Greek Orthodox patriarch, Gregorios V, and the

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86 Stanford J. Shaw. "The Nineteenth Century Ottoman Tax Reforms and Revenue System," *International Journal of Middle East Studies 6* (1975): 422.

87 While abolishing *cizye*, it made non-Muslim subjects eligible for military service, so the central government replaced the head tax with a tax for exemption from military service (*bedel-i askeri*). İnalcık, "Tanzimat'ın Uygulanması ve Sosyal Tepkileri," 631-2; Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London, New York and Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1961), 114; Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 53.

88 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 451/65, 16 Receb 1277 (28 January 1861). This tax was also called *hınzır resmi* or *Canavar Resmi*. Ziya Kazıcı, *Osmanlılarda Vergi Sistemi* [Tax System of the Ottomans] (İstanbul: Şamil Yayınevi, 1977), 122.

89 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 451/65, 16 Receb 1277 (28 January 1861).

90 Ibid.

91 BOA, A.MKT.UM, n. 454 12, 29 Receb 1277 (10 February 1861).

92 Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 110.

93 Halil İnalcık, "State and Ideology Under Süleyman I," in Halil İnalcık, *The Middle East and the Balkans Under the Ottoman Empire: Essays on Economy and Society* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).

94 Barkey, "Islam and Toleration," 17.

Sakız island massacres of 1821, when the Greek revolt broke out in Morea, are typical examples to this.

While the factors that constituted the normative basis of legitimacy might not appeal to non-Muslims, such as the Ottoman's divine and hereditary right to rule and the principles of Islamic law, the regime's legitimacy on the ground could be a sufficient basis for popular compromise.[95] If a large majority of people could practice their religion free of intolerance and oppression, they would be content enough and the regime would enjoy sufficient legitimacy.[96] The Ottoman state tolerated non-Muslim subjects, although it made them pay extra taxes and regarded them as secondary subjects because of their "incomplete" religion. But, the Ottomans did not attempt to force changes in religion or identity.[97] Non-Muslims also realised that, in the final analysis, their wellbeing and security depended on their obeying established authority.[98] These considerations played a crucial role in the Greek islanders' acceptance of the new Ottoman regime in the early years of their conquest. Political powers use various strategies to maintain legitimacy and stability. They seek to meet the needs of people by providing services.[99] For Imroz, central government did this by monitoring the application of Tanzimat principles for the Greek islanders' benefit and by responding to their petitions. As Nora Lafi notes elsewhere in this volume, petitioning was an important tool by which people throughout the empire, regardless of their religious affiliation, communicated with the central government. In other small Aegean islands like Patmos and Andros,[100] and in Rhodes, the centre of Cezayir-i Bahr-ı Sefid province,[101] the Ottoman government had encouraged communication with Greek islanders even before the 19th century. The issue of continuity over several centuries in the case of Imroz and other Northern Aegean islands requires further research.

Tanzimat reforms or increased central control opened up new channels of communication with Greek islanders. The islanders communicated with the local officials to complain about their co-religious civil leaders, or with central government to complain about Muslim local officials and to seek their rights. The state facilitated this process. The central government did not tolerate injustice on the part of subordinate local officials and *kocabaşı*s. It recognised the rights of Greek islanders, sought to protect social order in conflicts among *kocabaşı*s, local governors and islanders, and helped islanders' recover from natural disaster.

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95 Hakan Karateke, "Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis," in *Legitimazing the Order: The Ottoman Rhetoric of State Power*, ed. Hakan Karateke and Maurus Reinkowski (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 33.

96 Ibid.

97 Halil İnalcık, "Ottoman's Methods of Conquest," in *Studia Islamica* 2 (1951), 103-29.

98 Karateke, "Legitimizing the Ottoman Sultanate: A Framework for Historical Analysis,"33.

99 Ibid., 34.

100 Gilles Veinstein, "Les documents émis par le kapudan paşa dans le fonds ottoman de Patmos" *Doceuments de Travail du CETOBAC*, no. 1, Les archives de l'insularite ottomane, ed. Nicolas Vatin and Gilles Veinstein (Paris: CETOBAC, 2010), 13-19; Michael Ursinus, "Local Patmians in Their Quest for Justice: Eighteenth Century Examples of Petitions Submitted to the Kapudan Paşa," in ibid., 20-23; "Elias Kolovos, "Ottoman Documents from the Aegean Island of Andros: Provincial Administration, Adaptation and Limitations in the Case of an Island Society (late 16th – early 19th century)", in ibid., 24-7.

101Örenç, *Rodos ve Oniki Ada* .

How do we explain the Ottoman state's responsiveness to the Greek islanders? Was it "Ottoman toleration" originating in Islamic law? Was it an attempt by the state to restore the legitimacy that had been shaken in the first two decades of the 19th century? As Karen Barkey argues, toleration was indispensable to policies of incorporation and to maintaining the diversity of the empire, organising different communities, maintaining peace and order, and to ensuring the loyalty of these communities, and had little to do with ideals or a culture of toleration.[102] It was a means to extend, consolidate and enforce state power.[103] To provide and maintain social order, stability was needed, and stability was secured through legitimate rule. The Tanzimat reforms were the Porte's tools to restore its legitimate rule by providing and maintaining social order. The principle of the rule of law may be considered the most important feature of modernising European states that the Ottoman empire endeavoured to adopt, and it did so basically to regain its legitimacy in internal and external affairs. Power was to be exercised impersonally through public law, which regulated the relationship between state, public authorities and private law.[104] The 1839 reform edict, without contradicting sharia, stressed the sovereignty of law for the well being of subjects and empire.[105] The political powers needed to legitimise and stabilise their authority by gaining the people's trust. To achieve this, the policies they devised had to command popular support. This is what the Ottoman central government aimed to achieve with the Tanzimat programme. The Imvrians' appeals to central authority to protect their rights by reference to Tanzimat regulations demonstrate the relatively quick success of those reforms in securing the legitimacy of Ottoman government authority in the eyes of the Greek islanders.

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102 Barkey, *Empire of Difference*, 110.
103 Ibid.
104 Ibid., 19.
105 Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Islamic Roots of The Gülhane Rescript," in Butrus Abu-Manneh, *Studies on Islam and the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century 1826-1876* (Istanbul: Isis, 2001), 73-97.

PART III

Visualising the Ottoman Presence in Damascus: Interpreting 16th Century Building Complexes

MARIANNE BOQVIST

On his arrival in the newly conquered city of Damascus in 1516, Sultan Selim I set about restoring the mausoleum of the Sufi saint Ibn 'Arabi in the suburb of Salhiya and laying the foundations of a Hanafi Friday mosque. The establishment of a Hanafi institution in this neighbourhood was a challenge to both the other religious centres there as well as the Umayyad mosque. The sultan's new buildings, which were included in the Damascene *ziyara*, turned Ibn 'Arabi into the Ottoman patron saint of the city and linked the foundation to the state-controlled pilgrimage. This strategy was frequently adopted by the Ottomans to express their appropriation of newly conquered territory.[1]

The appropriation was also symbolic, for instance through the installation in the prayer hall of his new mosque of four granite columns removed from the governor's palace (Dar al-Sa'da) and Selim's use of the titles of the Mamluk sultans in the inscriptions on the mosque.[2] The complex was expanded with a public kitchen and bakery intended to distribute food to the poor of the neighbourhood. The inscription on the public kitchen designated the building as a Sultanic *imaret*.[3]

*Imaret*s, also known as *zaviye*s *or* multifunctional buildings, were one of the best-known types of Ottoman architecture, encompassing religious and utilitari-

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1. This strategy of "reviving" older sanctuaries was continued in Damascus in the cases of, for instance, the mausoleum of Sahib 'Ubayda, that of Bilal Habashi, the Mughamara al-Damm, the Sanjaqdar mosque, the Qubbat al-Hajj and the al-Qadam mosque. See also Adnan Bahit, *The Ottoman province of Damascus in the 16th century* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1982), 113; Abdel-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus, 1723-83* (Beirut: Khayats, 1966), 62; Paul Fenton, "The hidden secret concerning the shrine of Ibn Arabi, a treatise by Abd al-Ghani al-Nabulusi," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* XXII, (1997): 25-40.

2. Bahit, *Ottoman province*, 16; Henri Laoust, *Les Gouverneurs de Damas* (Damascus: IFD, 1952), 148,-50; Michael Meinecke, "Die osmanische Architektur des 16. Jahrhunderts in Damaskus," in *Fifth International Congress of Turkish Art (Budapest, 1975)*, ed. Géza Fehér (Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó 1978), 577, 582: Heinz Gaube, *Arabische Inschriftenaus Syrien* (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 1978), 112, 114; Astrid Meier, "For the sake of God Alone? Food Distribution Policies, Takiyyas and Imarets in Early Ottoman Damascus," in *Feeding people, feeding power: Imarets in the Ottoman Empire*, ed. Nina Ergin, Christoph Neumann and Amy Singer (Istanbul: Eren, 2007), 121-49; Shams al-Din Muhammad b. Tulun, *Mufakahat al-khillan fi Hawadith al-zaman*, ed. Muhammad Mustafa, 2 vols. (Cairo: Wizara al-thaqafawal-irshad al-qawmi, 1962-64), 2: 65, 70; 'Abd al-Qadir Rihawi, "Al-Abniya al-athariyya fi Dimashq. Dirasa wa-tahqiq. 2. Al-Takiyya al-Salimiyya fi al-Salihiyya," *Annales Archeologiques Arabes Syriennes* 8-9 (1958-59): 67-74; Abd al-Qadir Rihawi and Emilie Ouéchek, "Les deux takiyya de Damas: La Takiyya et la madrasa Sulaymaniyya du Marj et la Takiyya al-Salimiyya de Salihiyya," *Bulletin des études orientales* 28 (1975): 217-25; Jean Sauvaget, *Les Monuments historiques de Damas* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1932), 106, nr. 110; Carl Watzinger and Karl Wulzinger, *Damaskus, die Islamische Stadt* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1924), 127-8.

3. *Takiya* in the Arabic architectural vocabulary, see Meier, "For the sake of God," 126.

an facilities. This type of complex was used by the dynasty in the early period (14th and 15th centuries) both to transmit messages of territorial domination and as a strategy to populate the then predominantly Christian areas of Anatolia and the Balkans with Muslim settlers.[4]

At the time of the conquest of the Arab provinces in the early 16th century, the situation was quite different. The Ottomans where by then an established Sunni Muslim political and military power ruling the provinces of Anatolia and the Balkans from Istanbul. Through the incorporation of the former Mamluk territories into the empire, the Ottoman sultan secured the protectorate of the Holy Cities (Mecca, Medina, Jerusalem, Hebron/al-Khalil) as well as control over the Red Sea and the overland trade routes associated with it. The city of Damascus and its hinterland were important in this regard, being an official territory through which state-controlled pilgrimages and trade caravans passed. The sultan was henceforward responsible for the security and well-being of the growing number of pilgrims, merchants and other travellers on the roads leading to and from the region. This responsibility became increasingly important in the affairs of state as insecurity intensified in these mainly Bedouin-controlled territories in the aftermath of the conquest.[5] One response was the active Ottomanisation of the province, partly through the foundation of at least five so-called imperial *imaret*s in the province in the second half of the 16th century. Two of these were in the city of Damascus and were founded by sultans and three lay along the imperial roads and were established by two governors [ill.1].[*]

The aim of this chapter is to present some preliminary thoughts on how these imperial *imaret*s communicated an image of the Ottoman presence in the newly conquered territories of the province of Damascus.[6] Based on a comparative study of the written sources and of the material remains of these building complexes, it discuss strategies of location; compares and analyses the layout, shape and to an extent the building materials used for the buildings in these complexes; and how the latter related to both central Ottoman and local building traditions.

Ottoman Appropriation of Damascus's Urban and Rural Landscape

Although Selim's complex mentioned above was built in accordance with local architectural tradition, it was an important political statement of Ottoman rule in Damascus. Its symbolic value was confirmed by the closure of the complex and confiscation of the food-producing part of the endowment by the governor, Janbirdi al-Ghazzali, when he rebelled against Sultan Süleyman upon Selim's death in 1520. The mosque was reopened after the rebellion, but there is no further information on the use of the public kitchen until it burnt down in

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4. On imarets around Bursa and Edirne, see, for instance, Aptullah Kuran, "Form and Function in Ottoman Building Complexes," *Environmental Design: Journal of the Islamic Environmental Design Research Centre* 1-2 (1987): 132-9.

5. See Bakhit, *The Ottoman province*, 108; Uriel Heyd, *Ottoman documents on Palestine 1552-1615: A study of the firman according to the Mühimme Defteri* (Oxford: University Press, 1960), 73-4, 87-8, 90-1, 101; Laoust, *Les Gouverneurs*, 145, 48, 51, 53; and Rafeq, *Province of Damascus*, 53, 70-2.

6. Stephane Yerasimos, *Hommes et idées dans l'espace Ottoman* (Istanbul: Analecta Isisiana, 1997), XXIX, 213-15.

* For illustrations, see end of chapter.

1552. It was rebuilt on the orders of Sultan Süleyman in 1554, when his own building project in the city was launched.

Süleyman chose a different type of location for his imperial *imaret*, which became known as the Takiya Sulaymaniya.[7] It was built on the green meadow (*Marj al-Akhdar*) to the west of the city wall, where the Qasr al-Ablaq, the Mamluk Sultan Baybars's palace, had been in the 13th century, and where pilgrims awaiting the state-led caravans to or from Mecca would set up their camps, close to the imperial roads leading south and the west.[8]

The complex was built between1554 and 1560 in two phases. The first included a Friday mosque [ill. 4], guest rooms, a public kitchen with dining halls, a bakery and a market (*arasta*). The second was the madrasa, located to the north of the market, and designated as the chair of the Hanafi mufti of Damascus.

The first phase of the complex was executed according to plans drawn up by the chief royal architect Mi'mar Sinan (1490-1588), who sent an architect from his office in Istanbul to supervise the building site. This architect, Molla Aǧa "the Persian" (al-'Ajami) brought with him a team of "Ottoman" workmen.[9] He later returned to Damascus to administer the funds for and the organisation of the building site of the madrasa.

The first part of the complex strictly followed the canons of imperial architecture. It was composed of a symmetrically organised unit of two U-shaped buildings facing one another, enclosed by a rectangular wall with entrances to the west, north and east. The southern unit included a single domed Friday mosque with two slender minarets, flanked by twelve domed rooms intended for distinguished guests. The central element of the northern part was the rectangular kitchen. It was covered by two domes, flanked by two large dining halls, a bakery and storage space. The eastern gate of this complex opened on to a vaulted market (*arasta*) that gave access to the second part of the complex, the madrasa. It comprised a single domed building in front of a courtyard with a rectangular fountain at its centre enclosed in a quadrangular domed arcade that gave access to the students' rooms [Ill. 10a].

This construction project coincided with a reform of property status and an initiative to Ottomanise the province, which probably explains the sultan's desire to erect a complex of buildings according to the architectural canons of the central Ottoman lands. This project was interesting for other reasons, one of them being its close resemblance to other Ottoman roadside stops built under the supervision of the chief royal architect, such those in Payas or Luleburgaz, both

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7. For the endowment deed, see Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province*, 116, and Taisir Khalil Muhammad el-Zawareh, *Religious Endowments and Social Life in the Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Karak: Publications of the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies, Mu'tah University, 1992), 153-4. See also Vakıflar Genel Müdürlüǧü (hererafter VGM) 53-1389 and Ja'far al-Hasani, "al-Takiyya al-Sulaymaniyya fi Dimashq," *Majallat al-Majma' al-'Ilmi al-'Arabi bi-Dimashq* 31 (1956): 222-37, 437-50.

8. See, for instance, Godfrey Goodwin, "The Tekke of Sulayman I in Damascus," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (1978): 127-9; Aptullah Kuran, "Sulayman the Magnificent's Architectural Patronage," in *Soliman le Magnifique et son Temps, Actes du colloque de Paris, Galeries du Grand Palais 7-10 mars 1990*, ed. Gilles Veinstein (Paris: La documentation Francaise, 1992), 217-25; Sauvaget, *Les Monuments*; 'Abd al-Qadir Rihawi, "Al-Abniya al-athariyya fi Dimashq. Dirasawa-tahqiq. 1. Al-takiyya wa al-madrasa al-Sulaymaniyyatan bi-Dimashq," *AAAS* 7 (1957): 125-34; 'Rihawi and Ouéchek, "Les deux takiyya", 217-25.

9. Henri Sauvaire, "Description de Damas: al-'Adawi, Suite à 'Ilmawi," *Journal Asiatiques* 9, no. 6 (1895): 221-313, esp. 255-6.

the work of Sinan and built for Sokullu Mehmed Pasha. These complexes in a way demonstrated Ottoman domination all along the imperial road from Edirne to Damascus.[10] At the same time, the complex in Damascus was different in scale and shape from the great imperial foundations in Istanbul or Edirne, and integrated many elements of local architectural tradition, as we shall see below.

Ottomanisation through Buildings (Imperial *Imarets*)

The establishment of the Takiya Sulaymaniya in Damascus was followed by the foundation of seven great endowments by governors and Ottoman high officials in the second half of the 16th century, namely Ahmad Shamsi Pasha, Lala Mustafa Pasha, Darwish Pasha, Murad Pasha, Sinan Pasha, Siyaghush Pasha and Murad Pasha. These endowments promoted the construction of Ottoman buildings in strategic spots in and outside the city wall of Damascus, buildings that transformed the cityscape, relocating the political, commercial and, in a way, the religious centres of the city outside the wall. The aim of this reorganisation was to show the ever increasing number of travellers that Damascus was now integrated into Ottoman territory and the *Pax Ottomana*, thus rendering the protection previously provided by the city wall obsolete.

Curiously, the endowments of two of these governors included imperial *imarets* in locations along the imperial roads. Thus, Lala Mustafa Pasha established Qunaytra[11] about 40 kilometres southwest of Damascus on the *Via Maris* between 1563 and 1568, while between 1581 and 1596 Sinan Pasha erected Sa'sa' 30 kilometres southwest of the city on the *Via Maris* and Qutayfa, 30 kilometres north of Damascus on the road to Aleppo [Ill.1].[12]

For the latter we have archival documents confirming that the sultan ordered the governor to undertake its construction for the protection of travellers and pilgrims against Bedouin attack at the time he was appointed grand vizier, and that the imperial treasury even lent the governor funds to initiate the project. These documents also confirm that the sultan himself contributed to the sites with the construction of a fortress in which a permanent garrison of Ottoman soldiers was based. In the case of Qunaytra, only the endowment deed has been preserved and

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10. Gülru Necipoğlu, *The Age of Sinan: An Architectural Culture in the Ottoman Empire* (London: Reaktion Books, 2005), 348, 355.

11. Khalil Mardam Bek, *Firman liwa Saida wa Sham bi Khusus waqf Lala Mustafa Basha wa zawijatuhu Fatima Khatun bint sultan al-Ghur* (Damascus: al-matbaqa al-'umumiya, 1385 h./1956), VGM 747-216 (Lala Mustafa Pasha), VGM 747-134, (Fatima Khatun). el-Zawareh, *Religious endowments*, 158. According to Cornell Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The historian Mustafa Ali (1541-1600)* (Princeton: University Press 1986), 52, note 26.

12. For a list of Sinan Pasha's foundations, see Tahsin Öz, "Topkapı Sarayı Müzerinde Yemen Fatihi Sinanpaşa arşivi", *Belleten* X, no. 37 (1946): 171-93. VGM 599-63, VGM 583-188 Sinan Pasha, *Waqfıya Sinan Pasha* (Damascus: IFEAD/Mudiriya al-awqaf, 1948). The Damascene endowment has previously been studied and published on by Muhammad Arna'out, *Mu'iyat 'an Dimashq wa Bilad al-Sham al-Janibiya fi nihayat al-qarn al-Sadisa 'ashara* (Damascus: Dar al-Hassad, 1993); Jean-Paul Pascual, *Damas à la fin du XVIe siècle d'après trois waqfs ottomans* (Damascus: IFD, 1983). For more specific information on the sultan's involvement in the foundation, see Heyd, *Ottoman documents,* 187-8. For travel accounts, see for instance Evliya Çelebi, *Seyahatnamesi,* ed. Yücel Dağlı et al., 10 vols. (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2005), 9: 264-5. For a description of the complex in Sa'sa' see Machiel Kiel, "The caravansaray and civic centre of Defterdar Murad Celebi in Ma'arrat an-Nu'man and the külliye of Yemen Fatihi Sinan Pasha in Sa'sa'," in *Seven centuries of Ottoman architecture: "A supra-national Heritage,"* eds. Nur Akın et al. (Istanbul: YEM, 1999) 103-10.

no additional written documentation relating to its foundation has been found except for the settlement of horse minders for the imperial post system. Since these three complexes have so many other features in common, it is likely that the circumstances surrounding its establishment were similar to those of the other two.

The official reason for building these complexes was to display the omnipresence of the *Pax Ottomana* and to symbolise Ottoman power and convey a sense of security to travellers and pilgrims along some of the most exposed stretches of Syrian imperial roads on the border between settled lands and Bedouin territory, where the power of the Ottoman sultan was never really to be established. However, another important reason most probably related to the international Red Sea trade now controlled by the Ottomans and in which many governors had invested their personal fortunes, as in the case, for instance, of Sinan Pasha. All the stops had previously been used to accommodate travellers' most basic needs (*manzil*). These structures, most of them built by wealthy merchants in the late 15th century, were in a ruinous state by the mid-16th century and were thus not providing the level of security necessary to satisfy the Ottoman sultan.[13]

The new Ottoman complexes were guarded by permanent military garrisons consisting of 40 soldiers in Qunaytra and approximately 20 each in Sa'sa' and Qutayfa. The garrisons were housed in the new fortresses funded by the imperial treasury and especially built to protect these complexes.[14] The sultan also ordered the settlement of (peasant) families in the neighbouring areas and horse minders for the imperial mail system and their families.[15] An imperial order for an additional 200 families to be settled in and around Sa'sa' from 1581 and their exemption from taxes indicates that this complex was located in an even more exposed area than the other two.[16]

Although the interior space of these complexes was organised in different ways, they possessed the same facilities. This complementarity is particularly useful to us, since for Qunaytra we must rely on the written information provided by the endowment deed of Lala Mustafa Pasha, while in Sa'sa' and Qutayfa the structures are preserved, but the endowment deeds omit any details concerning the use or shape of the space.

In Sa'sa' and Qunaytra the fortresses were situated outside the main entrance of the enclosing fortified wall. Neither of them has survived but the fortified enclosure and the main entrance gate of the caravanserai in Sa'sa' is still partly standing [ill.7]. Above the entrance gates to both there was a primary school for young Muslim boys, called a *maktab*.[17] Although also enclosed within a fortified rectangle, the layout of Sinan Pasha's complex in Qutayfa was different from the other two [Ill. 3a].[18] The main entrance to this complex was located in the southern wall and seems to have been more discrete than in the other locations. The

13. Bahit, *The Ottoman Province*, 20 ff; Heyd, *Ottoman documents*, 101, 126-7.

14. Kiel "The caravansaray," 103-10; Çelebi, *Seyahatnamesi,* 264-5.

15. According to a firman from 985 h./1577 published by Heyd, *Ottoman documents*, 126-7 and Bahit, *The Ottoman Province,* 97, these 45 families of minders at each stop were exempted from paying taxes.

16. Heyd, *Ottoman documents*, 101; Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province*, 221.

17. Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, 264-5; Kiel, "The caravansaray," 105.

18. It is also better preserved and more easily understood from the description of the complex published by J. Sauvaget (1937) together with architectural drawings and photographs. See Jean Sauvaget, "Les Caravansérails Syriens du Hadjdj de Constantinople, " *Ars Islamica* IV (1937): 98-121.

smaller entrance may have been a precaution, given that the garrison was located inside the walled enclosure instead of outside, as with the other two roadside complexes.

Another important feature of these complexes was the vaulted corridors used both to link spaces and markets. They all primarily led to the mosque, but opened on to the *ribat*/caravanserai, the bath house, reserves, bakery and public kitchens on the way.

The *ribat*/caravanserai in Qunaytra was located in the northern part of the complex [Ill. 6]. It originally had two floors, a paved courtyard, stables and storage facilities on the ground floor and domed guest rooms on the upper floor. A small part of it is still preserved and is today used as a museum. In Sa'sa', the structures intended for the shelter of travellers and animals were located along the sides of the complex on two floors, probably directly accessible on each side of the entrance.[19] Both these caravanserais included a feature that identified the buildings as Ottoman: a ground floor covered with ribless crossvaults lying on two rows of pillars.[20]

In Qutayfa, the caravanserai was located on the right (eastern) side of the vaulted corridor. It also had space for animals on the ground floor and for travellers on the upper floor. In addition, it had an apartment, latrines and a great fountain in the centre of its courtyard. Its southern exit was the only access to the public kitchen, which is the greatest difference from the two other complexes.

All the mosques had the characteristic rectangular or square base, and were crowned with a single dome, preceded by a domed loggia and flanked by (more or less) slender minarets with a pointed cap. In front of the mosques was a paved courtyard with a fountain and surrounded by gardens on the other sides. The only difference was that the mosque in Qunaytra was rectangular and the dome was supported by pointed arches of stone standing on four pillars,[21] as were the mosques of Sinan Pasha and of Darwish Pasha in Damascus [Ill.2, 4]. The ones in Qutayfa and Sa'sa' both had a square base and their domes were supported on pendentives, just as in the Takiya Sulaymaniya [Ill. 3b.7, 5].

The *maktab* or primary schools that we know from Damascus comprised a small square with a dome. The two mentioned here were, as noted earlier, located above the main entrance of the complex (in Qunaytra and in Sa'sa') and were just an arched space in the shape of an *iwan*. The only known Damascene example similarly shaped is that of the Darwishiya.[22]

For the baths, there was a noticeable difference in size, shape and elaboration between those built in an urban context and those built inside these roadside stops. In urban contexts, baths needed to accommodate greater numbers of people and had often to be adapted to plots that had previously housed baths. In the roadside stops, the baths were completely new structures and could thus be

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19. Kiel, "The caravansaray," 105.

20. Ibid. Sauvaget, "Les Caravanserails," 120-21 mentions other features of the "Turkish" caravanserai structures that were distinctly different from local traditions.

21. According to Ahmad Zakariya, *Al-Rif al-Suri,* 2 vols. (Damascus: al-Bayan, 1955), 2: 540 the mosque was entirely rebuilt in the 1920s. For further information on the complex, see Gottlieb Schumacher, *The Jaula_n: Surveyed for the German Society for the Exploration of the Holy Land* (London: Bentley, 1888).

22. Other maktabs in Damascus were the Sinaniya and the complex of Ahma Shamsi Pasha. Both were domed buildings on a square base.

built more in accordance with the bath architecture of the central Ottoman lands.[23]

The bath house in Qunaytra is difficult to understand from the written description, but was associated with local tradition with its big warm room. Of the other two complexes, only that in Qutayfa is sufficiently well preserved for us to understand its spatial arrangement. It is quite different from that in Qunaytra and seems more closely affiliated with an "Ottoman" layout, with a big dressing room and a big hot room [Ill. 3a.].

Concerning the shape of the public kitchens (*imaret*), only the two in Damascus and the one in Qutayfa are still in place. The Damascene structures are almost identical, probably because they were built at approximately the same time and possibly by the same work team. They were rectangular structures, divided into two squares by an arch. A dome crowned each square space. The kitchen in Qutayfa, which is the only roadside one to be preserved, was quite different from these two. It comprises two cross-vaulted halls forming a U and was attached to the southern outer wall of the complex [Ill. 3a].[24] For the kitchens in Sa'sa' and Qunaytra, we must rely for our understanding of the buildings on later written descriptions by the Ottoman traveller, Evliya Celebi, who only recorded the number of domes of each – eight for Sa'sa' and 20 for Qunaytra.[25] Apart from this information that gives us a vague idea of their size and confirms their presence in the complex, the only information provided by the endowment deeds is the number of meals they served, which was the same for both (200 in the morning and 200 in the evening). This contrasts with the number of people served in the Takiya Sulaymaniya, namely 1,800 people per day.[26] Considering that there could be up to 20,000 travellers in a pilgrimage caravan, the capacity of these complexes was not very impressive, and one is left to wonder for whose benefit they had been opened.

Architecturally, all three roadside complexes in Qutayfa, Qunaytra and Sa'sa' were affiliated to the same architectural tradition as the Takiya Sulaymaniya, both in terms of the symmetrical organisation of space as well as the shape of the buildings, although they were built on a less monumental scale. Similar complexes were built in Hasiya, al-Nebk, Ma'arrat al-Nu'man, Jisr al Shughur, although these were not, as far as we know, referred to as imperial *imarets* and did not include food-producing facilities [ill.1]. Only the complex in Zembakiya, supposedly also built by Sinan Pasha, included an *imaret*.[27] The presence of a public kitchen seems to have been particularly important for an "imperial" designation.[28]

The security measures and new facilities afforded by these Ottoman roadside complexes were elaborate, including the Friday mosque, the public kitchen, bath houses, primary schools for young Muslim boys, storage space and rooms to shelter both humans and animals (*ribat*). Finally, covered markets with shops

23. Marianne Boqvist, "Ottoman baths in Syria? A preliminary study of bathhouses in 16th century Ottoman *külliye* in the province of Damascus," forthcoming proceedings of a conference held in Damascus, November 2009, see http://balneorient.hypotheses.org/.

24. Sauvaget, "Les Caravanserails," fig. 19.

25. Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, 264-5; Kiel, "The caravansaray," 105.

26. Meier, "For the sake of God," 131.

27. Öz, "Topkapı Sarayı," 193.

28. Christophe Neumann, "Remarks on the symbolism of Ottoman Imarets," in *Feeding people, feeding power: Imarets in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Nina Ergin, Christoph Neumann, and Amy Singer (Istanbul: Eren, 2007), 275-86, 283.

selling goods to travellers were located inside the complexes. There were as well bigger markets organised on specific days outside them.

Building Material and Decoration as Symbols of Ottoman Rule

Building material was an important marker of the status of a building and its founder. This was particularly the case in the Ottoman period, when the use and distribution of certain types of building material were controlled and restricted within the empire. Just as certain positions were reserved for the sultan and members of the royal family, so were certain types of building material only available to building sites under the patronage of these people.

The office in charge of imperial material stores was generally the royal architect's office or its local representative, which in the provinces was usually the governor. It is thus likely that a governor would be able to obtain permission to use some of this restricted material for "his own" building projects, given that there were leftovers from imperial building sites and that there were skilled workmen available.[29]

The restrictions affected, for instance, the use of lead for roofs and other precious materials such as marble, granite or ceramic tiles. Their use in a building expressed its importance and the status of its endowment or its founder in the eyes of observers and travellers. This is clear from the travel account of Evliya Çelebi, who frequently reported on the use of lead to cover domes. Of Damascus, he says that "the lead-covered domes almost reach the heavens".[30] This remark confirms the rarity of a building material such as lead and the workmanship needed to use it. Indeed, in reality only the domes of the Umayyad mosque, the Takiya Sulaymaniya and that of Sinan Pasha in Damascus had a lead covering [Ill. 4, 5]. Most Damascene domes continued to be plastered throughout the Ottoman period, just as they had always been [ill. 10b]. The references to lead thus indicate the status of the city in the eyes of Evliya rather than the abundance of lead domes in the city.

Ceramic tiles were used to decorate both the inner and outer walls of public and private buildings. The workshops in Iznik produced tiles for buildings founded by the imperial family and their protégés, while other architectural patrons had to make do with imitations. In Damascus, the use of imitations was true of even the sultan's complex (Takiya Sulaymaniya) [ill. 8]. It was most probably on this site that local producers first encountered Iznik tiles in Damascus. As a result it is here that we also see the first examples of locally produced imitations of Iznik designs. In addition, it must be mentioned that tiles were considered so precious they have been reused and reset in (to our eyes) completely incoherent panels up to the present. To my knowledge, no tiles are now to be seen on the sites of the complexes outside the urban context. However, in Qutayfa there are painted gypsum lunettes inside the mosque that are "maladroit" versions of the lunette motifs in, for instance, the mosque of Sinan Pasha. These have yet to be dated.[31]

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29. Heyd, *Ottoman Documents*, 156, nr. 101, note 2, discusses the material stores, the prices of different types of material (ibid. 157, nr 102; ibid. 298-9, nr. 256).

30. Çiğdem Kafesçioğlu, "In the Image of Rum: Ottoman Architectural Patronage in 16th century Aleppo and Damascus," in *Muqarnas* 16 (1999): 70-96.

31. Photographs of these lunettes were found in the National Archives of Historical Monuments in Damascus.

Other examples of particular or "precious" building materials are found in the endowment deed of Qunaytra. Particular materials in the mosque at Qunaytra included wood for the minbar and the balustrade for the muezzin, a material often used in a local pre-Ottoman Syrian or Egyptian context. In Sa'sa' and Qutayfa they were built of limestone and in the two sultanic foundations in Damascus of marble, which the Ottomans considered the most attractive building material for mihrabs.

Marble panels were used for the seclusion of women in Qunaytra. This type of panel has been observed in Damascus, but not in Sa'sa' or Qutayfa. This indicates that this mosque had more investment lavished on it by it founder than was the case for the other two. One reason for this could be that Lala Mustafa Pasha had chosen not to build a Friday mosque in Damascus and that he, according to Evliya Celebi, was in charge of the sultan's restoration of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and was thus in charge of many skilled workmen and of this building material.[33]

We know that the collaboration between workmen from the royal architect's workshops and local workmen on the Takiya Sulaymaniya building site resulted in a Damascene Ottoman architecture that incorporated Ottoman architectural elements, local building materials and adapted techniques. This particular style was produced for the first time in the madrasa of the Takiya Sulaymaniya [Ill. 10b]. Although its layout, shape and many architectural features were closely associated with Ottoman building tradition, the decoration had new and lively forms that originated in both local and Ottoman architecture. Despite the "Ottoman" layout of this madrasa, this building was closely aligned with local building tradition in, for instance, the conception of the dome and the materials used. This development was probably mainly due to the lack of skilled Ottoman workmen in Damascus at the time of its construction.

There is, however, also evidence that workmen were sent from Damascus to work on building sites such as the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the imperial roadside fortifications in the region. They were most probably responsible for spreading the Ottoman Damascene building style in the region.[34] It is also very likely that workmen from Jerusalem and/or Damascus worked on Lala Mustafa Pasha's complex in Qunaytra. In fact, the opportunity to employ their skills seems to be a probable explanation for the use of rare building material in this mosque, while Lala Mustafa's responsibility for government material stock located in Jerusalem made it possible to use leftover materials from the royal architect's sites. Another indication of Damascene workmen's presence on this project may lie in the description of the mihrab in Qunaytra, said to have comprised different types of coloured or painted stones. Although there is no sign of these medallions around the mihrab in Qunaytra today, there are reused stones in the northern façade of the mosque that can be compared with the decoration of the mihrab in Sa'sa' [ill. 9].

Similar itinerant teams of workmen from the provincial capital may have been involved in the construction of the complexes of Sinan Pasha. We know from

32. Çelebi, *Seyahatname*, 235.
33. Heyd, *Ottoman Documents*, 110; Ibid., 186-9; Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province*, 213; Laoust, *Les gouverneurs*, 181 mentions the works at two stops on the road between Damascus and Mecca (Al-Ahdar and Ziziya) executed by Damascene workmen.
34. Heyd, *Ottoman Documents*, 110-13, 114.

Ottoman administrative sources that the first superintendent of the building site in Sa'sa' was one Hajji Hasan, *jawush* of the court, who is also known to have administered the endowment in Jeruslam of sultan's wife, Haseki Hurrem, 987 h./1579. He was also appointed inspector of the building site of Sinan Pasha's complex in Uyun al-tujjar. The superintendent of that site was a man named Ali, head of the cadastral office in Damascus.[34] These local Ottoman administrators were probably not from the royal architect's office and did not have access to Ottoman work teams. Consequently, the degree of local influence on these buildings was higher than on, for instance, the Takiya Sulaymaniya. The local administrators' attachment to Ottoman authorities was, however, quite strong, and it was in their interest to execute buildings that clearly showed Ottoman rule in the province.

Conclusion: The Imperial Imaret – an Image of the Ottoman Presence in the Province of Damascus?

The building complexes discussed above were part of the foundations established by the sultan or high officials closely related to the central power in Istanbul. These foundations and the associated projects were supported or co-authored or co-financed by the sultan in response to the insecurity along key roads by the end of the 16th century. Choosing strategic locations for their complexes, these founders aimed to convey an important message: the province of Damascus was now integrated into the Ottoman realm and under Ottoman protection.

Because of the different needs of the users of the complexes, there were obviously different types of buildings in urban and in roadside complexes. The former focused on socio-educative facilities such as libraries, madrasas, *maktab*s, hospitals, kitchens, etc., while those on the road had more utilitarian facilities such as baths, cafes and shelter for travellers and animals. The shape of the buildings, in particular mosques, differed radically from local architectural tradition. Another important novelty brought to the province by these complexes was Friday mosques in roadside locations, something not previously found outside settled areas in Syria. In addition, the possibility of getting food and shelter free of charge for up to three months was new to Syrian roadside stops, and the new level of comfort one could expect while travelling impressed both Syrian and foreign travellers and was often referred to as a sign of the Ottoman presence in the Syrian province.[35] The establishment of these imperial *imarets* seems to have been part of a greater Ottomanisation scheme intended to integrate the territory beyond the urban areas of the province into an Ottoman landscape by adapting the original purpose of this type of complex as the central element of future settlements.[36]

These projects symbolised the Ottoman takeover together with the Takiya Sulaymaniya, which was also a product of the royal architects' office. The layout of the roadside complexes discussed above was closer to that of complexes

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35. Food distribution seems to have been one of the most crucial aspects of these complexes: it was this that made them "imperial". On this topic, see Meier, "For the sake of God."
36. Neumann, "Symbolism," 280.

in the central Ottoman lands than to those in the city of Damascus. However, just as they were not as monumental as the Takiya, the Takiya in turn was much less monumental than the imperial complexes in Istanbul or Edirne.

There are probably at least two reasons for the stylistic peculiarities of the roadside complexes. As imperial *imaret*s, their layout was designed under the supervision of the royal architect's office in Istanbul, while their location in deserted rural areas made it possible to execute a layout corresponding to Ottoman canons of symmetry. But while the layout and shape of buildings were most likely decided by the royal architect's office in Istanbul and, as such, were clear images of the sultan, their designers must have known that local building materials and teams of local workmen would have to be used in their execution, since there does not seem to have been a budget for (or interest in) sending materials or skilled workers from the capital to these sites.

With supervisors and workmen that at best originated in Damascus, the shape of the buildings was necessarily a local interpretation of Ottoman architecture or of Ottoman Damascene architecture, and there must have been a certain unpredictability about the result. Their success, however, becomes clear in the accounts of the pilgrims and travellers passing through Damascus and its hinterland. Many of these felt compelled to report on the number of buildings built in the "Rumi style",[37] a style introduced elsewhere along the roads to the four Holy Cities and the Red Sea and clearly intended as a representation of the Ottoman presence in the province.

Another important question that remains for the foundation of these complexes is the importance of the governors' personal interest in international trade and in the safe transportation of goods via the Red Sea, but that is a topic for another paper.

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37. For further reading on this style, see Kafesçioğlu, "In the Image of Rum,"; Hegnar Watenpaugh Zeitlian, *The image of an Ottoman city: Imperial Architecture and Urban Experience in Aleppo in the 16th and 17th centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2004). For more specific information on Damascus see, Stefan Weber, "The creation of Ottoman Damascus: Architecture and urban development of Damascus in the 16th and 17th centuries," in *ARAM* 9-10 (1997-98): 431-70; Meinecke, "Die osmanische Architektur," 575-95; Marianne Boqvist, "Architecture et développement urbain a Damas de la conquête Ottomane (922 H./1516-17) a la fondation du waqf de Murad Pasha (1017h./1607-08)," unpublished dissertation, Université de Sorbonne, Paris IV, 2006.

Ill.1. Map of the Ottoman roadside complexes in the province of Syria (from Google maps)

Ill.2. Mosque in Qunaytra seen from the east, photo Marianne Boqvist
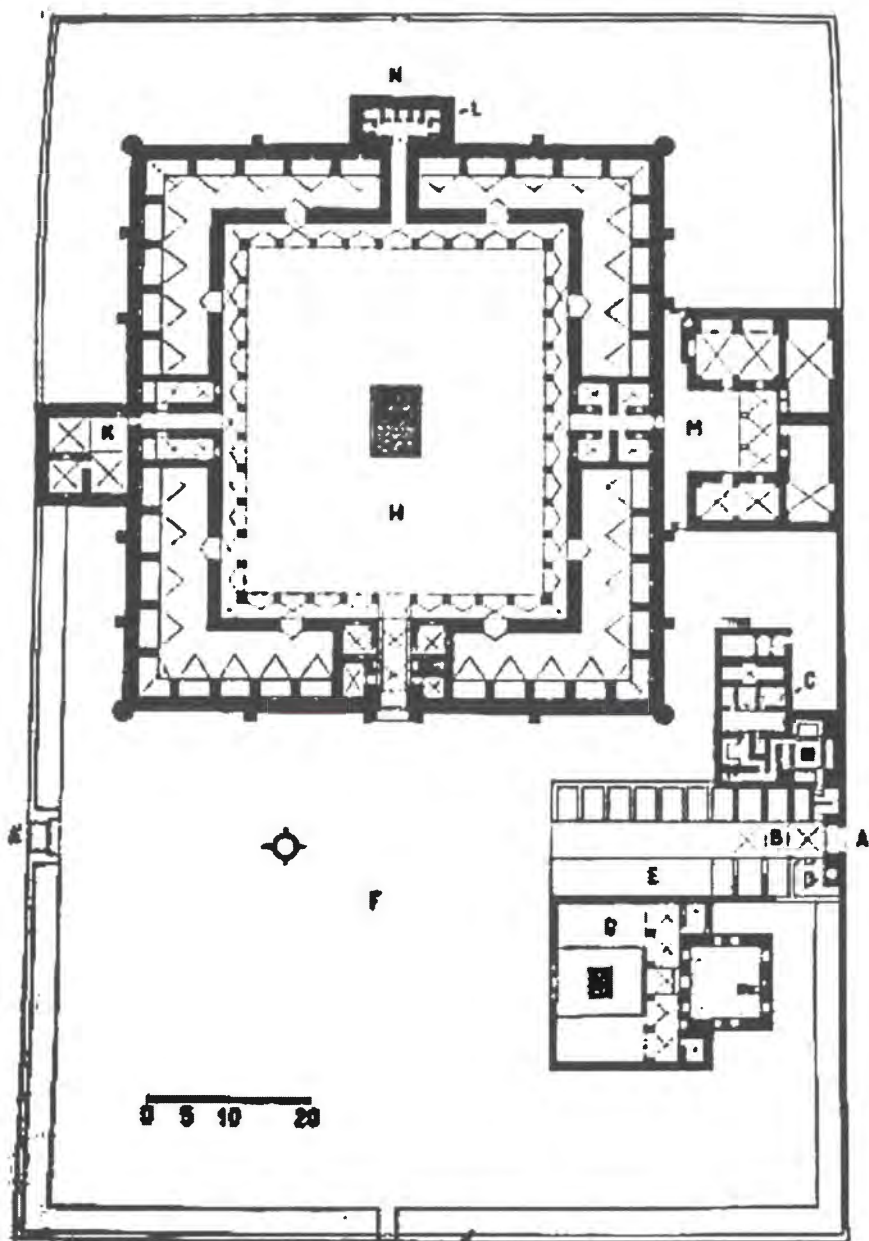
Ill.3. a. Ground plan Quayfa, from Jean Sauvaget, "Les Caravansérails Syriens du Hadjdj de Constantinople, " *Ars Islamica* IV (1937): 11S.

Ill. 3. b. Overview complex, photo Marianne Boqvist

Ill. 4. Sinaniya mosque, Damascus, photo Marianne Boqvist

Ill.5. Mosque of the Takiya Sulaymaniya, photo Marianne Boqvist

Ill.6. Remains of caravanserai/ribat Qunaytra, photo Marianne Boqvist

Ill.7. a. Main entrance and mosque in Sa'sa', photo Marianne Boqvist
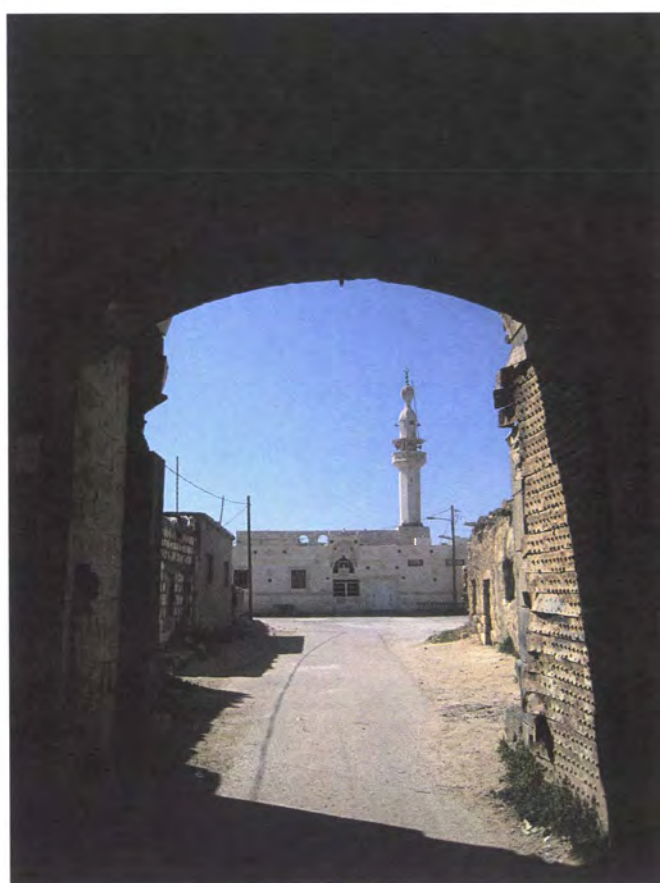
Ill.7. b. Main entrance and mosque in Sa'sa', photo Marianne Boqvist

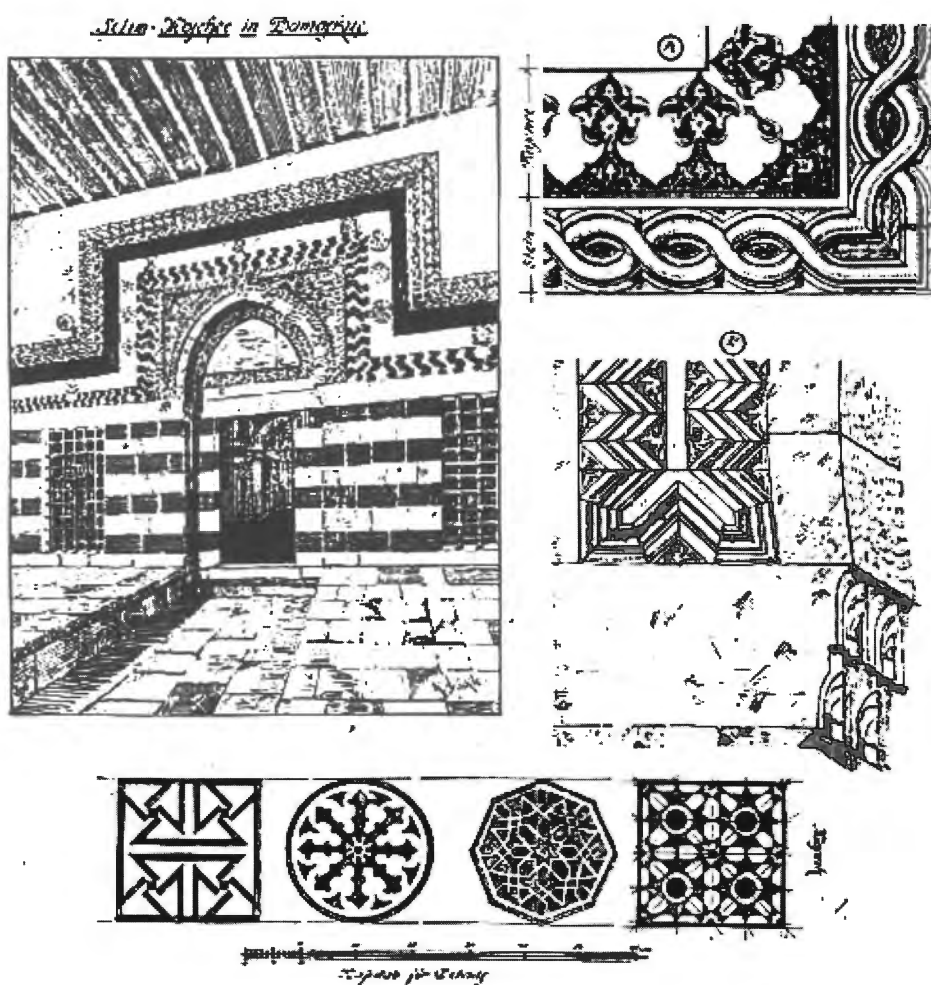Ill. 8. Ceramic tiles, Iznik imitations, Takiya Sulaymaniya, photo Marianne Boqvist

Ill. 9. Mihrab Sa'sa', photo Marianne Boqvist

Ill.10. Madrasa of the Takiya Sulaymaniya, colour paste motifs.
Carl Watzinger and Karl Wulzinger, *Damaskus, die Islamische Stadt* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1924, p. 107, Abb. 28.

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A Glimpse from the Periphery:
Medina in the Young Turk Era

HASAN KAYALI

The repeated failures of Ottoman governments to stem the loss of large European territories to nationalist and secessionist movements throughout the 19th century shifted the focus of their centralising policies in the last quarter of the century to the Asian periphery, including Eastern Anatolia, Syria, Iraq and Arabia.[1] This reorientation had relatively little effect on the province of the Hijaz in Western Arabia, in part due to its distance from the capital, but more especially because the province traditionally held a unique place in the Ottoman order. The privileges that the Hijaz enjoyed set it apart from the Arab societies in the Fertile Crescent that were being more closely integrated into the imperial centre. It also lacked the large urban centres with agricultural hinterlands in which the relationship between the imperial government and local society was subjected to renegotiation under the pressure of novel economic forces. Yet at the beginning of the 20th century, the town of Medina, situated in northern Hijaz, emerged as a site of Ottoman penetration of the Arabian frontier. Particularly after 1908, when the centralist policies of the Young Turk governments brought a new dimension to Ottoman integration of the provinces, one that was less dependent on the sultan's patronage, the relationship of Medina to Istanbul, and together with it, the mutual vantages from the imperial centre and northern Arabian peninsula, underwent transformation. This chapter will examine the immediate impact on Medina of the twin forces of regime change in Istanbul and the town's incorporation into the Ottoman railroad network.

The Hijaz had always been a focal point of the Ottoman order. The possession of the holy places imparted legitimacy to the Ottoman administration and the House of Osman and was a crucial expedient in maintaining hegemony over vast lands populated by Muslims. In contrast to the rest of the Arabian peninsula and the remote periphery of the empire elsewhere, the Ottomans paid particular attention to preserving and reinforcing their authority in Mecca and Medina and their environs. They achieved this by direct patronage of the grand sharifs of Mecca, descendants of the Prophet's family, who were recognised as hereditary overseers of the holy sites and were held in esteem within the empire and beyond. While acquiescing in tribal feuds and the consequent shifts of local power from

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1 See, for instance, Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998) and Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

one shaykhly family to another throughout the peninsula, Istanbul strove to protect the sharifs of Mecca from the depredations of neighbouring power-seekers. It devised mechanisms to maintain the sharifs' loyalty to Istanbul, not the least of which was keeping the scions of the sharifian family under watchful eyes in the capital, and, in the late period, granting them high office during their uncertain wait to be appointed amir of Mecca.

The distance to the Arabian peninsula and difficulty of communication made supervision difficult. The Ottoman government confronted vital threats to its hegemony, occasionally in the form of challenges from the grand sharif himself in alliance with local elements, but more ominously, from neighbouring chiefs defying sharifian authority as well. The Wahhabi predations in the holy places, motivated by an ideology that justified violence within the holy sites in the name of preserving the purity of religion, was the most significant of these challenges after the turn of the 19th century,[2] while the revolt of Sharif Hussein in 1916 with British encouragement and assistance constituted the most consequential act of defiance by a grand sharif in office. Such exceptions notwithstanding, the Ottomans succeeded in preserving their authority in the Hijaz for several centuries, despite the distance, through dexterous deployment of politics and coercive power. The patronage of the grand sharifs, coupled with the usual functions of the provincial governor seated in or near Mecca, secured the Hijaz for the Ottoman government.

This Ottoman success owed in part to techniques of governance that were peculiar to the Hijaz and to the special dispensations the province enjoyed. In the 19th century, Mecca and Medina were islands in a vast frontier region. As the locus of the pilgrimage, both towns, particularly Mecca, were well-plugged into Ottoman and global circuits, as was Jidda, the Hijaz's entrepôt for the pilgrimage. However, the Hijaz preserved prerogatives more characteristic of the unincorporated open frontier. The Hijazis were exempt from military service and most forms of taxation, the two institutions that provided for contact between local society and the seat of government, generated bargains and partly determined a province's perceptions of the centre. Unlike in other tribal regions, sedentarisation did not become a deliberate or systematic policy in the case of the Hijaz Bedouin.

The politics of notables that flourished in the Fertile Crescent applied to the Hijaz only in superficial ways in the absence of commercialisation based on land or merchant capital circulating beyond the region and taxed by government authorities. While the sharifs of Mecca can be considered to have belonged to a bureaucratic elite (even though the office of the grand sharifate was outside the administrative hierarchy), the Hijaz lacked a bureaucratic-landed or bureaucratic-commercial elite, and thus contrasted with territories that became politically and socioeconomically integrated into the centre.[3] The region was not pulled by the centrifugal forces generated by the Tanzimat, but rather enjoyed an exceptionalism that ensured the sway of local custom and established practice, as is evident, for instance, in the perfunctory enforcement in the province of the mid-

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2 Zekeriya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti: Vehahabi Hareketi ve Suud Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998), 24-8.

3 See, for instance, Philip S. Khoury, *Urban Notables and Arab Nationalism: The Politics of Damascus, 1860-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Rogan, *Frontiers*.

Making headlines in the weekly press. Inauguration of the Dera-Zerka section of the Hicaz railway, 16 October, 1902.

19th century ban on slavery.[4] The pilgrimage managed by imperial authorities closed the Hijazi frontier precociously, albeit partially, without engendering fundamental sociopolitical transformations on the ground. Thus, the absence in the

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4 The concession was in deference to the intricate relations between the grand sharif and his tribal allies and interlocutors, who not only owned slaves but continued to trade in them. Hasan Kayalı, "Hicaz Vilayetinde II. Meşrutiyet: Değişim ve Devamlılık," in *II. Meşrutiyet'i Yeniden Düşünmek*, ed. Ferdan Ergut (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2009), 134-5.

Hijaz of the kind of politics of notables that developed in the northern Arab provinces, coupled with the province's unique position from a religious point of view, engendered atypical mutual perceptions between the capital and the Hijaz. The pilgrimage oriented the centre towards the Hijaz more than the converse: while important segments of local society in the Fertile Crescent increasingly looked to Istanbul,[5] the Hijaz had only a blurry view of the centre until the beginning of the 20th century.

The town of Medina, a *sancak* (or sub-province) of the Hijaz province (headquartered in Mecca after 1841), shared the general characteristics of the Hijaz province and its relationship with Istanbul. As the northernmost of the three major towns, the other two being Mecca and Jidda, it was closer to the "core" of the empire and within relatively easier reach by land. The Ottoman government gave the designation *muhafızlık* to Medina, which suggests that it was a military outpost, but its administrative status was the same as an ordinary *sancak*. Its designation as a military outpost had to do with the safe conduct of the pilgrim caravans coming from the north. It did not signify an extension of administrative power into the Hijaz or a higher degree of incorporation of Medina. On the contrary, Medina continued to be removed from the gaze of both Ottoman central authorities and the foreign consuls.

At the turn of the 20th century, Medina did not witness the pre-revolutionary anti-Hamidian political ferment seen in some parts of the empire. The Hijaz railway project[6] and the town's tradition as a centre of religious learning had symbolically placed the Holy Cities at the forefront of Sultan Abdulhamid's Islamic policy. Medina was removed from Young Turk centres of dissidence. Unlike other distant localities such as Libya or Egypt, it was not a destination of exile for Young Turk activists. Its name came up, however, in association with subversive schemes. As early as 1879, 35 years in advance of Sharif Hussein's fateful cooperation with Britain against Istanbul (Arab Revolt), the British consul in Jidda, James Zohrab, schemed to separate the Hijaz for the British in order to better secure the colony of India. He believed that a secret society sought to establish an Islamic state with Medina as its centre and wrote, "Medina, which confined within itself all the requirements, that is remoteness from Europe, difficulty of access, sacredness of the city and purity of the Mussulman character, indicated itself as the natural centre of the faith".[7] Medina had been similarly mentioned among *salafi* circles as the envisaged site of an anti-Hamidian intrigue, namely a meeting of Arab notables to discuss an Arab caliphate to supplant the Ottoman sultan.[8] As late as June 1908, "rumours of a pan-Islamic conference in

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5 In Damascus, for instance, wall-paintings in the residences of the local notability started to depict scenes from Istanbul, reflecting the increasingly cohesive links between Damascus and the capital forged during the 19th century. Stefan Weber, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808-1918)*, 2 vols. (Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2009), vol. 1, 290-301. Residences in Istanbul, on the other hand, depicted illustrations of the holy sites in the Hijaz. J.B. Harley and D. Woodward, *Cartography in the Traditional Islamic and South Asian Societies* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 217.

6 On the Hijaz railway, see William Ochsenwald, *The Hijaz Railroad* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1980); Ufuk Gülsoy, *Hicaz Demiryolu* (Istanbul: Eren, 1994); Murat Özyüksel, *Hicaz Demiryolu* (Istanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 2000).

7 Martin S. Kramer, *Islam Assembled: The Advent of Muslim Congresses* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 13-14.

8 In 1900, Abd al-Rahman al-Kawakibi published in his *Umm al-Qura* a fanciful description of an Arab congress to elect a new caliph. Rumours of congresses held in the Hijaz circulated for many years. Ibid., 33.
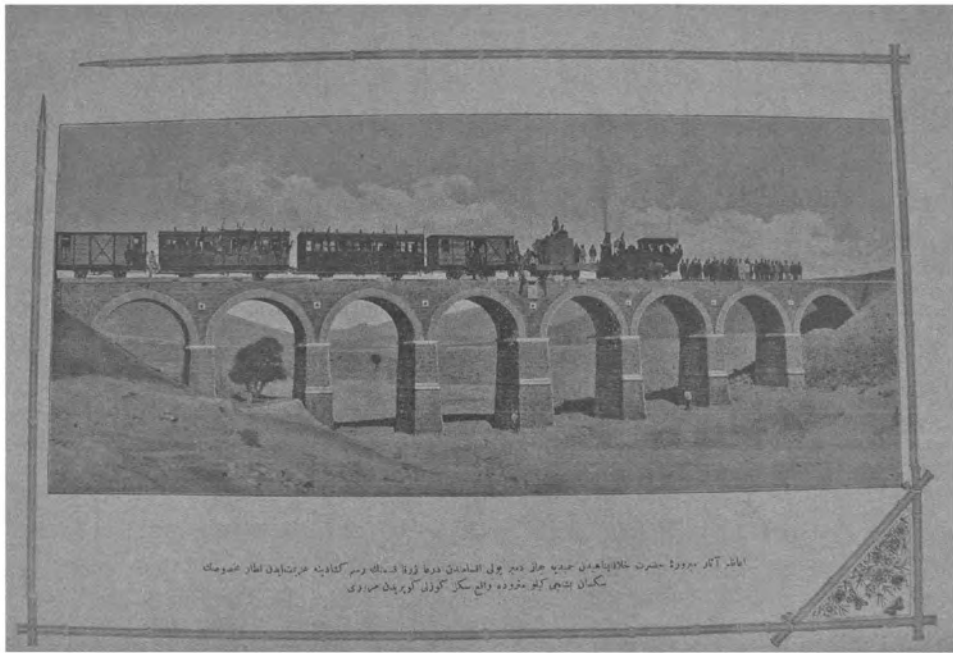
An eight arched railway viaduct on the Dera-Zerka section of the Hicaz railway.
Irfan Dağdelen Archive

Medina" circulated in British consular documents.[9] The choice of Medina as the possible site of the proposed meeting had to do first and foremost with its isolation, though as the seat of the Islamic state under the Prophet and the rightly-guided caliphs it would have been the right venue for a conference on the fate of the caliphate. However, any such scheme was outside the mainstream of Young Turk opposition that eventuated in the 1908 revolution.

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In the early summer of 1908, an observer in Medina would not have seen the Young Turk Revolution coming. When the events of July ushered the revolution in, and the news reached Medina, he would have been hard-pressed to envisage any implications for remote northern Arabia. At that very juncture, however, the same observer might have expected significant transformations for his town in anticipation of the imminent completion of the Damascus-Medina stretch of the Hijaz railway, with its potential to radically transform the town's communications. The railway opened within a few months, on 1 September 1908. As it ushered in both anticipated and unanticipated transformations, it also became integrally intertwined with the emanations of the 1908 revolution in the Hijaz and beyond.

The events in Istanbul and the opening of the railway reinforced each other to establish Medina as an important site from which to deploy administrative and ideological power into the Arabian periphery during the Second Constitutional Period. As the central government consolidated its rule in northern Hijaz, Medina's administrative status changed to reflect the new relationship. The

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9 "Reports ... state that conference assembles shortly at Medina for the purpose of discussing the desirability of proclamation by the Pan-Islamic League of a general war against unbelievers." FO [United Kingdom National Archives/Foreign Office] 195/2273, 20 June 1908.

enhanced pilgrim traffic through Medina provided opportunities for the new regime to buttress its legitimacy as the new communications altered traditional power relations and societal dynamics. The year 1908 marked a salient point in the impingement of Ottoman modernity on Medina and the larger province.

Medina did not share some of the usual modes in which 19th century modernity insinuated itself into the Ottoman provinces, particularly as far as the role of foreign interests was concerned. In other words, the changing relationship between the centre and Medina was not modulated significantly by colonial forces or capitalist penetration.[10] Despite the magnitude of the Damascus-Medina railway line as an infrastructural project, Medina was spared the dislocations associated with enterprises of similar size elsewhere in the empire, typically constructed with foreign know-how, by foreign personnel and with massive foreign funding. The construction of the Hijaz railway entailed relatively little foreign involvement. Its chief architect, Meissner Pasha, and the technical advisors were German. Some 1,000 Italian workers were employed in the construction in areas that were not off-limit to non-Muslims.[11] The railway was largely subsidised by the government and contributions of Muslims all over the world, and the workforce consisted mostly of enlisted men of the Ottoman army.

The strict interdicts against non-Muslim entry into the holy places and the absence of Christian communities in the Hijaz kept the missionaries out. Thus, the infrastructural reinforcement that accompanied missionary activity elsewhere and brought educational, health-related and other services was nonexistent in the Hijaz.[12] Resources of the central government went to Medina to extend the reach of the centre, but Istanbul was not primarily motivated by a need to compete with European capitalism or missionary institutions. For local actors, the absence of the foreign missionary and merchant precluded the possibility that foreign powers could be played off against one another or against the centre to enhance local power. The European powers were not entirely indifferent to the Hijaz, of course. European consuls followed the rituals of the pilgrimage, including the quarantines, closely from their headquarters in Jidda because of the large scale participation of their colonial Muslim subjects. The British, in particular, used Muslim consular officials to monitor the pilgrimage, as the venues were closed to non-Muslims. Medina, situated some 250 miles to the north of Jidda and Mecca, remained relatively elusive.

The completion of the railway altered the economic and political equilibrium in the largely tribal society of northern Arabia and the Hijaz province. The railway also became the conduit for the emanations of the revolutionary upheaval in the capital, further impacting the status quo in the region. Even before the actual completion of the project, the implications of the railway for caravan trade and transport did not escape the notice of tribal groups inhabiting the desert land

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10 In this regard, the impact of the major infrastructural projects in Beirut and Medina can be compared. In Beirut, the construction of the port during the preceding decade reflected and engendered a triangulation of power relations between local actors, the imperial government and European capitalism. Jens Hanssen, *Fin De Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005). In Medina, there was hardly any local initiative and involvement in the construction of the railway.

11 Ernesto Mario Bolasco, *Damasco-Medina: Ferrovia Avveniristica (1901-1908): Mille Operai Italiani Nel Deserto Dell'hedjaz* (Italy: F. Angeli, 1999). (I thank Dr. Nora Lafi for this reference.) Non-Muslims were not allowed south of al-cUla, some 400 kilometres north of Medina.

12 For a discussion of the missionary factor in Transjordan, see Rogan, *Frontiers*, 122-59.

Construction work along the Hicaz railway.
Istanbul Municipality Atatürk Library

between Damascus and Medina. Some tried to hamper the progress of the construction and agitated against the government forces. However, the major consequences of the railway, including rebellion and sabotage, came only after the first train cars rolled into the Medina station in September 1908.

<center>***</center>

In 1908, unrest was palpable in Southern Syria and the Hijaz. Railway construction, as it approached Medina from Damascus, threatened vested economic interests. Between Medina and the coast, unruly Bedouin behaviour, such as the March attack on the Egyptian caravan, which was attributed by the German consulate in Cairo to Bedouin agitation against the railway, may have been motivated by the anticipation of the railway's adverse consequences on their trade.[13] The aggrieved Bedouin made their opposition to the railway absolutely clear by attacking Kazım Pasha, the minister responsible for the Hijaz railway and, as such, the highest Ottoman official to be stationed in the Hijaz, 50 kilometres from Medina, killing and wounding soldiers in his retinue.[14] The ferment was not restricted to the north of Medina. The impending arrival of the line to Medina also disturbed the Bedouin between Medina and Mecca, even though the railway was still far from reaching its prime destination, Mecca. Further south, the merchants of Jidda, Mecca's Red Sea port, feared the competition from the railway too. Even though the new railway did not have significant implications for the mainstay of Jidda's economy, the transport and provisioning of pilgrims from the southern seas, the anticipated decline in the import of barley, the primary camel food for which demand would decline, became a concern for Jidda merchants.[15] For the Bedouin engaged in caravan trade between Jidda and Mecca, there was the added threat that the government was now turning to the construction of a railway line from coastal Jidda to Mecca.[16] Conversely, the resi-

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13 Auswärtiges Amt (AA) [German Foreign Ministry] Türkei 165/Band 28/29, Cairo, 13 March 1908.
14 FO 618/3, Damascus, 1 April 1908.
15 FO 195/ 2286, Jidda, 3 Feb 1908.
16 Haus-, Hof-, und Staatsarchiv [Austrian State Archives] (HSS) Politisches Archiv (PA) Türkei 38/341, Jidda, 17 April 1908.

dents of Rabigh, a seaport midway between Medina and Mecca, close to which the Medina-Mecca portion was planned to pass along a main pilgrim caravan route, favoured the Hijaz railway.[17] The railway and the prospects of further extension not only pitted segments of local society against an impending governmental reach of unprecedented nature but also crystallised conflicts of interest at the local level.

The military authorities in Istanbul informed the grand vizier that the military forces necessary to neutralise the intrigue and opposition the railway had set afoot in northern Hijaz were lacking. Istanbul resorted to the time-honoured policy of sticks and carrots. Little could be done beyond sending the *muhafiz* cash and supplies and asking him to offer the "right advice" to the local notables in order to seek their compliance.[18] The ministry of finance approved the redirecting of funds from budgetary allocations for the Anatolian and European provinces. Just before the outbreak of the revolution in Istanbul, a Hamidiye cavalry force of some 1,000 Kurdish troops arrived to protect the railway.[19] In the second half of 1908, bloody battles took place between the military forces based in Medina and surrounding tribal groups. Longstanding conflicts of interest may have been aggravated by perceived threats from the railway. In July, tribesmen from the Masruh division of the Harb tribe attacked troops camped two miles from Medina at Bir Ruma, possibly charged with the protection of the wells. The battle resulted in the death of some 300 Bedouin.[20]

Confronted with the extension of direct government authority into the Hijaz, the province's highest officials had to determine their stance in the face of changing power relations. Both Vali Ratib Pasha, the governor of the Hijaz, and Grand Sharif 'Ali had forged alliances with local groups in the region, granting them freedom of action in return for personal benefits. The Hamidian government tolerated these symbiotic relations for the sake of maintaining tranquillity. Such was the lure of material gain that Ratib Pasha had remained as governor for 13 years. The British consul characterised Ratib as "an 'old Turk' of a bad type", acting in collusion with the equally corrupt grand sharif.[21] Ratib Pasha abetted the Bedouin opposition to the railway and allied himself with "local Arab magnates in opposing the extension of the railway which would ultimately deprive [him], the Grand Sharif, and others of sources of illicit private income derived from their organized extortion in connection with the camel transport".[22]

In the midst of the commotion about the railroad, the revolutionary events of July 1908 do not appear to have resonated in Medina. The city had enjoyed telegraphic connectivity since 1901, and it is unlikely that the news reached the Hijaz late. The more plausible explanation for the seeming ignorance or indifference was that the import of the upheaval in Istanbul and the European provinces may not have been fully appreciated: it may have been seen as a passing disturbance, or, more likely, the news may have been deliberately sup-

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17 FO 195/2286, Jidda, 3 Feb 1908.

18 Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi [Ottoman Prime Ministry Archives] (BOA), Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (BEO) 247962, 5 May 1908.

19 FO 618/3, no. 26, Damascus, 22 July 1908.

20 FO 195/2286, no. 62, Jidda, 30 July 1908.

21 FO 195/ 2286, no. 34, Jidda, 8 May 1908.

22 FO 195/ 2286, no. 13, Jidda, 29 February 1908. (Quoted text from marginal note dated 15 March 1908). Also FO 195/ 2286, no. 30, Jidda, 14 April 1908.

pressed by the top administrators, who more than suspected the implications for their careers.

After the Young Turk takeover, the confluence of the prospect that the railway would allow for the extension of central rule into the Hijaz and the revolutionary government's determination to purge the bureaucracy of Abdulhamid's men led to immediate changes in top administrative positions in the Hijaz. The shuffle exacerbated the turmoil that the completion of the railway had set afoot. The new government ousted not only Ratib Pasha but also the Grand Sharif 'Ali and the governor of the *sancak* of Medina, Osman Pasha. The incumbents tried to protect their positions with the assistance of local forces, inciting them to rebellion. Once they were removed, their replacements could not be determined immediately, and when they were, it took time for them to arrive in the Hijaz. Thus, the dismissals allowed a power vacuum and opportunistic jostling for power by tribal chiefs and other notables.

The British consul in Jidda expressed surprise at *Muhafiz* Osman Pasha's protests against the new regime and his dismissal.[23] He opined that "it was thought Medina would receive with favor liberal and progressive ideas". There is no indication in his report why Medina would have been more amenable to such ideas. The language betrays the perennial difficulty of the consuls in obtaining reliable information about Medina, a concern to which they frequently gave voice with a degree of frustration, even paranoia. Indeed, the provincial governors based in Mecca seemed to share the same difficulty in keeping abreast of developments in Medina. Its distance from Mecca and Jidda was primarily responsible for this. Medina was also avoided by many pilgrims, especially those from South and Southeast Asia arriving in Jidda by boat, since the visit to the Prophet's mosque is not a formal ritual of the pilgrimage. As a result, Medina fell outside full consular surveillance. Osman Pasha was taken to Damascus, where he was accused of stalling on making the news of the revolution public and rebuked for his harsh treatment of Young Turk sympathisers.[24]

The moral authority of the grand sharifs of Mecca as the custodians of the holy places, ordinarily backed by the political and military support of the central government, was always strong in Medina. Sharif 'Ali's ultimate replacement, Sharif Hussein, arrived in the Hijaz at the beginning of December 1908, resolved to establish his influence. No sooner had he set foot in Jidda than he reported to Istanbul that, on the authority of his brother Nasir, who had served as deputy grand sharif until Hussein's arrival, the 5,000 camel-strong pilgrim caravan was safeguarded near Medina. Istanbul instructed Hussein to take the proper measures to bring peace and quiet to Medina.[25] In October, two tribes had attacked a caravan destined for the coast near Medina. In the ensuing battle, one Ottoman officer and 21 soldiers had been killed. The British consul reported 220 Bedouin casualties.[26] Hussein sent an emissary, Gazi Bin Jalal, to negotiate with the discontented tribes and ensure peace and understanding between them and the Medina *muhafiz*.[27]

23 FO 618/3, Damascus, 25 August 1908.
24 FO 618/3, no. 38. Damascus, 2 September 1908.
25 BOA, BEO 258620. 5 December 1908.
26 FO 195/2286, Jidda, 18 November 1908.
27 BOA, BEO 258766, Husayn to Grand Vizierate, no. 506, 10 December 1908.

A semblance of peace and security seemed to have been established by the end of the year on the eve of the pilgrimage, which, despite the new train service, still heavily depended on the caravans. In order to assuage the restive Bedouin of Medina, the authorities hired the camels these Bedouin made available for the procession coming from Syria.[28] They lifted the security measures taken outside the perimeter of the walls, collected the arms that had been distributed to the townspeople and then banned the bearing of arms.[29] In an attempt to forestall renewed attacks by the Juhayna tribe, the officials of the Hijaz railway met and negotiated with the leaders.[30] The newly appointed *Muhafiz* Basri urged the formation of camel-mounted troop formations in order to protect the railway, in addition to placing guards in each train.[31] Meanwhile, Sharif Hussein asked Nasir to meet with tribal leaders during his return trip through Medina.[32] Irrespective of any of the achievements of such direct talks, before the spring's end the sharifian forces were engaged in an armed encounter with the Mutayr tribe.[33]

In the spring of 1909, Medina appeared better tuned-in to the events in the capital than the rest of the province. The French consul in Jidda reported that the incident of 31 March, the unsuccessful counter-revolutionary insurrection in Istanbul that was carried out by loyalist army units and resulted in the deposition of Sultan Abdulhamid II, did not have repercussions in the major Hijazi towns except Medina. The defiant act by some 60 troops of taking refuge in the Prophet's mosque and demanding discharge from service occurred just before the insurrection in Istanbul and cannot have been directly related to the 31 March incident, despite the suggestion of such an association in the Istanbul press.[34] The governor in Mecca corroborated the consul's observation about the repercussions of the Istanbul events in his province.[35] His recommendation to establish a camel-mounted security force in Medina probably had less to do with any anticipated politically motivated insurgency than with the troubles with the Mutayr and other tribal groups.

The ministry of the interior studied a report that had been drafted (in Arabic) regarding reforms in the peninsula by 'Abd al-Rahman bin Ahmad Ilyas, a religious scholar in Medina. The report may not have been solicited by the new government, but was given close attention in Istanbul.[36] The author identified three main problems in the broader region: the spread of ignorance among the Bedouin, massive arms smuggling and autocratic and malicious acts by officials. He made the case that military reinforcement was insufficient as a remedy and emphasised the need for the dispatch of instructors and opening of schools in order to spread religious tenets and laws among the tribal population with the objective of bringing them into a civilised state and submission (*taht-ı medeniyet ve inkiyad*).[37] The Council of Ministers discussed the reform pro-

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28 FO 195/ 2320, no. 4, Jidda, 20 January 1909.

29 *Takvim-i Vekai*, 27 December 1908.

30 BOA, BEO 261004, 22 January 1909.

31 BOA, BEO 264339, Medina, 25 Mar 1909.

32 BOA, BEO 263604, Mecca, 1 March 1909.

33 FO 195/2320, Jidda, 30 May 1909.

34 *Tasvir-i Efkar* reported the arrival of the "reactionary soldiers in Medina" in Istanbul on 14 June 1909.

35 BOA, BEO 266358, 19 May 1909.

36 A document dated 4 July 1909 refers to 'Abd al-Rahman Ilyas's visit to Istanbul during the "previous year". It is possible that his advice had been sought by the old regime. BEO 269189.
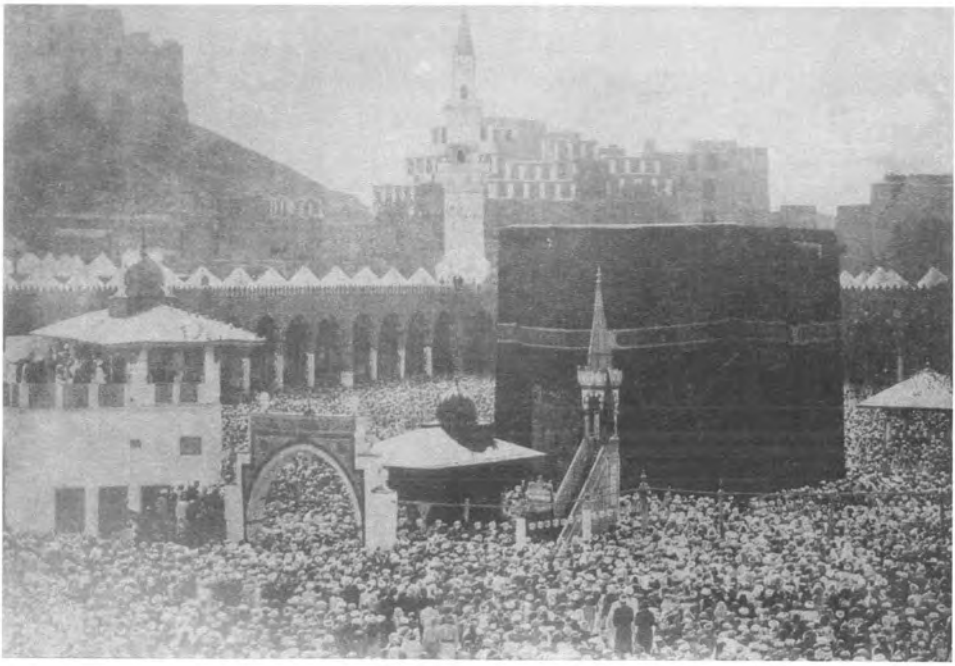
Mecca in the 1890s. Photograph.
Irfan Dağdelen Archive

gramme and decided to allocate a 2,000 *kuruş* salary to 'Abd al-Rahman to oversee such an educational programme in tribal areas.

The Istanbul daily *Tanin*, an organ of the Committee of Union and Progress, published in the spring and early summer of 1910 a series of reports from a correspondent in Medina by the name of Abu'l Fikret Tahir. *Tanin*'s publication of articles on Medinese affairs reflects the greater attention paid to the *sancak* in Istanbul. The author is sympathetic in his reports to the new order in Medina, although also quite vocal about hardships suffered by the townspeople, pilgrims and Bedouin alike, particularly the logistical issues plaguing the pilgrims. Despite the promise of speedy travel offered by the new railway, more than two months after the completion of the pilgrimage rites in Mecca in mid-December large numbers of pilgrims were still congregated in Medina. Winter weather was a problem. Tahir reported that rains unseen for many years significantly slowed the pilgrim groups' movements. A prolonged drought that had preceded the rains had decimated the camel population in the region, leading to a severe shortage of transport animals that stranded the pilgrims for days.[38] The decline in the number of beasts of burden placed the Bedouin in economic hardship,

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37 BOA, BEO 258601, Istanbul, 10 February 1910. Reform discourses of a similar kind and the projects they engendered since the Tanzimat have been subjected to close scrutiny in recent historical scholarship as manifestations of an Ottoman Orientalism and colonialism. See, for instance, Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains* and his more recent "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003): 311-342; Birgit Schäbler, "Civilizing Others: Global Modernity and the Local Boundaries (French, German, Ottoman, Arab) of Savagery," in *Globalization and the Muslim World: Culture, Religion, and Modernity,* ed. Birgit Schäbler and Leif Stenberg (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2004), 3-29; Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Review* 107 (2002): 768-96.

38 *Tanin*, 26 March 1910.

inducing as few as five or six desperate Bedouin to attack several-thousand strong pilgrim groups. Tahir disparaged the railway administration for its ineptitude and helplessness, notwithstanding its fancy (*cicili bicili*) advertisements that boasted transport from Medina to Damascus within 66 hours. He accused the builders of having constructed shabby roads and bridges that easily fell into disrepair and bemoaned the woeful inadequacy of the Medina town arteries to cope with such throngs.

Writing for *Tanin*, Tahir – not surprisingly – lauded the activities of the Committee of Union and Progress and the new *muhafız*, Ali Rıza Pasha, in their struggle against ignorance and conservatism. He referred to an Egyptian *"şeyh"*, presumably a passing pilgrim, who decried the railway in a speech. The Egyptian argued the railway would lead to emulation of the Europeans and declared that the Hijaz would share the same fate as Egypt, where railways built all over the country had led people down the path of error. Tahir spoke well of the *muhafız* for arresting the speaker.[39] He ascribed the clashes with the Bedouin to their ignorance and praised the CUP club for founding a school called "Harbinger of Unity" (*Burhan-ı İttihad*) for their benefit. In doing so, he also chastised the ministry of education for its torpor in building schools. This critical tone in the report about the government and *Tanin*'s willingness to publish it reveal the still incomplete sway of the CUP over the administrative cadres in Istanbul.

The reports are especially revealing about the activities and propaganda efforts of the CUP club in this remote and hitherto cut-off corner of the empire. One project was the opening of a CUP charter school (*Nümune-i İttihad*), where children, including the Bedouin, received Turkish instruction. The school held public exams to showcase its modern teaching methods. In a later report, Tahir mentioned that he had been invited as an examiner to Medina schools in subjects such as morals, law, economics and civics. He compared the students' level of knowledge favourably with that prevalent under the old regime, emphasising the "freedom of question and answer".[40] The state of education in Medina also received tentative endorsement by the British consul in Jidda. Consul Monathan dispatched at almost the same juncture a confidential report comprising an elaborate summary and assessment of changes in the Hijaz since the revolution. Declaring "of Medina I hear but little", he focused his remarks on Mecca and Jidda and concluded that the condition of the province now differed little from its condition under the old regime. His appraisal of schooling in the province was consistent with the report's overall tenor, except he related that "there is said to be a rather superior school in Medina".[41]

In other fields, the local Committee organised an auction for the benefit of the Navy Association (*Donanma Cemiyeti*), which had just been formed in Istanbul to raise funds for the Ottoman navy. Taking advantage of the passage of religious and lay intellectuals through Medina, the CUP engaged with them for propaganda purposes about the virtues of Islamic unity in order to bolster the domestic and international legitimacy of the new regime. In one instance, a speaker from Japan, Omar Efendi, gave lectures in Russian to massive applause (led, presum-

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39 Ibid., 29 March 1910.
40 Ibid., 28 June 1910.
41 FO 195/2350, Jidda, 7 June 1910.

ably, by pilgrims from Russia), especially when he related the activities of a 35-strong society in Tokyo to disseminate the religion of Islam.[42]

The government's and the CUP's proactive policy in Medina presaged the implementation of fundamental administrative restructuring in 1910. First, the rudimentary form of municipal organisation consisting of the office of the assessor (*Daire-i İhtisab*) and presided over by an appointee of the *muhafız* was replaced by a municipality with an elected mayor and municipal council. Medina was not alone in implementing municipal reorganisation: it followed on similar reforms in Mecca. There was also now a precedent for elections, namely in the determination of Medina's single deputy to the restored parliament in 1908, even though those elections can hardly be assumed to have conformed to the letter of the Electoral Law of 1877, restored in 1908. If the 1908 elections elsewhere in the Hijaz are any indication, the first stage of indirect elections, where primary voters voted for electors, may have been disregarded in the parliamentary election altogether. What the electoral procedure was in the municipal elections of 1910, and in the concurrent elections for the *sancak*'s administrative council, is unclear. Tahir's account suggests, however, that the process took several days before a Shaykh Muhammad Saman was elected mayor. The mayor and the council members were ushered from the government house to their offices accompanied by a band and began their work following prayers.[43]

More important than municipal reform was the government's reconfiguration of the *sancak* of Medina within the administrative structure of the empire. In the summer of 1910, Medina was reconstituted as an "independent *sancak*" in order to strengthen its administrative bonds with the centre, enable the government to exert a greater degree of direct control over the *sancak* and implement a forward policy in the broader region.[44] This change in the administrative structure of the *sancak* occurred against the background of political crises that involved the grand sharif, who sought to establish his primacy as the foremost political authority in the Hijaz, especially in the eyes of the Bedouin. The first crisis pitted him against the governor in Mecca, Fuad Pasha. Sharif Hussein censured the governor, and ultimately caused his recall, for his unwillingness to take action against the local newspaper over its criticism of the sharif's campaign against the Mutayr tribe as well as for his imputation of anti-constitutionalist motives to Sharif Zayd, the grand sharif's representative in Taif.[45]

The second conflict concerned Sharif Hussein's other representative, Sharif Shahat in Medina. In the prolonged tussle from the spring into the fall of 1910, *Muhafız* Ali Rıza Pasha implicated Shahat in aiding an exile, who had been convicted of supporting the counter-revolutionary uprising in Istanbul, to escape to Egypt.[46] The formal separation of Medina from the province of the Hijaz as an independent *sancak* occurred in July 1910 during the course of the prolonged

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42 *Tanin*, 13 March 1910.

43 *Tanin*, 11 April 1910.

44 Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 159-61.

45 Ibid, 153-4. Also, BOA, BEO 269031, Mecca, 6 August 1909; BOA, BEO 272822, Istanbul, 19 September 1909.

46 BOA, BEO 286312 (280413), 6 April 1910.

conflict and gave broader meaning to the discord. Sharif Shahat went to Mecca, most likely fearing reprisal. Ali Rıza urged Istanbul that Sharif Shahat should not be allowed back to Medina. Further, he recommended that Sharif Hussein should henceforth administer his affairs in Medina through the office of the *muhafız*. When Sharif Hussein insisted on reappointing Shahat,[47] Ali Rıza warned that Shahat's return would signify the collapse the government's moral authority. Thus, when Sharif Hussein sent Shahat as his representative to Medina in November, *Muhafız* Ali Rıza prevented him from entering the town. Hussein protested to the grand vizierate that the *muhafız*'s actions targeted his person. He was told that the ministry of the interior would counsel *Muhafız* Ali Rıza, but that Shahat's reappointment as the grand sharif's representative in Medina would be unacceptable.[48] The government assured Sharif Hussein that his office's traditional authority in pilgrimage and Bedouin affairs would be recognised in both Mecca and Medina. However, Hussein perceived the administrative changes as curtailing his prerogatives and engaged in a tug-of-war with the *muhafız* of Medina for influence in the broader region. The backdrop to the administrative restructuring of Medina was the persistent attempt by Sharif Hussein to preserve his influence to the north of Mecca and the *muhafız*'s resolve to temper that influence.

Istanbul sought to achieve balances of power between the grand sharif and the *muhafız*, but also among other high officials. It was customary for the ministry of foundations to appoint to Medina an official holding the title *şeyhülharem,* who served as custodian of the Prophet's mosque and controlled a chest of money donated to the mosque. In September 1908, Muhtar Efendi was transferred to this position from his post at the ministry of war.[49] Before long, telegrams of complaint arrived in Istanbul from Medina residents about Muhtar's high-handed and corrupt conduct.[50] He was accused of confiscating the annual payments to the poor and needy of Medina made by Tunisian Muslims. The ministry wanted to replace him with first the Bursa deputy Ömer Fevzi Efendi and then the *mutasarrıf* (district governor) of Lattakia, but neither seems to have taken the position.[51] The administrative council of Medina approved *Muhafız* Ali Rıza as caretaker *şeyhülharem.* However, the council's decision was rejected in Istanbul, and Muhtar was eventually reappointed, but with his salary docked by half, which elicited a plea for reinstatement to the salary level of the *muhafız*.

As the CUP gradually gained control of the government in Istanbul, a process that started with the appointment of Unionists in the cabinets formed after the counter-revolutionary attempt of 1909 (31 March incident), Medina became both the object and the advance front of the government's centralising policies. Some of the implemented reforms were superficial or even symbolic, others contravened practice elsewhere, such as the expansion of the jurisdiction of the sharia courts. Medina did not become integrated into the sociopolitical order that had been restructured in the core areas of the empire since the Tanzimat. But cooptation and tutelage, aided by improved communications, were conducive to an ori-

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47 Ibid., 9 October 1910.
48 BOA, BEO Defter 705, no. 72, Istanbul, 17 November 1910.
49 *Tanin*, 27 September 1908.
50 BOA, BEO 266513, Istanbul, 18 May 1909.
51 BOA, BEO 275690, no. 2419, Istanbul, 14 December 1909.

entation of at least segments of the local society towards the centre. They "enhanced interaction" with the state and fostered new modalities of governance.[52]

The extension of more direct forms of rule into Medina was not a one-sided process. Demands also came from the local society, leading to negotiations. Petitions sent to Istanbul contain not only the usual complaints about corruption and abuse of authority by local authorities, but also seek state services. Exemption from direct taxation may have been a time-honoured prerogative of the Hijazis, but tributary relations existed in the Hijaz, as evidenced by some tribal leaders' recognised right to collect the *zakat*, which prompted petitions to Istanbul demanding *zakat* collection by the state. Other petitions sought state services or special dispensations, as in the request by some Medina residents to be allowed to take advantage of the train at half fare, which was denied.[53] The government solicited reform proposals from Medina. The submitted proposals claimed for Medina some of the institutions implemented in central parts of the empire. At the same time, Medina advocated the preservation of local practice in other spheres, chief among them being the administration of justice. Negotiation between the state and the independent *sanjak* became the norm.

Sharif Hussein's revolt in Mecca in June 1916 reverberated in the rest of the Arab provinces and found adherents there, especially as the Ottoman forces lost battles against the British in Syria and Iraq. Nearby Medina is known for its dogged defence against a siege by sharifian forces that lasted well beyond the armistice the Ottoman government was forced to sign in October 1918.[54] Medina was the Ottoman holdout that fell to enemy forces last. This prolonged resistance was possible more for reasons other than the valour of the Medinese, or their support or loyalty to the Ottoman government. Rather, it had to do with the presence of a sizeable military force within the town's fortifications, the idiosyncrasy of its commander, Fahrettin Pasha, and perhaps, in the absence of good communications, the ignorance of the defending troops of how desperate their cause had become following the Ottoman defeats to the north. However, there is also evidence that the Young Turk governments built trust and support in Medina after 1908.

Immediately upon the outbreak of the revolt in June 1916, a French report maintained that "the success of the operation against Medina, where the population supports the Turks, looks doubtful".[55] According to British reports, Sharif Hussein began to undermine the Ottoman war effort several months before he declared his revolt. For instance, he sent Faisal to Medina to ensure that "neither camels nor any other kind of help reaches the Turks". Yet these efforts were not entirely successful. During the siege, Medina merchants delivered 11,000 sacks of flour to the defending troops. Sharif Hussein confiscated the flour and imprisoned the merchants.[56] The Ottoman wartime propaganda emanating from Damascus seems to have been effective in Medina.[57]

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52 Rogan, *Frontiers*, 12-13.
53 BOA, BEO 282344, 4 June 1910.
54 Feridun Kandemir, *Peygamberimizin Gölgesinde Son Türkler: Medine Müdafaası* (Istanbul: Yağmur, n.d. [1974?]) and Naci Kaşif Kıcıman, *Medine Müdafaası: Hicaz Bizden Nasıl Ayrıldı?* (Istanbul: Sebil, 1971).
55 Archives du Ministère des Affaires Etrangères [French Foreign Ministry Archives] Guerre 1679, Paris, 17 June 1916.
56 FO 371/2767, no. 16, Cairo, 24 January 1916.
57 HHS PA 38/369, Damascus, 22 June 1916. "The local press of Damascus, which has a wide circulation in Medina, defends the Turkish caliphate with all possible arguments."

Undoubtedly, some Medinese cooperation was secured through intimidation. The decision to exile 170 Medinese, including Medina's member of parliament Ma'mun Barri, to Anatolia in January 1917[58] suggests there was also opposition. The Ottomans combined cooption and coercion, which were motivated by the centralising policies of Young Turk governments, inspired by an integrative Ottomanist ideology and facilitated by the infrastructural capacities of the Hijaz railway. These efforts, which entailed negotiations with local society, tend to get lost in histories that ascribe to the Young Turk governments the neglect of the Arab provinces and the ultimate imposition of alien authoritarian power.

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58 AA Türkei 165/41, Damascus, 5 January 1917.

One Ottoman Periphery Views Another: Depictions of the Balkans in the Beirut Press, 1876-1908

ABDUL RAHIM ABU HUSAYN

In the historiography of the Ottoman empire, numerous studies of varying quality have been published seeking to examine the imperial centre's perceptions and relations with its periphery(ies), and vice versa. However, precious few works have explored how one peripheral region of the empire viewed another. This chapter is a modest attempt in this direction, examining the representations of several episodes of political turmoil in the Balkans in the Beirut press in the period of 1876-1908. Though the Balkans were considered part of the "core areas" of the empire in an earlier epoch of Ottoman rule, the 19th century saw greater bids for local autonomy and a gradual rise in nationalist sentiments effectively reduce the region for all practical purposes to a peripheral one.

Despite a number of differences in their depiction of political issues, the Beirut news sources under discussion may be considered fairly representative of the Christian-dominated Lebanese press of the time. It is generally assumed that the press at this particular juncture tended to reflect nationalist, or at least proto-nationalist, sentiments. Based on my sample, the proposition in this chapter is that the dominant sentiment in the Beirut press of the time was unquestionably Ottomanist rather than secessionist. This sentiment is perhaps best illustrated in the treatment of the often tumultuous state of affairs in the Balkans, where there were repeated episodes of crisis, some of which bore the hallmarks of nationalist uprisings and all of which involved other Christians of the empire. Had the Christian-dominated Beirut press acted out of nationalist or even proto-nationalist sentiments or been less committed to the Ottomanist ideal, one would expect it to show some sympathy for other nationalist quests or with fellow Christians. This Ottomanist attitude cannot be attributed to the rigours of Hamidian censorship: as even the most sceptical reader would admit, during the brief period of press freedom under the early tenure of the CUP, the vast majority of journalistic publications in Beirut still professed their loyalty to and undivided support for the authorities in Istanbul.[1]

In this chapter, the intention is not examination of the unmistakably Ottomanist outlook of the press, but rather its coverage of and attitude towards

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1 This state of affairs was evident in the three newspapers under discussion (*al-Jinan*, *Lisan al-Hal*, *al-Bachir* and *Thamarat al-Funun*), and remained prevalent until at least the end of 1908.

political events in distant areas of the Ottoman realm. Were the likes of Salim al-Bustani[2] and Khalil Sarkis[3] satisfied with Ottoman management of the successive Balkan crises? If not, what possible remedies to the recurrent problems did they, as loyal subjects of the sultan, suggest? Can general patterns of representation be drawn to establish a common perception of the Balkan region and its peoples, or did the secular *al-Jinan* and *Lisan al-Hal* differ from the Jesuit-founded *al-Bachir* in their depiction of other Christian constituents of the empire? How was the international dimension of this seemingly perpetual state of conflict viewed, and what was said of the roles of the individual external powers involved? These are some of the questions this chapter attempts to address. The hope is that the narrative will add to the scant knowledge we have of the perceptions of the Ottoman periphery in Lebanon of its Balkan counterpart and shed some, albeit indirect, light on Lebanese perceptions of the imperial centre.

The period in question was chosen because it preceded efforts initiated shortly after 1908 by the so-called Society of the Lebanese Revival (*Jam'iyyat al-Nahda al-Lubnaniyya*) to purchase Beirut-based newspapers and align their discourse with pro-French secessionist aims. This "society", initially concerned with preserving the special status that Mount Lebanon had enjoyed under the Mutesarrifate since 1861, had, by this time, begun pressing for independence from the Ottoman state.[4] The Ottomans believed (probably correctly) that the newspapers reflecting the aims of this society were subsidised by the French government and that the society's leaders were linked to the French foreign office.[5] This chapter in the history of the Beirut press is of great interest in itself, but would only confuse the issue at hand. Accordingly, this chapter is restricted to representations of Balkan affairs in the Beirut press until 1908, that is, until the Bosnian crisis and the Bulgarian declaration of independence. Of course, the main purpose of this study is to investigate some of Beirut's journalistic portrayals of these and other political phenomena in the Ottoman Balkans, rather than recount the events themselves. To begin, it is necessary to introduce the source material used in this study.

News Sources and Those behind Them

Beirut journalism during the period under discussion reflects different and sometimes conflicting orientations and affinities. Its publications can nevertheless be broadly categorised according to whether they were issued by religiously motivated or secular groups. The latter group was far more elaborate than its religious counterpart in its coverage of events, and often offered far richer insights into social and political phenomena. Consequently, this study will mainly focus on the secular publications, since their depiction of Balkan affairs was notable for its breadth of view and depth of analysis.

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2 Founder and editor of the political journal *al-Jinan*

3 Founder and first editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Lisan al-Hal*

4 Eliezer Tauber, "The Press and the Journalist as a Vehicle in Spreading National Ideas in Syria in the Late Ottoman Period," *Die Welt des Islams* 30 (1990): 163-77.

5 Ibid., 168.

Beirut: The government building, surrounded by the Hamidiye garden (1891).
Cengiz Kahraman Archive

The Cloth and the Pen: Men of Faith in the Field of Journalism

In this chapter, three newspapers and one political journal being published in Beirut during the period in question have been selected: each was established during the 1870s. Three were headed by Christians and one by Muslim owners, reflecting the general Christian dominance of the Beirut press at the time. The oldest was the newspaper *al-Bachir*, founded in 1870 by the Catholic Jesuit order, an established missionary movement in the Near East for centuries. The weekly publication was part of an extensive network of institutions, which also included the more famous Saint Joseph University, established in 1876 and still a leading educational institution in the Lebanese capital. Owing to its religious background, the newspaper naturally focused on ecclesiastical issues and tried to bring its readers news of the Catholic communities of the Levant.[6] Still, its coverage of political issues does not appear to have been much different from the rest of its contemporaries in its loyal adherence to the Ottoman state (though a closer study of its discourse may yield subtle variations on this theme).

The second religious newspaper, *Thamarat al-Funun*, was, in a sense, established as a direct antagonist to such institutions as *al-Bachir*. The publication was founded in 1875 by a local movement of Muslims who later set up their own counter-missionary movement in Beirut, called *Jam'iyyat al-Maqasid al-*

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6 The first columns in the newspaper were always written under the heading *Akhbar Kathulikiyya* (Catholic News)

Khayriyya al-Islamiyya.[7] The founder and editor of the newspaper, a certain Abdul-Qadir Qabbani, was a Muslim shaykh in charge of a movement seeking to counter the influence of Christian missionary groups in Bilad al-Sham. Not surprisingly for a staunchly Muslim institution, *Thamarat* demonstrated unconditional loyalty to the Ottoman state, but nevertheless remained a self-funded publication throughout its existence. It did not survive beyond 1908, for reasons that remain uncertain: possibly it suffered financial failure, since it was unsubsidised and may not have had a large enough readership to justify continued publication. This supposition is lent credibility by the newspaper's earlier closure in 1882 due to financial troubles.[8] However, another possibility is that Qabbani had earlier briefly fallen out of favour with the new CUP regime, which once unjustly accused him of harbouring Arab nationalist sentiments.[9] It nevertheless becomes clear to any reader of the newspaper that it had not abandoned its role as the "Islamic and pro-Ottoman paper *par excellence*",[10] even after the Young Turks had deposed Sultan Abdulhamid.

Nevertheless, Abdul-Qadir Qabbani was not simply a blind apologist for Ottoman rule. He was a staunch opponent of press censorship and had supported and at times even led his colleagues in their repeated attempts to prevent or at least limit the censorship of their publications to those specific guidelines set by the provincial administration.[11] *Thamarat al-Funun* was often demagogic in its discourse, but still reflected the top-tier education (religious and non-religious) that its founder had received earlier in life.[12] Qabbani was a notable of sorts, having served as the head of the Beirut municipality at the turn of the 19th century when the German Kaiser Frederick II had visited the city, and later served as the director of education in Beirut.[13] This is perhaps reflected in the fact that Qabbani's focus on education and literature was always a defining element of *Thamarat*, in which it effectively overshadowed coverage of political issues.[14]

The newspaper's inability to survive beyond 1908 is unfortunate, as its demise predated the different strands of nationalism that began to arise in the Arab East soon after. As an Islamist publication that looked favourable on the universal Muslim polity embodied in the Ottoman state, its views on such matters would have been of great value. In contrast to the short lifespan of *Thamarat al-Funun*, Qabbani's other achievement, the *Jam'iyyat al-Maqasid,* continues to operate in modern Lebanon and currently owns and runs an extensive network of schools and charitable foundations. It remains "the largest private educational and social organization in the Arab world, and maybe in the whole of the Muslim world",[15] and was the "prototype for several other Muslim educational organiza-

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7 Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 225. *Al-Maqasid* was established three years after the first appearance of the newspaper (1878).

8 Hisham Nashabi, "Abd al-Qadir Qabbani and Thamarat al-Funun," in *Intellectual Life in the Arab East*, ed. M. Buheiry (Beirut: American University of Beirut Press, 1981 [1939]), 90.

9 Ibid., 87-8.

10 Ibid., 90.

11 Donald Cioeta, "Ottoman Censorship in Lebanon and Syria, 1876-1908," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979): 173.

12 Nashabi, "Abd al-Qadir al-Qabbani", 85.

13 Ibid., 87.

14 Ibid., 88.

15 Ibid., 84.

tions in Lebanon and the Arab world".[16] It is partly in this capacity that Abdul-Qadir Qabbani has been described as "one of the most important personalities in the modern cultural history of Lebanon".[17]

The Secular School of Journalism

The third and perhaps most important of the four journalistic publications is *al-Jinan*, a bimonthly political journal, the only one of its kind at the time. It was first issued in 1870 by Butrus al-Bustani, one of the leading "Lebanese" intellectual and literary exponents of the Arab *nahda*. This was a literary movement starting in the 19th century and lasting for decades to follow that has generally been credited with sparking a "renaissance" or "awakening" in Arabic thought and literature.[18] Butrus al-Bustani was an important character in his own right, and his intellectual career and ideological predispositions have been discussed at length by scholars of the Middle East.[19] His importance lies partly in his quite original conception of what it meant to be an Arab in a Syrian province within an Ottoman state (which, during his lifetime had been relentlessly pushing forward programmes of social and administrative reform). He is also credited with being the patriarch of one of the most significant intellectual dynasties in the future independent state of Lebanon. It was perhaps fitting that one member of the family eventually played a leading role in the establishment of the Lebanese University in 1953, and that the institution remains the country's only public university.[20] Albert Hourani has credited Bustani and "the circle which gathered around him" with being a founding father of "the modern novel and drama in Arabic as well as modern Arabic journalism".[21]

Originally a Maronite Catholic, Butrus al-Bustani was educated at a Maronite seminary situated in modern Lebanon, in the village of 'Ayn Waraqa, where, as Hourani notes, he "laid the foundations of his knowledge of Arabic and many other languages".[22] He belonged to an intellectual circle that had developed an image of Syria as a fatherland and a separate entity.[23] This is usually mistaken as an early form of Syrian nationalism (perhaps conveniently so by those who adhere to the doctrine), since nationalism is at its core a political doctrine, not simply a sense of belonging to a given cultural or geographical unit. This group conceived of a "Syria" merely in terms of its cultural and linguistic identification, rather than as a national doctrine aiming to establish an entirely new political entity in the Arab East.

Bustani's rather modern educational background provided him with a knowledge of several languages, including English, and this privilege enabled him to find employment immediately after he moved to Beirut in 1840. He was first employed as a dragoman for the British consulate at a time when the

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16 Ibid., 87.
17 Ibid., 84.
18 N. Torniche, "Nahda" in *Encyclopedia of Islam* (Brill: Leiden, 1993), vol. 2.
19 See Butrus Abu-Manneh, "The Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism: The Ideas of Butrus Al-Bustani," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 11 (1980): 287-304. Also Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 99-102.
20 J. Abdel-Nour, "al-Bustani" in *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 2.
21 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 100.
22 Ibid., 99.
23 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism an Syrian Nationalism", 288.

British were seeking to evict the armies of Ibrahim Pasha from Syria.[24] Soon after, Bustani attached himself to the American Protestant missionary movement, which at the time was quite active in the region, and in the process converted to Protestantism himself. Through these connections, he became acquainted with several influential foreign figures, most notably the clergyman Eli Smith, whom he assisted in translating the Bible into Arabic.[25] In addition to these positions, Bustani also served as a dragoman in the American consulate in Beirut for some time.[26]

Much to the dismay of his previous associates, Bustani eventually began to distance himself from the missionary movement after experiencing a "second conversion". This rebirth was of a political, rather than religious, nature, and it was inspired by the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* of 1856, which promised non-Muslims equal civil and political rights in the Ottoman realms. From Presbyterian Protestantism, Bustani shifted to a newly emergent political ideal, Ottomanism.[27] Bustani's primary concern was the integration of the different sectarian communities in Syria, whose lack of social and cultural unity had always vexed him.[28] He regarded the new reformist spirit of the Ottoman state, with its recently declared policy of religious equality, as a suitable foundation on which to form the disparate groups into what he viewed as an ideal Syrian whole. [29]

His adoption of Ottomanism came at the expense of his involvement in the Protestant missionary movement, and he eventually came to criticise his former associates for disseminating Western culture and values among the Syrian population and ignoring the local heritage that had brought him a sense of pride and identity.[30] He had never believed in an indiscriminate incorporation of Western values into his Ottoman-Syrian society. As Hourani suggests, Bustani believed that "to accept customs because they were foreign was as absurd as to reject them because they were foreign … They should be accepted or rejected on their own merits".[31] Bustani also staunchly opposed religious fanaticism, and felt that the power and influence of religious zealots at the communal level had been the major cause of social degeneration and lack of cultural unity in Syria.[32] The bloody sectarian conflicts in Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860 confirmed Bustani's belief that the Ottoman system represented the best framework in which to integrate the various sectarian groups of his fatherland.[33]

Butrus al-Bustani believed that the sultan's issuance of the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* meant the Ottoman empire had "substituted religious solidarity with patriotic solidarity",[34] and from that point on he and later his sons and intellectual heirs pledged complete allegiance to the Porte. He soon regarded the missionary movement as hindering the desired process of integrating the Syrian population,[35]

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24 Ibid., 289.
25 Ibid., 289.
26 J. Abdel-Nour, "al-Bustani" in *Encyclopedia of Islam,* vol. 2.
27 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism", 289.
28 Ibid., 288.
29 Ibid., 289.
30 Ibid.
31 Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* 100.
32 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 288.
33 Ibid., 293.
34 Ibid., 296.
35 Ibid., 290.

and, in addition to Ottomanism, considered the Arabic language to be a second tool for this integration. Acting on this belief, Bustani wrote several works on Arabic grammar and linguistics and proposed ways to reform the language to make learning it easier in order to adapt it to the needs of the modern age. Among his most significant such works are his Arabic dictionary *Muhit al-Muhit* and an encyclopaedia entitled *Da'irat al-Ma'arif*.[36] The Arabic language was considered to be a primary element of identity, and an effective means by which cultural homogeneity could be established in Syria.[37] To this end, Bustani additionally set up a "National School" (*al-Madrasa al-Wataniyya*), which deviated significantly from the religious education offered by the various missionary movements.[38] In addition to Arabic language instruction, which was the cornerstone of the school's curriculum, the institution taught Turkish, English and French, along with the modern sciences.[39] Interestingly, in addition to his elaborate religious training, Abdul-Qadir Qabbani was a student of Bustani's school.[40]

As noted, his emphasis on language, and more importantly his image of Syria as a "fatherland", made later observers consider Bustani to be among the first Syrian nationalists, and in the cultural sense he could be seen as a forerunner of an Arab Syrian movement.[41] In reality, however, there can be little doubt that the political doctrine he adhered to most fervently was Ottomanism. A remarkable intellectual with few equals, he recognised the seemingly irreconcilable nature of his cultural identification with an Arab "Syria" and his political allegiance to an integrated Ottoman state, and sought to resolve this issue of conflicting identity in ways that may have clashed with the centralised state the Ottoman reforms sought to construct. Bustani parried these conflicts in a slightly naive but nevertheless admirable way, citing the example of the United States as a state that had integrated several European nations. He believed it was in the interest of the Ottomans to realise the uniqueness of the Syrian identity (and perhaps, by extension, the identities of other groups) and to "associate us with itself (the Ottoman state) in one solidarity".[42] Citing America as an example might suggest that Bustani believed in a federal system based on limited local autonomy, as in the US, and this may well have been the case. However, he never openly expressed such a belief in his various writings, perhaps because he thought the authorities would not accept it.[43]

Politically, Bustani believed that pushing forward with social and administrative reform was an absolute necessity, but was mostly unconvinced that the population of the far-flung empire was ready for a democratic constitutional government at that stage in its history. He deemed Ottoman subjects to be not yet "sufficiently united or enlightened" to enjoy such a libertarian system, a belief that later led him to support Sultan Abdulhamid against the constitutionalists. Nevertheless, he consistently warned against violation of the newly acquired rights of Ottomans because he feared such actions might lead to instability or even open

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36 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 99.
37 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 291.
38 Hourani, *Arabic Thought,* 99.
39 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 294.
40 Nashabi, "Abd al-Qadir Qabbani and *Thamarat al-Funun*", 85.
41 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism," 294.
42 Ibid., 297.
43 Ibid.

rebellion.[44] It is within this logic that his journal *al-Jinan* depicts the importance of reform and development to the state of unrest in the Balkans in the 1870s in an article entitled "The Revolt of Herzegovina and Bosnia against the Porte".[45]

By the time this article appeared, Salim al-Bustani had replaced his father as the official manager of the journal's affairs and its editor. Though most of the published material appeared under Salim's byline, it is well-known that his father continued to write and publish under his son's name. In a sense, this is inconsequential since the views of father and son were indistinguishable on political issues, and the son cannot be considered anything other than the intellectual successor of the father.[46] Because of this intellectual continuity, *al-Jinan* under Butrus as under Salim articulated the same social and political beliefs for the duration of its existence. *Al-Jinan* no longer appeared after 1886, the difficulties presented by the harsher censorship imposed under Sultan Abdulhamid, it is supposed, discouraging the Bustanis from pressing on with their publication.[47]

The final source to be discussed is the newspaper *Lisan al-Hal*, which may be considered as belonging to the same intellectual tradition as the Bustanis' *al-Jinan*. Its founder and editor, Khalil Sarkis, was of the generation of Salim al-Bustani, and he was actually married to one of Butrus's daughters. Like Butrus al-Bustani, Sarkis's father had been among the first to establish links with the American missionary movement in the 1840s. Having been educated at one of the missionary schools in Beirut under a Reverend Thompson,[48] Khalil Sarkis was shaped by intellectual influences similar to those that affected Bustani. The focus of *Lisan al-Hal*, founded in 1877, was more literary and artistic than political or news-based. In this respect, it was similar to another journal that Butrus al-Bustani founded, *al-Junayna*. Both Sarkis's *Lisan al-Hal* and Bustani's *Junayna* held that the Arabic language and literary heritage would be effective tools in the efforts to coalesce the Syrian population around a central identity. Because of this, Sarkis's newspaper devoted much of its energies to the contemporary Arabic literary movement.[49]

Of course, what concerns us in this study is rather the political content of the newspaper, and, as earlier indicated, the political content of *Lisan Al-Hal* can be described as an ideological equivalent of that of *al-Jinan*. Both publications were secular and non-sectarian in outlook, attempting to reconcile some sort of local cultural identity with the ideal of Ottoman patriotism.[50] Like Bustani, Sarkis believed, as he wrote in an editorial in 1880, that different subjects of the Ottoman empire must nurture a sense of community and common belonging to a political entity but had hitherto failed to do so.[51] Also like Bustani, the founder of *Lisan al-Hal* believed in the importance of incorporating certain Western European innovations and ideas, but rejected a wholesale adoption of European

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44 Ibid., 299.

45 *Iftitahiyat Majallat al-Jinan al-Bayrutiyya* (Editorials of the Beiruti Periodical, *al-Jinan*), collected and edited by Yusuf Khoury, 2 vols: vol 1:1870-75; vol. 2: 1876-84 (Beirut: DAR al-Hamra, 1990), vol. 2, 541-3.

46 Abu-Manneh, "Christians between Ottomanism and Syrian Nationalism", 295.

47 Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, 245. Whether this is the case is unclear, for by that time both Butrus and Salim al-Bustani had passed away.

48 Abdul-Rahim Ghaleb, *Mi'at 'Am fi Tarikh al-Sahafa: Lisan al-Hal* (A Hundred Years in the History of the Press: *Lisan al-Hal*) (Beirut: Jarrus Press, 1988), 38.

49 Ibid., 87.

50 Ibid., 95-6.

51 Ibid., 120.

culture and values by Syrian-Arab society.[52] Not surprisingly, *Lisan al-Hal*'s coverage of political issues was almost identical to that of the Bustanis, but along with its Jesuit and Islamist contemporaries, *al-Bachir* and *Thamarat al-Funun* but not *al-Jinan* it survived long enough to witness the annexation of Bosnia by the Austrian government in 1908. In connection with this event, *Lisan al-Hal* and *Thamarat al-Funun* triumphantly and proudly proclaimed from Beirut the success of the empire-wide boycott of Austrian goods, particularly the fez.[53]

Lisan al-Hal actually survived well beyond the end of Ottomanism, the Ottoman state itself and its founder's death in 1915. It continued to appear until 1976, when its offices were literally destroyed in the early phase of the Lebanese civil war. Had its offices been situated in any area other than the Beirut city centre, which had become a no-man's land on which snipers from both sides trained their guns, it may have survived to this day.[54] Though unnatural, its death and burial in the wreckage of Beirut may have been timely, signalling the death of the second of its ideals. In Lebanon and its broader Arab society it is sorely missed today for its generally non-partisan coverage of issues, which enabled it to acquire a wide readership across sectarian lines.[55]

Balkan Troubles as Portrayed in the Beirut Press

In terms of their coverage of Balkan issues, the four news sources adopted different approaches that reflected both their respective ideological underpinnings and the knowledge each acquired about the Balkan region and the political events that were unfolding. It is readily apparent that the religious-oriented newspapers, *al-Bachir* and *Thamarat al-Funun,* are not as detailed or expansive in their descriptions and analysis of the turmoil in the Balkans as the secular *al-Jinan* and *Lisan al-Hal*. More often than not, *al-Bachir* and *Thamarat al-Funun* relayed the news from the Balkans by translating international or regional telegrams or by printing the occasional translated excerpt from a foreign news report. Such translated material was published without additional commentary or interpretation. Crucially, however, *al-Bachir* and *Thamarat al-Funun* sometimes provide front-page editorials, which offer brief interpretations of social, religious and/or political phenomena, including the Balkan situation.

The secular *al-Jinan* and *Lisan al-Hal*, for their part, are far more comprehensive in their treatment of Balkan events, offering detailed analyses of them and their implications. Detailed analysis was a necessary part of the Bustanis' *al-Jinan,* a periodical rather than an ordinary source of daily news. It is a testament to the intellect of Butrus al-Bustani that he decided to elucidate his own thoughts and offer tribute to Ottoman patriotism rather than merely reporting the events as straight news items. *Lisan al-Hal*, effectively a successor of the Bustani school of journalism, holds similar if not identical attitudes to *al-Jinan*, and offers its readers the same breadth of knowledge earlier provided by its predecessor. It is for these reasons that *Lisan al-Hal* and *al-Jinan* are afforded greater attention here in their portrayals of the Balkans.

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52 Ibid., 123.
53 See *Lisan al-Hal*, 14 October 1908, 1; and *Thamarat al-Funun*, 19 October 1908, 1.
54 Ghaleb, *Mi'at 'Am fi Tarikh al-Sahafa*, 135.
55 Ibid., 136.

The Ottoman Handling of Balkan Crises as Depicted by the Press: The Question of Reform and its Connection to Unrest in the Balkans

In an article in *al-Jinan* in 1876 entitled "The Revolt in the Balkans and the neutrality of the Major States", Salim al-Bustani expresses feelings of resignation at the recurrent European political intrigues and their erosive influence on Ottoman affairs, particularly in the Balkans.[56] Bustani's emphasis on the international context of occurrences in the Balkans denotes a sense of submission, and almost capitulation, to the reality that the Ottoman state was no longer in control of the destiny of its own territories. Such a discourse is not unfamiliar in the modern Arab world, where Arab intellectuals and populations at large echo such feelings of helpless acquiescence, surrendering their collective fates to the machinations of more powerful international and regional players. Nowhere is this more evident than Lebanon, whose sectarian make-up continued to make it easy prey for the constant interventions of foreign powers. In any case, Bustani also expresses fears that at some point the repeated episodes of turmoil in the region might lead to broader international conflict involving the Great European Powers.[57] He likewise warned Ottoman authorities against underestimating the Herzegovinian rebels, pointing to France's dismissive attitude towards Prussian forces earlier in the decade, which to him had resulted in the French defeat by Prussia in the Franco-Prussian War of 1871.[58]

Despite his knowledge of the extent of European influence in Ottoman affairs at the time, Bustani was appalled to discover, when it dawned on him, that the Bosnian and Herzegovinian rebels and their backers would escape punishment, despite having been decisively defeated by the Ottoman forces.[59] In this same article, the reader begins to detect Salim Bustani's generally gloomy outlook, which in itself is unsurprising given the many trials and tribulations the Ottoman state faced during the period in question. This also confirms the earlier observation that al-Bustani seemed resigned to the idea that international politics were the key to the unfolding of events in contested regions of the empire.[60] This repeated stress on the international context becomes all the more telling when Bustani discusses what seems to be purely domestic issues. For instance, in an article entitled "Administrative Reform is a Must", he begins with an elaborate discussion of international, particularly military, matters,[61] before underlining the importance of reform in only a few lines at the end of the piece.[62]

This brings us to another important element of Salim Bustani's journalism. He often links the protracted state of conflict in the Ottoman Balkans to the necessity of pushing forward with further reform measures. It was evident, as far as Bustani was concerned, that peripheral rebellion in the empire was closely associated with the degeneration of social conditions in the regions in question, and that the correct implementation of meaningful reforms could slowly re-integrate

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56 Khoury, *Iftitahiyat Majallat al-Jinan* (1876), 413-16.
57 Ibid., 413.
58 Ibid., 416.
59 Ibid., 423.
60 Ibid., 423, 425.
61 Ibid., 436-7.
62 Ibid., 438.

the Balkans into a properly functioning Ottoman system. Among the first examples of Bustani's connecting Balkan troubles to Ottoman reform is in another 1876 article, "The Revolt of Herzegovina and Bosnia against the State".[63] Nevertheless, in this piece Bustani acknowledges that a successful programme of reform in the Ottoman realms would be impossible without the cooperation of the sultan's subjects, "regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds", while stressing that it is in their best interest to do so.[64]

One of the clearest links that Bustani manages to establish between reform and rebellion is in a piece from 1877, somewhat revealing entitled "Amending the Condition of the Christians and the Containment of War". Significantly, the Christians discussed here are not those of the Arab Levant or Armenia, but rather of the Balkans.[65] Remaining true to his generally pessimistic attitude, he concedes that unfavourable dynamics in the European political system may already have undermined Ottoman suzerainty over some Balkan provinces almost beyond repair, to the advantage of either the Russians or Austrians.[66]

Later that same year, when it had become clear that the Ottomans would not reap the benefits of their victory in the war, Salim al-Bustani produced a statement that aptly summarised his position concerning Ottoman reform in the Balkans:

> If problematic issues are resolved in a manner that is fair and just we will have fewer revolts, and it will become evident to those who have ethnically oriented ambitions (*matami' jinsiyya*) that, as long as the Ottoman state is capable, they can never triumph over it. But if Europe rewards the Ottomans for their victories by taking away their lands and giving them to the rebels, then the latter group will surely choose the same course of action again.[67]

In short, Bustani deduced that two decisive elements, the proper implementation of reform and, even more crucially, favourable international circumstances, could alleviate Ottoman troubles in the Balkans.

The issue of reform was itself a quite complex one for Salim al-Bustani, and he clearly did not regard its implementation in the Ottoman empire as either a result of foreign pressure or as the wholesale incorporation of Western ideals. One of his 1880 articles, "The Natural Development of States", discusses the rapid development of the Egyptian economy and society, and represents an early Arab refutation, based on the Egyptian model, of the conception that modernisation is synonymous with Westernisation.[68] Of course, Egypt at the time, unbeknown to Bustani, was on the eve of long decades of blatant and almost absolute British imperial dominance. Nevertheless, Salim's assertion is a journalistic articulation of an idea earlier propounded by his father, namely that indiscriminate incorporation of all things Western into the Orient was neither culturally desirable nor necessarily practical.

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63 Ibid., 419.
64 Ibid., 420.
65 Ibid., 439-41.
66 Ibid., 439. At that time it had not yet officially emerged that Austria would assume effective control of Bosnia and Herzegovina
67 Ibid., 441.
68 Ibid., 584.

Salim al-Bustani also draws a quite common analogy, likening the state to a growing child, which necessarily passes through certain stages to reach adulthood. Bustani emphasises that, like a young boy, the state is very unlikely to be able to solve all its problems overnight, but must rather achieve maturity, eventually "establishing the correct frameworks for political and economic administration and making sure that it follows these guidelines".[69] Bustani sees no reason, however, why the Ottoman state and the Orient could not resurrect themselves and function properly within a reasonable period. Drawing again on his man/state analogy, he emphasises that a "young man who has been weakened by certain diseases, however severe, can restore his physical strength within a short period of time if he is treated by a skilled physician".[70]

Despite his pessimism and repeated concentration on the often unfavourable (to the Ottomans) international context of the Eastern Question, Bustani offered some hope that the Ottoman state could rise and reassert its power and authority over its territories once again. This hope is echoed by Khalil Sarkis in *Lisan al-Hal*, where it is, in fact, converted into a great feeling of optimism and open defiance of the world powers suspected of attempting to undermine Ottoman attempts at advancement in all fields. Late in 1880, Sarkis praised Ottoman social reforms while comparing conditions in the empire with those in other European states. He writes: "We have found that there is equality between Ottomans regardless of their ethnicities or religious orientations. We have also seen that people in Beirut are establishing cordial relations despite religious differences: at the same time, we observe the persecution of the Jews at the hands of the Russian and Greek governments".[71]

As for Bustani, his generally positive attitude towards Ottoman attempts to improve the population's conditions cannot be considered blind praise. He criticised certain decisions of the central government, such as when the state removed Midhat Pasha from his post in Istanbul in 1877, favourably describing Midhat as "one of the men most vehemently opposed to European policies".[72] Even the Islamist *Thamarat al-Funun* could offer harsh criticism of the authorities when it deemed that necessary. In the midst of the Bulgarian and Bosnian crises of 1908, Abdul-Qadir Qabbani not merely came to the defence of the empire, but also criticised members of its bureaucracy for corrupt practices such as nepotism and furthering personal ambitions at the expense of other people.[73]

No one was more enthusiastic than Qabbani in heaping praise on the Ottoman people for their boycott of Austrian goods in the aftermath of Austria's annexation of Bosnia. Interestingly, he commends the people of the different regions of the empire for their "wisdom" in resorting to peaceful protests against Austria's action, considering this course to be more useful and civilised than violent expressions of disapproval. Qabbani reports that the first Austrian ship to arrive at Beirut met with vigorous, but non-violent, protest, before mail and passengers from non-Austrian lands were allowed to disembark. After reporting that the same thing happened in the Palestinian port of Jaffa, Qabbani adds, "This is the

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 585.
71 *Lisan al-Hal*, 22 November 1880, 1.
72 Khoury, *Iftitahiyat Majallat Al-Jinan*, 446.
73 *Thamarat al-Funun*, 19 October 1908, 1.

best way for a person to realise his purpose, and what better purpose is there than serving one's nation and coming to its defence?"[74]

Sarkis was equally enthusiastic about boycotting Austrian products in the empire:

> Let us do in Beirut and every other *vilayet* what the Ottomans of Istanbul have done in their boycott of the Austrian goods that fill our markets. It is no secret that half of our imported goods come from Austria … The fez that only we [the Ottoman people] wear is brought to us by the Austrians at a rather hefty price, although the fabric that is used to produce it is worth no more than 1 *kuruş*. We buy it here at a quite ridiculous price.[75]

He then praised the Christians of Istanbul in particular for their resentment towards Austria and its commercial interests. "This proves", Sarkis believed, "that we have become one people [*umma*] walking shoulder to shoulder to defend one nation [*watan*]".[76]

The Jesuit *Al-Bachir* was the only Beirut periodical to express uneasiness at this method of protest, despite acknowledging the legitimacy of the boycott and the patriotic feelings that led to its adoption. Curiously, it translated an excerpt from a German newspaper based in Cologne, which warned Ottomans of the possible repercussions of their boycott, and also confirmed that, regardless of the heavy toll this boycott could take on the Austrian economy, Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be returned to the Ottoman state.[77] This is rather peculiar but not entirely surprising, and may have had something to do with *al-Bachir*'s Catholic sensibilities, which prevented it from manifesting open hostility to Austria, a country with a huge Catholic population and a Catholic reigning dynasty. Whatever the case, this did not influence *al-Bachir's* mostly pro-Ottoman discourse, as was evident in its account of the (non Catholic) Bulgarian question in 1908.[78]

On this question, Sarkis maintained that war was imminent, since Bulgaria, expecting not to have its declaration of independence accepted, had activated roughly 100,000 reserve troops in preparation for its announcement. Sarkis nevertheless advised the people of the empire to support whatever decision their state took, whether to go to war or find other means to resolve the issue.[79] Two days later, Sarkis again predicted imminent war with Bulgaria. He looked on the positive side of the recent events that had seemingly undermined the Ottoman state's power and authority, particularly in the Balkans, by claiming they had fostered a new sense of belonging among the Ottoman people that "transcends a merely common connection to freedom and the constitution. We do not want such sentiments to subside or fade away".[80]

Sarkis elaborated further on this "sense of belonging" on 20 October of that year, claiming that "Christian and Syrian Ottomans, at home and abroad, declared their readiness to volunteer in the military, if that was required. These include thousands of individuals currently residing in North America, South

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74 Ibid.
75 *Lisan al-Hal*, 14 October 1908, 1.
76 Ibid.
77 *Al-Bachir*, 2 November 1908, 2.
78 Ibid., 5 October 1908, 1.
79 *Lisan al-Hal*, 14 October 1908, 1.
80 Ibid., 16 October 1908, 1.

America and Egypt, all of whom are ready to serve the state and protect its possessions".[81] It is quite interesting that Qabbani's *Thamarat al-Funun* does not openly express a similar belief in the imminence of war against Bulgaria, but reports that Istanbul newspapers had claimed there is "no escaping war".[82] The Ottomans, now led by the CUP, had neither the desire, nor probably the ability, to go to war, and such claims by Istanbul papers must be taken as part of a provocative propaganda campaign that was also intended to lift the spirits of Ottoman subjects, who had felt violated by the Austrian and Bulgarian actions.

Perceptions of the Balkan Peoples and Other Major States

Thamarat al-Funun was unique among the four news sources in displaying an attitude of obvious hostility to the West in general.[83] In this sense, it represented a predictable Islamic view, which persists to our day among certain radical Islamist groups, which do not seem to distinguish between individual nation states in the Western hemisphere, and condemn an entity they name the "West" for what they deem to be its moral, cultural and, above all, religious decadence. *Al-Bachir's* seemingly dispassionate coverage of political affairs, due to the paucity of its editorial writing, gives its readers not much clue as to its attitude towards foreign powers. Yet it must be assumed that it had held special reverence for France since the days of its inception, since the Jesuits operating in Beirut at the time were mostly French or French-speakers with French leanings, regardless of their nationalities. The pro-French stance of *al-Bachir*, however, is never obvious in any way or at any particular juncture.

Bustani's *al-Jinan* seems to hold a quite negative attitude to the so-called "northern peoples" (*ahali al-shamal*) of the Ottoman empire, blaming the Balkan population for much of the unrest and lack of unity in the Ottoman domains, as well as for the toll their actions took on Ottoman finances.[84] In *Lisan al-Hal*, Sarkis also squarely blames the Balkan Christians for the troubles the Ottoman state had faced in fostering a unified political identity among its ethnically diverse constituency. "The lack of Ottoman union", he writes, "is not a result of a religious conflict between Muslims and Christians as some people imagine. It is based on attempts by the Christian *milal* [pl. of *milla* or *millet*] within the state to instil their own ancient traditions in the minds of their constituents". For evidence of this, Sarkis cites the Greek-Bulgarian standoff over the Macedonian question.[85] This informs the reader that the Balkan centrifugal tendencies, conflicting as much among each other as with the empire, were held solely responsible for undermining the drive towards Ottoman centralism.

There is also an implication in the writings of Bustani and Sarkis that wheras the vast majority of the Balkan population had betrayed the state, the upright citizens of the empire are those of the Eastern provinces. In 1876, Bustani wrote that the Armenians are "among the people most concerned with maintaining

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81 Ibid., 20 October 1908, 1.
82 *Thamarat al-Funun*, 20 November 1908, 8.
83 Nashabi, "Abd al-Qadir Qabbani and *Thamarat al-Funun*," 90.
84 Khoury, *Iftitahiyat Majallat Al-Jinan*, 421
85 *Lisan al-Hal*, 20 October 1908, 1.

friendly relations with the State", after noting the Armenian patriarch's discussions with the Porte. Bustani also seemed generally sympathetic to the Armenians' pleas for reforms in their areas within the empire.[86] Decades later, Sarkis focuses on what he deems to be the newfound national harmony within the Ottoman state following the events of 1908. Emphasising such sentiments particularly among the empire's Christian populations, Sarkis mentions specific examples of Christians willing to join the army in case of war, particularly Syrian and Armenian Christians. "The peoples of Syria and Armenia have always been known for their loyalty [to the state]".[87]

Writing in the 1870s, Salim al-Bustani saw in Russia one obvious "enemy" (*'aduww*) to his Ottoman state. This attitude pervaded much of his journalistic writing in *al-Jinan*, and he rejoiced whenever international political opinion conspired against this constant foe of the Ottoman empire.[88] An even more striking feature of Bustani's political outlook was his conviction that the Balkan rebels were effectively no more than puppets of the Russian empire, or at best, that they would not have taken such violent anti-Ottoman action without Russian encouragement. There are also implications that some of the Balkan peoples had been deluded by Russia into believing that revolt was in their best interests, whereas, in Bustani's view, they had absolutely nothing to gain.[89] Tellingly, Bustani made the historical claim that small, developing nations could not escape the dominance of larger powers when the latter aid the former in their bids for independence.[90] Above all, there was a deep mistrust of the Russian empire, a sentiment probably shared by many Ottoman subjects who were loyal to the state during the period in question. Bustani was fully aware of Russia's clandestine support of the Balkan rebels in the 1870s, through its press and its toleration of Pan-Slavic groups that sent men and funds to the region (despite Russian claims to the contrary).[91] For both Bustani and Sarkis, however, modern European states (bar Russia in Bustani's case) were welcome to contribute to the development of the Ottoman state as long as they did not meddle in its intimate core affairs.

Where they decided to comment on Balkan affairs, the four news sources can be considered to have demonstrated a great degree of professional journalistic integrity, despite their differing approaches and doctrinal sensibilities. They were all, in varying degree, Ottomanist in their discourse, and this is reflected, for the most part, in their coverage of Balkan affairs. General Arab separatism or Lebanese particularism had not yet become pervasive influences in the Beirut press. As such, the Balkan territories and their inhabitants were viewed as increasingly peripheral to the central Ottoman scene, and a chronic source of problems for the modernising Ottoman state to which the owners and editors of these journals and the intellectual readership they addressed belonged.

The foregoing review of the journalistic views prevalent in the Beirut press of Bustani and Sarkis, in particular, pertaining to the Balkan crises of 1876-1908 makes a case for a reconsideration of the commonly held view that the Maronites

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86 Khoury, *Iftitahiyat Majallat Al-Jinan,* 432.
87 *Lisan al-Hal*, 20 October 1908, 1.
88 Khoury, *Iftitahiyat Majallat Al-Jinan*, 435.
89 Ibid., 418.
90 Ibid., 437.
91 Ibid., 436-7.

of Lebanon and Arab Christians generally were more receptive to Western ideas and the charms of Western civilisation than their Muslim counterparts. By extension, the view that Arab Christians were less Ottomanist than their Muslim counterparts and more the forerunners of Arab or other nationalist thought is in equal need of reconsideration. What makes this case more compelling is the fact that convictions such as Bustani's do not appear to have been a transient phenomenon but rather a school of thought that survived momentous political changes in Lebanon and the Ottoman empire at large.

PART IV

Mohammad Kurd 'Ali (1876-1953)
and a stamp issued in his memory
during the Syria Arab Republic.

Nostalgia, Admiration and Critique: Istanbul in Arabic Travel Accounts from the Early 20th Century

TETZ ROOKE

With the perspective of time, Arabic descriptions of Istanbul from the early 20th century seem much more positive than one would expect from today's negative image of the Ottoman Turk. In contemporary Arab history writing, the Ottoman empire is branded as a colonial state, and Ottoman rule is commonly referred to as "Ottoman colonialism" (*al-isti'mar al-'uthmani*) or "the Ottoman occupation" (*al-ihtilal al-'uthmani*).

In Syria, for example, the Ottoman Turk is typically portrayed in scholarship, schoolbooks, novels, television serials and films as an evil oppressor. A telling example from the world of television is the Syrian Ramadan serial from 1996, *Ikhwat al-Turab* ("The Brothers of the Home Soil"). This serial narrated the end of the Ottoman era in Bilad al-Sham between 1915 and 1918, and the Turkish characters are portrayed as brutal, racist oppressors persecuting all non-Turks among the Syrian population. Realistic scenes of torture had a strong emotional impact on the audience. The anti-Turkish bias led the Turkish ambassador to Damascus protest to the Syrian foreign minister, and when the serial was exported to Kuwait, diplomatic interventions by Turkey led to the discontinuance of the show after only 13 of the 24 scheduled episodes had been shown.[1] Many historians also hold the Ottomans responsible for the 400-year decline of Arab society between the 16th and 20th centuries.[2]

This (hi)story of the Arabs as victims of a vicious Turkish occupation is essentially a post-imperial construct. It is a product of the doctrinaire history writing

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1 For an analysis of the serial and the debates it prompted in Syria and other Arab countries, see Salam Kawakibi, "Le role de la television dans la relecture de'histoire," *Monde arabe Maghreb-Machrek* 158 (1997): 47-55. The motive of the Syrians in defending themselves against the Turks was also a theme in the Ramadan series *Ayyam Shamiyya* (Damascene Days) in 1993. On this serial, see Christa Salamandra, "Moustache hairs lost: Ramadan television serials and the construction of identity in Damascus, Syria," *Visual Anthropology* 10, 2 (1998): 226-46.

2 Counter narratives that rehabilitate the Ottomans also exist. As early as 1958, the Lebanese historian Zeine declared that "there is no historical evidence to support the popular view, current in the twentieth century, that the Turks were mainly responsible for Arab 'backwardness' and cultural retardation for four hundred years. On the contrary, the Arab lands seem to have profited from the Turkish occupation" (Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism,* 3rd ed. (New York: Caravan Books, 1973), 15). This book was first published under the title *Arab-Turkish Relations and the Emergence of Arab Nationalism* (Beirut: Khayat's, 1958). Today, it is in relation to Islamic fundamentalism that the Ottoman empire is being reevaluated positively, now with a focus on the Islamic dimension of the state. But even if the dominant narrative has been contested, the stereotype of the evil Turk persists.

practised in Arab countries during the interwar period and after independence in particular.[3] Arab ethnicity then came to serve as the basis for national identification and nation building. History was consciously shaped to serve the ideological needs of the emerging new states, and Arabism cast its shadow over all interpretations of the past.[4] A leading figure behind this trend was the educationalist Sati' al-Husri (1882-1968). His German-inspired notion of nationalism eventually came to be used by various Arab regimes as a means of coercion: within the boundaries of the imagined greater Arab homeland, anyone who spoke Arabic was an Arab, whether he liked it or not, accepted it or not, was aware of it or not or loyal or not.[5] And the historical foes or Other of the Arabs, according to this narrative, were the Iranians and the Turks, who were considered "foreign elements".[6]

This hostile image of the Turk was not always self-evident, however, as can be seen from the situation in the 1920s, when the Ottoman empire had just collapsed and Ottoman rule over former Arab provinces had abruptly ended. At that time, many Arab nationalists and intellectuals retained ties of solidarity with Istanbul as an Islamic capital of historic and symbolic importance. Many of them, in fact, viewed the Turks as new allies against the common enemy, the European powers, who had divided up the Middle East between themselves.[7] Among the Arab population in Palestine, nostalgia for the Ottoman period appeared as a widespread reaction against British policies, and Kemal Atatürk's victories against the allies in Anatolia were celebrated in popular music and song.[8] The radical reforms of the Turkish revolution led by Atatürk seem to have won the attention and admiration of quite a few Arab reformers, who seriously considered their applicability to their own societies and speculated over their pros and cons of adopting them.[9]

Two leading Arab intellectuals from this period recorded their impressions of Istanbul. One was the Egyptian reformer Ahmad Amin (1886-1954) and the other the Syrian journalist and scholar Muhammad Kurd 'Ali (1876-1953). Amin was "one of the foremost Egyptian scholars and writers in the second quarter of the twentieth century and played a leading role in modern Arab culture",[10] while

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3 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, "Historical writing in Ottoman and post-Ottoman Syria," in *Les Arabes et l'histoire créatrice,* ed. Dominique Chevallier (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995), 90-3.

4 Ulrike Freitag, "La vision nationaliste: l'enseignement de l'Histoire après l'indépendance de la Syrie," in *Les Arabes et l'histoire créatrice,* ed. Dominique Chevallier (Paris: Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 1995), 147-52; Paul Salem, *Bitter Legacy. Ideology and Politics in the Arab World* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1994), 52-3, 57-8.

5 Sati' al-Husri, *Ara' wa-Ahadith fi al-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya* (1951), 65-6, as quoted in al-Husri, *Hawl al-Qawmiyya al-'Arabiyya* (Beirut, 1961), 53. According to 'Afra Mayhub, who quoted the same passage in the Syrian daily *Tishrin* a decade ago, it is still a valid thought. See "al-Huwiyya al-'Arabiyya fi Fikr Sati' al-Husri," in *Tishrin,* no. 7364 (22.03.1999): 7.

6 Freitag, "La vision nationaliste," 150.

7 Rafeq, "Historical writing," 91.

8 Salim Tamari, "Ma bayn al-A'yan wa-l-Awbash: al-Ru'ya al-Jawhariyya fi Tarikh al-Quds al-Intidabiyya," in *Dirasat fi al-tarikh al-ijtima'i li-Bilad al-Sham: Qira'at fi al-siyar wa-l-siyar al-dhatiyya,* ed. 'Isam Nassar and Salim Tamari (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filistiniyya, 2007), 224.

9 In a sense, even the "anti-Turks" among the Arab nationalists were inspired by the Turkish experiment. Both Turkish and Arab nationalism built on the notions of unity of language and unity of history as the foundations of a common national identity. Al-Husri is a case in point. See his lecture "Nushu' al-Fikra al-Qawmiyya 'ind al-Atrak al-'Uthmaniyyin," in Abu Khaldun Sati' al-Husri, *Muhadarat fi nushu' al-Fikra al-Qawmiyya* (Beirut: Markaz Dirasat al-Wahda al-'Arabiyya, 1985 [1951]), 89-115). Cf., Youssef M. Choueiri, *Arab History and the Nation-State. A Study in Modern Arab Historiography 1820-1980* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 203.

10 Issa J. Boullata in the introduction to his translation of Ahmad Amin, *My Life. The Autobiography of an Egyptian Scholar, Writer, and Cultural Leader* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), vii.
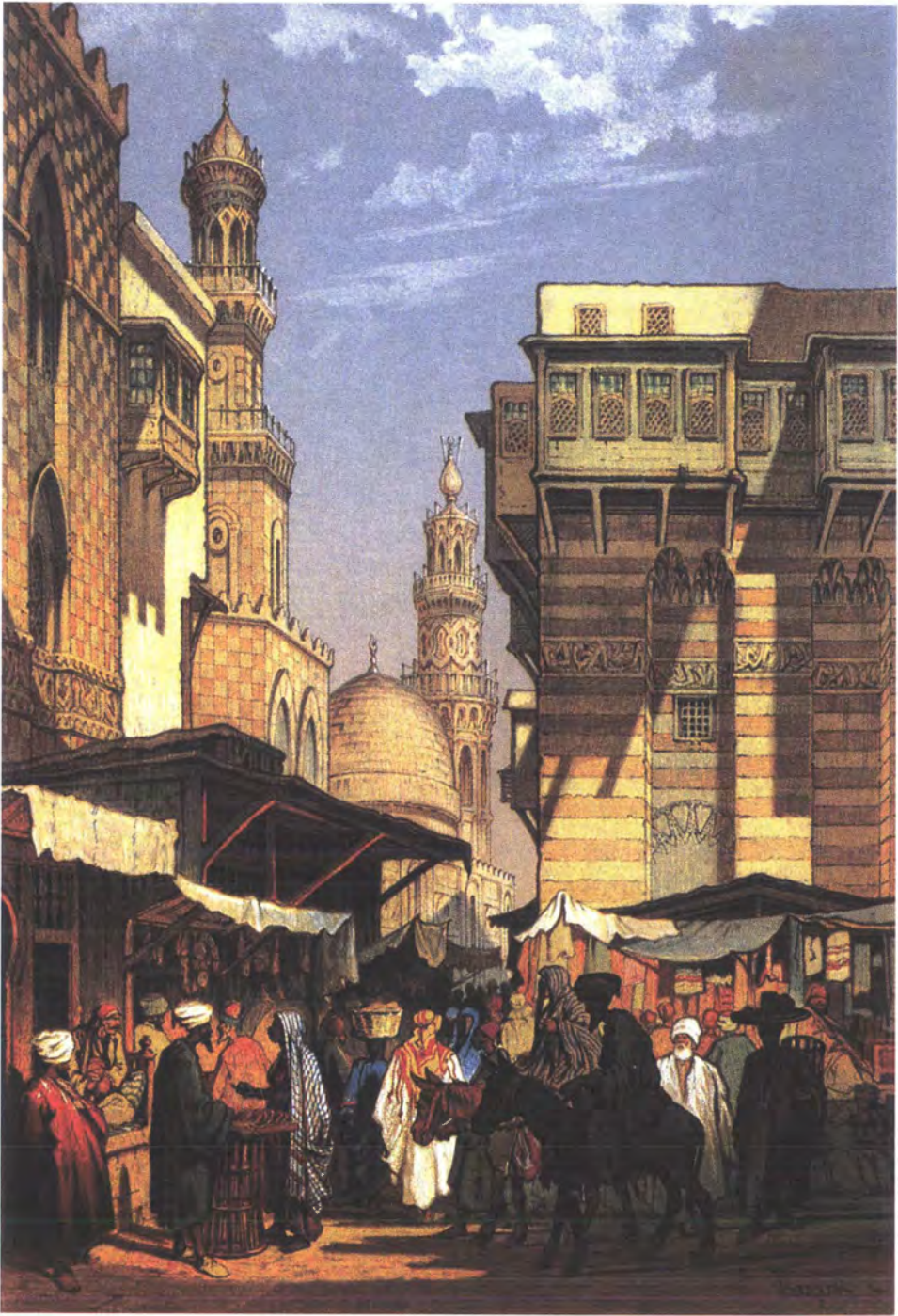
Cairo in the middle of the 19th century.
Painting by Amedeo Preziosi (1816-1882).

Muhammad Kurd ʻAli was perhaps no less important in Syria.[11] He was an influential creator of public opinion, a prolific writer, the founder of the first Arab academy in Damascus and an active politician. Both men were born close togeth-

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11 Shafiq Jabri, *Muhadarat ʻan Muhammad Kurd ʻAli* (Cairo: Matbaʻat al-Risala, 1957), 75; Kaïs Ezzerelli, "Introduction," *Les Mémoires (al-Mudhakkirat) de Muḥammad Kurd ʻAli (1876-1953),* cinquième tome, édition critique, texte et annotations en arabe (Damascus: IPFO, 2008), 12-13.

er in time, and died just a year a part in the 1950s. They both belonged to the generation of the Arab *nahda* or "awakening".

Both also knew each other well personally, even if they were not the best of friends. This enmity is evident in their literary exchanges. Amin made some very nasty remarks about Kurd 'Ali in a review of his colleague's *Mudhakkirat* (Memoirs, vol. I-II, 1948), for example. Disappointed by the work and offended at Kurd 'Ali's accusations in it that the Egyptian literati were snobbish and chauvinistic, he accuses the author of being rude, tasteless, false, and naive, a liar and, on top of all this, a bad writer.[12] And Kurd 'Ali was no less unpleasant: he countered by describing Amin as dishonest, unoriginal, uninformed and plain greedy for money and fame.[13]

Interestingly, at the time of his review of Kurd 'Ali's memoirs, Ahmad Amin was actually writing his own life story. This text was published just a year later as *Hayati* (My Life, 1952),[14] his much read and oft-reprinted autobiography. Through this conjunction of works, both men came to play a recognisable part in the establishment of autobiography as a literary genre in modern Arabic literature.[15] It is from this personal literature that the impressions of Istanbul analysed in this article are derived. The focus is on travel accounts, in Kurd 'Ali's case also culled from one of his travel books. Most of this material was either written or published in the 1920s. Positive attitudes towards Turks and Turkish conditions interplay with the critical views of the authors. Obviously, the reading of contemporary history by these two Arab observers was more complex than the later dominant black and white version.

Istanbul as Bright Example

In *Hayati,* Ahmad Amin included a mini-travelogue of about 25 pages in which the author describes a visit to Istanbul in the summer of 1928 (pp. 227-52).[16] This was Amin's first trip abroad. His narrative is divided into two parts, an initial summary of experiences followed by short extracts from a travel diary. Although not published until 1950, the text seems to be a faithful representation of the young Egyptian's impressions of the former imperial capital. The extracts from his diary claim to be authentic, and the summary appears to be a direct or very close transcription of the notes of the journey.[17] The author's focus on the

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12 Ahmad Amin, "Mudhakkirat al-Ustadh Muhammad Kurd 'Ali," *al-Thaqafa*, vol. 2, No 452 (1949): 6-9.

13 Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 4 (Damascus: Matba'at al-Sharq, 1951), 1312-15; *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 5 (Damascus: IPFO, 2008), 294-6. On the animosity between Amin and Kurd 'Ali, see Tetz Rooke, "The influence of *adab* on the Muslim intellectuals of the *Nah'a* as reflected in the Memoirs of Muḥammad Kurd 'Alī (1876-1953)," in *The Middle East in a Globalized World,* ed. Bjørn O. Utvik and Knut Vikør (Bergen: Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 2000), 193-6, and Qays al-Zaralli [Kaïs Ezzerelli], "al-Tahlil al-Sardi li-l-Nusus al-Siyar al-dhatiyya fi Khidmat al-Ta'wilat al-Tarikhiyya al-Jadida: 'Mudhakkirat' Muhammad Kurd 'Ali ka-Mithal," in *al-Sira al-Dhatiyya fi Bilad al-Sham,* ed. Mahir al-Sharif and Qays al-Zaralli (Damascus: al-Mada, 2009), 185-8.

14 A first edition of *Hayati* was published in 1950. It was revised and slightly enlarged by the author in 1952. It is this second edition that has become the standard version of the text. English translation by Issa. J. Boullata: A'mad Amin, *My Life* (Leiden: Brill, 1978).

15 Cf., Ezzerelli, "Introduction," 14.

16 Ahmad Amin, *Hayati*, 7th ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1989). All references are to this edition.

17 The evidences are many: A footnote on page 238 informs the reader that the official day of rest in Turkey "later on" changed to Sunday. In the narrative, the day of rest is still Friday. The law effecting the

Greetings from a bazaar in Cairo. Postcard dated 29 April, 1904.
Cengiz Kahraman Archive

Turkish revolution and its effects certainly reflects Arab concerns at the time of his visit.

change was passed in 1935. This shows that the printed text was copied as written down before this year. Further, a footnote (p. 233) says that the German Orientalist Helmut Ritter "recently" published his edition of al-Ash'ari's *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*, a work that appeared in 1928. And, finally, the whole chapter (25) concludes with a dating within brackets: "Written on board the ship al-Rawda on the 16th of July 1928" (p. 251). Cf., the author's introduction to *Hayati* about the composite nature of the book, p. 7.

Amin undertook this journey as one of two assistants to Prince Yusuf Kamal al-Din (1882-1967), who was visiting Istanbul to search for rare manuscripts in the libraries and bookshops there. The prince was interested in old geographical books and was especially looking for a manuscript of Ptolemy's *Geography*. At the time, Amin was a lecturer at the college of arts at the Egyptian University, and he was chosen for the task of assistant by the dean, Lutfi al-Sayyid. The author-narrator is happy to accept the mission because of the magical reputation of Istanbul. The city has an aura of greatness and splendour in his mind. To him, it is associated with Khedive Abbas's regular commutes between Egypt and Istanbul, the frequent travels of the rich and mighty to the city and with their boasts about it and with Ahmad Shawqi's poetry in its praise. His imaginings about Istanbul reflect the persistence of old cultural ties between Egypt and the Ottoman capital. They also attest to the existence of an often overlooked Ottoman Turkish connection in early modern Egyptian Arabic intellectual and literary history.[18] Amin is eager to see all the wonders that he has heard so much about, the palaces and natural beauty of the Bosporus, but is also very curious about the recent revolution that has turned the social system upside down. What is its secret and to what extent can it become a model for Egypt, he asks himself?[19]

The journey lasts for 40 days during the summer of 1928. Amin spends most of his time inside libraries and bookshops in fulfilment of his mission. But "how dull formalities are", he complains, and true to this attitude he quickly summarises how he and his colleague put together annotated bibliographies of the literary treasures they found – a mechanical task, useful but unexciting – and after their return to Egypt compared their lists with the catalogues of Dar al-Kutub in Cairo in order to sift out what was new. "But this was not *the* trip and so I will not bore the reader with the details", he briefly concludes.[20]

Instead, his narrative concentrates on those happy days when he went out into the city with no purpose other than to see and experience, meet people and relax. It is during these excursions – which also include a trip to the Princes' Islands – that Amin gets to talk to ordinary people and find out their views. He is impressed by the cleanliness of the Turks and their calmness, which he compares favourably with the Egyptian character. Otherwise he dwells particularly on the big political issues of the day: the changed status of religion, the unveiling and new dress code for men and the language reforms.

The discussion of religion opens with a portrait of an old doorkeeper at the Sultan Ahmad Mosque, who deplores the new situation for himself and Islam. Amin quotes the doorkeeper's complaints and then provides a snapshot of the way in which the man looks around, fearing that someone has overheard him. The scene symbolises the tensions in society and the sensitivity of the issue. Next, the author meets some Egyptian exiles. One is his former teacher at the Judicial School (Madrasat al-Qada') in Cairo, 'Ali Bey Fawzi, who has resigned

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18 Cf., Johann Strauss. *The Egyptian Connection in Nineteenth Century Ottoman Intellectual and Literary History,* Beyrouth Zokak El Blat(t) No. 20, (Beirut: Orient-Institut der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft, 2000), 54. Elsewhere, Strauss highlights the importance of the Egyptian printing press of Bulaq, established in 1921, for the development of modern Turkish literature and book production. Literary impulses obviously went in both directions (conference organised by the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul, 27-31 May, 2010).

19 Amin, *Hayati,* 228-9.

20 Ibid., 232. My translations of this article follow Boullata's *My Life*, except for some details.

his office and left Egypt because of his dislike for the British occupation. "He could not bear to see his country occupied by the English soldiers, nor the Greek waiter in a café enjoying privileges which he himself did not."[21] Istanbul is in this scene represented as a free place and a refuge from colonialism: "I preferred Turkey", he said, "because it is an independent Islamic country".[22]

The abolition of the caliphate, the establishment of the republic and the dissolution of religious institutions – including the ministry of religious endowments, the Islamic courts, the religious schools and the Sufi orders – are presented as examples of the huge social changes that have occurred in Turkey. The author thinks they merit special attention by his Egyptian readers as an experiment in reform they could benefit from by rejecting the bad elements and applying the good. Yet he never explicitly states his own preferred solutions. Nevertheless, it becomes clear from Amin's discussion of the unveiling issue and the language reforms that he is sympathetic towards most of the measures taken by the new regime. Some controversial views conveniently emerge from the mouth of Fawzi:

> There is no hope of reforming Egypt as long as there is a language for learning ('ilm) and another for conversation (kalam). Either the language of conversation should rise or that of learning should come down so that the two of them may become one. Only then will there be true thinking and a language that derives its soul from real life.[23]

But this was actually the view of the author too. The Turkish language experiment seemingly encouraged him to rethink the norms of Arabic. In one of Amin's last books, Zu'ama al-Islah (Leaders of Reform, 1948) he considers the Arabic diglossia – "the use of two languages, vernacular and literary" – as one of the biggest problems then facing the Arab world.[24] And in several of his essays, he suggested simplification of Arabic grammar according to pragmatic rules, above all the abandonment of desinential flexion (i'rab).[25] But to a critic like Kurd 'Ali, this suggestion reminded him of, and was just as silly as the contemporary proposal to substitute the Arabic script with Latin.[26]

Returning to the text, most of the Turkish reforms, including the government's ban on the tarbush and the restrictions on men of religion – "supporters of reaction and instruments in the hands of the oppressive sultans"[27] – appear to be supported by Amin the traveller: at least, he records them without any note of protest. This stance also matches his narrative voice, for example in the description of how women in Istanbul celebrated the unveiling (al-sufūr): "Women are charmed by the new freedom and the new unveiling, and they make merry and

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21 Ibid., 236.
22 Ibid., 242.
23 Ibid., 243.
24 Ahmad Amin, Zu'ama al-Islah fi al-'Asr al-Hadith, 4th ed. (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahda al-Misriyya, 1979 [1948]), 378.
25 Ahmad Amin, "Mustaqbal al-Adab al-'Arabi," Fayd al-Khatir, vol. VI, 65, and idem. "Mashakiluna al-lughawiyya wa-l-adabiyya," Fayd al-Khatir, vol. VII, 246, as quoted in 'Ali Mazyad, Ahmad Amin. Advocate of Social and Literary Reform in Egypt (Leiden: Brill, 1963), 95-6 and 102. Mazyad also gives a summary of Amin's views on language and literature on pp. 90-107. Fayd al-Khatir is a collection of essays that runs to ten volumes. of which eight appeared during the author's lifetime, the first in 1938, while two were published posthumously.
26 Kurd 'Ali, al-Mudhakkirat, vol. 5, 295-6, with notes 139 and 140 for further references. Cf., al-Mudhakkirat, vol. 2, 499-503 ("al-Ahruf al-Latiniyya").
27 Amin, Hayati, 241.

celebrate like wild. Girls dance even in the streets and sing in the cafés. It is as if they were prisoners who are released from jail after a long torture and see their relatives after long absence".[28]

Amin is careful to point out the benefits for both genders of this reform. It makes marriage less fraught with disappointment, because the couple gets a chance to see each other beforehand. They can thus be more realistic in their feelings and avoid falling prey to fantasy. Similarly, the author appreciates the new legal equality between man and woman decreed by the revolution, which gives her equal political rights and opportunities for education.[29] He implicitly suggests that a similar change towards secularism would be good for Egypt too, even if he is an Islamic judge. Empowering women was a necessary step towards progress, the reformer firmly believed, a conviction that was further strengthened during his later visits to Europe.[30]

In retrospect, it is interesting to read about Amin's meeting with two German scholars in Istanbul, who obviously made quite an impression on him. They were Helmutt Ritter and Oskar Rescher. They lived only for Arabic books, spending half the day in libraries and the other half at their desks, writing and reading. In their patience and devotion to their work, they resemble two monks in their cells, the author jokes. We also learn that he and his colleague assisted Ritter in interpreting some difficult passages from a manuscript of *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* by Abu al-Hasan al-Ash'ari, managing to solve a few problems, but by no means all.[31]

When he sums up his 40 days in Istanbul, Ahmad Amin finds that there were enough great experiences, meetings with interesting people and exciting scenes to fill a novel, even a number of novels. The story only needs a woman and a bit of editing to be complete, he thinks.[32]

Be that as it may, as a travel account the story is good enough, not very detailed or long, but still revealing of the author's opinions and the political climate of the time. In the context of Arab impressions of Istanbul, this essentially positive representation of post-revolutionary Turkish Istanbul can be seen as a response to other images of the city that had previously appeared in Egyptian letters. If we go back to the age of Sultan Abdulhamid II and his autocratic rule, the Ottoman capital had in some cases been described as thoroughly corrupt, decadent and cruel, the epitome of backwardness and injustice. In *Ma Hunalik* (Over Yonder), the journalist Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi (1844-1906) told of his ten-year stay in Istanbul from the mid-1880s. The author's critique of the Ottoman bureaucracy and state was so sharp that the book was banned within days of its publication in Cairo in 1896. The content, however, had already reached the public in a series of articles published in the Egyptian press. The medium was the anti-Ottoman, pro-British newspaper *al-Muqattam*, whose policy probably also influenced Muwaylihi's negative picture of Istanbul and

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28 Ibid., 236.
29 Ibid., 239-40.
30 Ibid., 277-8.
31 Ibid., 233. As a curiosity, it might be mentioned that the Swedish scholar H.S. Nyberg was also working on the exact same Arabic text at this time, but from a manuscript in Paris at the Bibliothèque Nationale (de Slane, nr 1453). Nyberg had only established half of the text when Ritter's edition was published in 1928 and then aborted the project. See Sigrid Kahle. *H.S. Nyberg. En vetenskapsmans biografi [The Biography of a Scholar]*, Svenska akademiens minnesteckningar (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1991), 158-64.
32 Amin, *Hayati*, 251.

A postcard from Cairo (early 20th century)
Cengiz Kahraman Archive

led him to disregard the more positive developments that also existed.[33] From the perspective of past Arabic representations, Amin's travel diary, for all its modesty, reads like a counter-narrative that rehabilitates the Turkish capital, which has completed its "awakening" or at least taken it to a new level.

Amin was not a great traveller. Besides the Turkish diary, his autobiography contains summarised accounts of visits to Syria and Palestine in 1930, Iraq in 1931 and on the the *hajj* to Mecca in 1937. He also went to Europe a few times on tours in connection with congresses or conferences. That is all.[34] He does not seem to have visited Istanbul a second time. The positive and optimistic impressions of the youthful traveller thus stand unchallenged in his work. But even if limited in scope, his travels had an intellectual impact on him. They were an eye-opener. In his own words, travel showed him new colours, let him hear new voices. What he first experienced in the East he automatically judged and compared with what he afterwards witnessed in the West, he recalled of his trips abroad.[35] This comparison was not always favourable to Europe, however. In old age, Amin was less sure of liberal, Westernising reforms as the best way ahead for Arab society. The experience of totalitarianism, the Second World War and diehard colonialism acted as deterrents. In the posthumously published *al-Sharq wa-l-Gharb* (East and West, 1955), the tone is much more cautious.[36]

Istanbul as Dark Contrast

Muhammad Kurd 'Ali's experiences and perceptions of Istanbul are more complicated to reconstruct from his oeuvre than those of Ahmad Amin. The scope of the material is much greater, but still not as great as it could have been considering the author's enormous productivity and frequent travels. Even though Kurd 'Ali visited Istanbul many times, the city is almost absent from his personal writings. In his books and articles on his travels abroad, Egypt, were he lived for many years, occupies a special place, as does Europe. But Istanbul was apparently perceived by the author to be a not very interesting place for his readers. This is one way, at least, to explain the city's relatively faint presence in his texts.

European scholars also feature in Muhammad Kurd 'Ali's recollections of Istanbul, albeit indirectly. Several of Kurd 'Ali's visits to the city occurred on return trips from Europe, where he had sought the company of Western academics and studied their works.[37] In his memoirs, in a chapter called "The Purpose of my Journeys" (*Ghayati min Siyahati*), the author expresses his high appreciation of the Orientalists – but also his deep reserve:

> Meeting the Orientalists (*'ulama' al-mashriqiyyat*) gave me the greatest satisfaction, for they know our history as well as our present circumstances, and are familiar with our customs. They are the link between East and West. The Orientalists (*al-mustashriqun*) are very attentive to vis-

33 After being banned and confiscated, *Ma Hunalik* was more or less lost and only recently became available in an English translation by Roger Allen. Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi, *Spies, Scandals and Sultans: Istanbul in the Twilight of the Ottoman Empire* (Lanham MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2008). Allen has provided the book with a most valuable introduction, explaining the literary and historical background of the Arabic source text. It is worth noting that the author of *Ma Hunalik*, according to the testimony of Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, was considered "one of the greatest writers of his day" in Egypt. But when he worked as a journalist in Egypt (1901-08, for two periods) the Syrian emigré nevertheless avoided Ibrahim al-Muwaylihi because of the latter's political views. Kurd 'Ali did not like his attacks on Shaykh Muhammad 'Abduh and suspected al-Muwaylihi of being an agent for foreign interests. See Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 251. Cf., Muwaylihi/Allen, *Spies, Scandals and Sultans*, 5, 12.

34 Amin, *Hayati*, 252-81. Mazyad, *A'mad Amīn*, 26-30.

35 Amin, *Hayati*, 278.

36 Ahmad Amin, *Orient and Occident. An Egyptian's Quest for National Identity*, trans. Wolfgang H. Behn (Berlin: Adiyok, 1984). First published under the title *al-Sharq wa-l-Gharb*, Cairo, 1955.

37 Kurd 'Ali visited Europe four times, in 1909, 1913-14, 1921-22 and 1928.

itors, whether they expect the same treatment when they visit other countries or not. Though some are quite poor, they invite you to their homes because they know Eastern customs require this courtesy. They devote their knowledge, however, primarily to the service of their own nation.[38]

In the next chapter, Kurd 'Ali further develops his personal views on the virtues and evils of the Orientalists.[39] The actual theme here is social criticism of Arab intellectual attitudes and practices: the foreign scholars are portrayed as ambitious and hard working, humble and idealistic, in contrast with Arab academics, who are depicted as bombastic, materialistic, lazy and incompetent. The Orientalists are a model to be emulated. The author admires them for their knowledge, but is not naive about their motives:[40] the majority serve the political interests of their own state or nation, but nothing else could be expected of them.[41]

This attitude of admiration and rejection was not a construct by the author in old age, but dates from his journeys in his youth. Indeed, Kurd 'Ali formulated these views more sharply in his early thirties in a speech given during one of his visits to Istanbul. His travelogue *Ghara'ib al-Gharb* (Wonders of the West) contains the full text of the speech given early in 1910 to the Literary Club, also called the Arab Club, which was a gathering place for young Arab students seeking higher education in the Ottoman capital.[42] There, Kurd 'Ali lectured the students on his recent experiences in Europe. His great admiration for "the West" is tempered by the racial prejudices he encountered in France and the open colonial ambitions to take control of "the East" that he also encountered.[43] In this politi-

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38 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat,* vol. 1, 186. I have followed the English translation by Khalil Totah, *Memoirs of Muhammad Kurd 'Ali. A Selection* (Washington DC: American Council of Learned Societies, 1954) in my quotes from the *Memoirs*, even if Totah sometimes omits words and phrases and altogether neglects the embellished style of the original. In some cases, I have emended his translation slightly. Passages not included in Totah's translation are translated by me.

39 This chapter, "Orientalists and Islam" (*'Ulama' al-Mashriqiyyat wa-l-Islam*) is a reprint of an article for the Cairo magazine *al-Balagh*. In our context it is interesting to note that the author refers to Helmut Ritter's edition of al-Ash'ari's *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin* as one example of the valuable intellectual services made to the Arabs by "those foreigners" (*'ula'ika al-'ajaim*). The recently published (2008) posthumous fifth volume of Kurd 'Ali's memoirs also has a long chapter devoted to the Orientalists: "The Arabists among the Orientalists" (no. 5, 124-39). The text is a speech given by the author at the University of Alexandria, 1 March 1948, and first published the same year (Alexandria: Matba'at al-Tijara). Cf., Ezzerelli, "al-Tahlil al-Sardi," 192-3. On Kurd 'Ali's relationship with Western scholars, see also Joseph Escovitz, "Orientalists and Orientalism in the Writings of Muḥammad Kurd 'Ali," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 15 (1983): 95-109.

40 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat,* vol. 1, 195.

41 Ibid.,vol. 5, 126.

42 Muammad Kurd 'Ali, *Ghara'ib al-Gharb. Kitab Ijtima'i Tarikhi Iqtisadi Adabi,* al-Tab'a al-thaniya (Cairo: al-Matba'a al-Rahmaniyya, 1923). The speech is chap. 35 of the book, pp. 154-71. Nazik Saba Yared has devoted a whole study to the theme of conflicting Arab emotions and attitudes to Europe in travel books: *Arab Travellers and Western Civilization,* transl. S.D. Shahbandar (London: Saqi Books, 1996). Kurd 'Ali is one of her examples, and *Ghara'ib al-Gharb* a main source for her study.

43 On Kurd 'Ali's conceptualisation of the East (*al-Sharq*) and the West (*al-Gharb*), see Samir M. Seikaly, "Imperial Germany: A View from Damascus," in *Arab Civilization: Challenges and Responses: Studies in Honor of Constantine K. Zurayk,* ed. George N. Atiyeh and Ibrahim M. Oweiss (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 315-18, including further references. See also Yared, *Arab Travellers.* When Ahmad Amin in the 1950s writes on the same topic in *al-Sharq wa-l-Gharb* his attitudes resemble Kurd 'Ali's: he too admires many aspects of European culture and denounces others. But he also asks himself whether Orient, Occident and similar words really are fixed and meaningful expressions? Despite his own conceptual use of the terms, Amin finds that the answer is no: "There are no two incompatible civilizations, an Oriental and an Occidental one, rather there is only one civilization encompassing the entire world. The crux of the matter is that some people derive more benefits from this civilization than others. In other words, it is clear that there are not two different ladders of progress but only one with different steps." Amin, *Orient and Occident,* 14.

cal project of exploitation, he identifies the scholars as a new kind of weapon. A lecture at the Sorbonne by the Sinologist Paul Pelliot (1878-1945) that Kurd 'Ali attended prompted him to conclude:

> His journey [to Turkestan] is just like all the other scientific journeys that the Westerners do to Asia and Africa. They act as the forerunners of conquest and colonisation. In former times the poet used to say, "The sword brings truer tidings than the books".[44] Hence, if a nation wanted to conquer another country it sent swords and guns against it, and then cleared the way with knowledge [afterwards]. But today the West sends scholars to explore the countries first – then they send their canons and guns and machines of destruction. And the examples of this are many.[45]

How many times did Muhammad Kurd 'Ali visit Istanbul? In the *sīra*, the brief autobiography that concludes his encyclopaedic history *Khitat al-Sham* (The Description of Syria), he mentions four visits.[46] But other visits have probably been left unrecorded (see below).

In the winter of 1909-10, he passed through Istanbul on his way back from Europe, where he had spent three months in Paris. This journey resulted in 35 newspaper articles, which were later collected in the abovementioned *Ghara'ib al-Gharb*, a modern *rihla* published in Egypt in 1923. Of these, five articles are about Istanbul.[47] A dominant subject in this section is sites and monuments, but two chapters containing rather dry descriptions of museums and palaces are actually authored by others. Kurd 'Ali's own contributions are more interesting. The speech to the Literary Club, for example, gives a vivid picture of the political sentiments held by the secular Arab nationalists of the time. He addresses the Arab students as at once the future of the Ottoman nation and the Arab people, admonishing them to study their language, Arabic, and learn from the example of Europe. The best defence against the "assault of the West" is continued support for the Ottoman union, *al-jami'a al-'uthmaniyya*, and eschewing separatism, he argues. In closing the account of his first journey, the chapter acquires symbolic importance. Arguably, it reads as an address to the whole of his assumed audience. This privileged placement indicates that the issues raised in the text were not finally settled by the time the book appeared in the early 1920s, including the question of the relationship between Turks and Arabs.

Kurd 'Ali's stay lasted 20 days. Despite the natural beauty of the city, his professed Ottoman allegiance and a certain feelings of familiarity with Istanbul as "the capital of our Ottoman Sultanate", the author cannot avoid complaining

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44 *Al-Sayfu asdaqu anba'an min al-kutubi*. This is a famous verse by Abu Tammam (d. 845).

45 Kurd 'Ali, *Ghara'ib al-Gharb*, 157. The lecture was first printed in the journal *al-Muqtabas* V, no. 2 (1910), 121-41. See Kaïs Ezzerelli, "Les arabistes syriens et la France de la révolution jeune-turque à la première guerre mondiale (1908-1914). L'exemple de Muhammad Kurd 'Ali," *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* LV (2003): 95.

46 Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat al-Sham*, 6 vols. (Damascus: al-Matba'a al-Haditha, 1925-28). The autobiography is only 14 pages long (vol. 6, 411-25). His Istanbul journeys are mentioned on page 417 and 419-20. They occurred in 1909-10, 1913-14, 1915 and 1918. I have not been able to establish the exact dates.

47 Kurd 'Ali, *Ghara'ib al-Gharb*, vol. 1, chaps. 31-5, 138-71. The articles from this journey were first published in Kurd 'Ali's journal *al-Muqtabas* 4 (1909) and 5 (1910) and then printed as a single work in Damascus in 1910 with the same title. See Samir M. Seikaly, "Damascene Intellectual Life in the Opening Years of the 20th Century: Muhammad Kurd 'Ali and *al-Muqtabas*," in *Intellectual Life in the Arab East, 1882-1939,* ed. Marwan Buheiry (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1979), 135. Cf., Seikaly, "Imperial Germany," 324, n. 9.

about the material and cultural situation there as compared to Paris. Houses and buildings are in disorder, the monuments and architecture less impressive and the scholars less advanced. He especially criticises the Turkish portion of the population for its economic idleness, chronic dependency on others, for behaving as if it was still the ruling element (al-'unsur al-hakim), and for sponging off the nation, like a tick on the neck of the provinces.[48] In other articles from the same time, he condemns the Ottomans for trying to impose Turkish as the sole official language and medium of instruction in the empire. In this context, he displays a certain derogatory attitude towards Turkish culture, which he sees as being essentially dependent on Persian and Arab culture for all its achievements in science and art.[49] These negative views obviously foreshadow the later narrative of Turkish occupation and exploitation of the Arabs. Yet here they are not framed as fully fledged Arab nationalist ideology, but as an element in a liberal, Arabist discourse that aims at renewal and reform of Ottoman society along European lines.

Equal civic rights for members of all ethnic groups and religious communities and constitutional reform were important demands in this discourse. Accordingly, Kurd 'Ali shows particular interest in the newly reopened parliament, which he visits five times. He is only moderately impressed by what he hears and sees, however. The parliament is still a child, he thinks, and expresses the hope that the next election will bring an improvement in its standards. For the moment, the competent and honest deputies are a minority among a mass of dishonest chatterboxes who never manage to achieve anything concrete. In the end, the abolition of tyranny and the overthrow of Sultan Abdulhamid appear to the author to be cosmetic changes. Authoritarian rule has poisoned his contemporaries completely, and only a new generation raised on different principles can accomplish true change: "I don't exaggerate if I say that the representatives and deputies ('ummāl) of Istanbul today are a copy of the ones in the age of 'Abd al-Hamid, except that they now call for freedom [...] The ones who will bring about a real reform of this dear country I believe are not yet born".[50]

A further visit to Istanbul took place in 1913-14. Once again, the city was a stop-over for Kurd 'Ali on his way back from Europe, where he had undertaken philological and historical research over the winter. This journey was documented in over 30 articles, which were also included in Ghara'ib al-Gharb.[51] However, only one chapter, the last in the first volume of the work, contains Istanbul impressions. The author's portrayal of the city once more highlights its negative features, in contrast with the marvels of Europe. Bureaucratisation and a lack of personal initiative among the educated elite annoy him the most. Interestingly, this time both Istanbul and Cairo are lumped together in Kurd 'Ali's report and jointly referred to as the "two capitals" (al-'asimatan). They are

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48 Kurd 'Ali, Ghara'ib al-Gharb , vol. 1, 142.

49 Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, "al-'Arabiyya wa-l-Turkiyya," al-Muqtabas, vol. 4, No. 2, 1909, s. 109-12. Cf., Seikaly, "Damascene Intellectual Life," 131-2, 152. Seikaly maintains that Kurd 'Ali deliberately and repeatedly denigrated Turkish culture in his writings, but he omits al-Mudhakkirat from his sources, a text in which a different image also appears (see further below).

50 Kurd 'Ali, Gharā'ib al-Gharb, vol. 1, 143-4. Kurd 'Ali also visited parliaments in Europe, but then the image was positive. See Yared, Arab Travellers, 91.

51 Ibid., vol. 1, 172-336, chaps. 36-69. First published in al-Muqtabas 8 (1914), according to Seikaly, "Imperial Germany," 324, n. 9.

described as being afflicted with the same kind of social diseases, and differences between Turks and Arabs are not given any significance.[52]

As part of the Ottoman homeland and the supposedly backward East, Istanbul did not fit quite into the theme of the book. It only found its place in the narrative as a dark contrast to the brightness of the West and provided Kurd 'Ali with the occasion to express social criticism, which in this article also included European penetration and domination of the local economy. As Samir Seikaly has observed of the author's portrayal of Paris, his purpose was not the exact delineation of a European metropolis, but the fashioning of a meaningful symbol that typified Western civilisation and, at the same time, "by its radiance expose[d] Arab cultural poverty".[53] In drawing his sombre portrait of Istanbul, Kurd 'Ali uses the same literary technique, but with an inverted purpose: the capital becomes a symbol of an entire backward, dependent and unprogressive East.[54] The thrust of the critique is never anti-Turkish, but anti-East. It is quite possible for the Syrian writer to link Cairo with Istanbul, both symbolically and analytically. His arguments proceed from a kind of social self-criticism typical of the Arab *nahda*. Comparing the contributions by rich Europeans to institutions of learning and science with the situation at home, Kurd 'Ali writes:

> What did the rich Turks and Arabs ever do for the public good during the last four or five hundred years? They usurped the religious endowments, made the peasants sweat, and plundered the nation in ways unlawful according to both reason and tradition, nothing else. Nevertheless some simple-minded people respect them; the servants of this world bow before their authority even if they did not obtain anything of their favours and benefits. They should oppose them and despise them instead, because they [the rich Turks and Arabs] are like a parasitic tick on the nation's body, feeding on its blood without giving back one percent of what they ought to give.[55]

Kurd 'Ali here uses the same image of the tick and parasite that he used to criticise the city's Turkish upper class in his 1909 description of Istanbul. But now the simile also includes Arab notables (*aghniya' al-'arab*). The passage is included in an article on France published after the author's third European journey in 1921-22. This was a time when the new political map of the Middle East was still in the making and the divorce between Arabs and Turks not yet final. The sins of exploitation and responsibility for backwardness were apparently still shared equally between the two peoples.

Istanbul as Refuge

Quite another image of Istanbul emerges from the scattered references to the city in *al-Mudhakkirat*, the author's memoirs. Here the Ottoman capital is less a symbol and more the neutral background to events. It even figures positively as a refuge and safe haven for him, a city where he had many friends and acquain-

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52 Kurd 'Ali, *Ghara'ib al-Gharb*, vol. 1, 333-6 (*Fi al-'Asimatayn*).
53 Seikaly, "Damascene Intellectual Life," 136.
54 Ibid., 132.
55 *Ghara'ib al-Gharb,* vol. 2, 12.

tances, and a place he knew well. When the Great War broke out, Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, who was the owner and editor of the influential Damascene periodical *al-Muqtabas* and a daily newspaper of the same name, was unwillingly forced to cooperate with the Ottoman authorities.[56] His newspaper had previously followed a policy that was highly critical of the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). Consequently, it was shut down by the authorities and accused of revealing war secrets. However, for tactical reasons Kurd 'Ali soon received a pardon for a conviction already passed on him.[57] Fearing for his life if he refused to cooperate, according to his own account, he reluctantly resumed publication of the newspaper and also personally contributed articles expressing the views of the newly appointed governor, Ahmad Jamal Pasha (Ahmed Cemal Pasha).[58] He probably had good reason to be afraid and to cooperate: many of his close friends were among those Arab liberals who were executed during Jamal's reign of terror.[59]

In 1915, Jamal Pasha dispatched Kurd 'Ali on what was dubbed a scientific mission, together with a group of Syrian religious scholars, poets and notables, to Istanbul and Çanakkale. In reality, the purpose was to support the war through propaganda. It was Kurd 'Ali's job as a journalist to document the experiences of the delegation in a book, which he duly did. The work was co-authored with two other participants and entitled *al-Ba'tha al-'Ilmiyya ila Dar al-Khilafa al-Islamiyya* (1916). It extolled the bravery and strength of the Ottoman army at the Dardanelles.[60] A second, unspoken task of the delegation was to strengthen Jamal's position among the leaders in Istanbul by praising the governor's actions in Syria before them. Thus it was as a mouthpiece of the Turkish general that Kurd 'Ali came to Istanbul on this particular journey.[61]

In his memoirs, he vividly recounts the internal conflicts within the delegation over the dishonest behaviour of some its members. He also remembers how afraid all of them were of being drowned by allied submarines during the sea voyage from Istanbul to Çanakkale, and how each participant received money and a gold watch as a reward after the mission had been accomplished. The journalists also received 100 Ottoman lira as support for their newspapers. When certain of the sheikhs learned of this gift, they asked Kurd 'Ali if they could not also

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56 Due to the identical name for *al-Muqtabas* the journal (*al-majalla*), which Kurd 'Ali started in Egypt in 1906 before moving to Damascus, and *al-Muqtabas* the daily (*al-jarida*) which he began publishing in Damascus in 1908, it is sometimes unclear to which of these two publications he is referring when he speaks of *al-Muqtabas* in his memoirs. Cf., Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat*, 416. For an assessment of the importance of the journal, "the boldest, most coherent, consistent, and committed proponent of reform and modernity in Syria prior to World War I," see Seikaly, "Damascene Intellectual Life" (quotation taken from p. 128) and Ezzerelli, "Les arabistes syriens", 96.

57 According to Hasan Kayalı, in 1914 the CUP adopted a notably more lenient attitude towards its former Arab opponents, and cites Kurd 'Ali's pardon as an example. Hasan Kayalı. *Arabs and Young Turks. Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1997), 177.

58 According to his memoirs, he was advised to cooperate and comply with the wishes of Jamal Pasha both by his former mentor, Sheikh Tahir al-Jaza'iri, and by the former governor, Khulusi Bey, whom Kurd 'Ali considered the most noble of all the Ottoman governors he knew. *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1,142-3; *Khitat*, 419.

59 Among the prominent victims were 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Inklizi, Salim al-Jaza'iri and Shukri al-'Asali, three men Kurd 'Ali describes as being among his closest friends. *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1: 152-3. Cf., Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 193, 196, 199.

60 Yasir al-Malik et al., *al-Tarajim wa-l-Naqd* (Damascus: Wizarat al-Tarbiyya, al-Mu'assasa al-'Amma li-l- Matbu'at wa-l-Kutub al-Madrasiyya, 1973), 107-8, 112; *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 140-3 ("Wafd Janaq Qal'a wa-Shu'un").

61 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 140.

be counted as journalists. They did not care if this also meant they would have to remove their turbans, shave off their beards and stand last in line, the author sarcastically remarks.[62] However, there are no direct descriptions of the city in this chapter on the delegation to Istanbul.

Because of the prestige and usefulness of his person, Kurd 'Ali was later commissioned to write another travel book for the army. This time the task was to commemorate the visit of the Ottoman minister of war, Enver Pasha, to Syria and Hijaz, especially the holy places in Medina. The journey was a wartime propaganda exercise to strengthen the government's position in the Arab districts.[63] However, Kurd 'Ali did not accompany the minister and the governor-commander, Jamal Pasha, on the tour, which lasted about a month.[64] The book he composed as the official chronicler of the journey, *al-Rihla al-Anwariyya ila al-Asqa' al-Hijaziyya* (1916), was published under his name, but after the war he denied responsibility for the book's content and did not want to be associated with either it or *al-Ba'th al-'Ilmiyya ila Dar al-Khilafa al-Islamiyya*.[65] "They are pure propaganda books for the filthy war", Kurd 'Ali shudders in his autobiography.[66] In his memoirs, he again disavows responsibility for the books and classifies them as propaganda, paid for by the army and composed "by somebody else, not by me".[67]

During the war, Kurd 'Ali also contributed articles to the Arabic newspaper *al-Sharq,* which the Germans and Turks had established in 1916 to promote their war efforts. In his autobiography, he appears to be merely obeying of orders in collaborating, but in *al-Mudhakkirat* we learn that the author was rather active in the project. For example, he discussed the planned content in advance with the German representative, Baron Oppenheim, and suggested who to employ.[68] Moreover, he appears to have been on quite friendly personal terms with Jamal Pasha, joking with him in one scene in his text,[69] paying him a farewell visit in another,[70] but also pleading with the commander to show mercy towards some of his Arab prisoners in a third.[71]

Judging from this rather intimate relationship, it is not surprising that some people considered him to be one of Jamal's close men,[72] or perhaps to learn that he fled Damascus for Istanbul when allied troops approached Damascus. If his collaboration was involuntary and unwilling, as he claimed, why did he leave? You would rather assume that he would be happy at the departure of the Turks, rather than following their trail. Yet, in 1918 Kurd 'Ali suddenly travelled to

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62 Ibid., 140-1.

63 Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 195.

64 Kurd 'Ali explains that Jamal's order to him was to write about the journey along the lines of the book about Istanbul and the Dardanelles, but without accompanying the generals to Medina himself; *al-Mudhakkirat,* vol. 1, 171. According to Yared, the content of the book also shows that Kurd 'Ali did not take part in the trip. See *Arab Travellers*, 75.

65 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 313.

66 Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat*, 419.

67 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 313.

68 Ibid., 148-49. On the initiation of *al-Sharq* as the mouthpiece of government propaganda, see Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 196, 198.

69 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 148.

70 Ibid., 156.

71 Ibid., 155.

72 Ibid., 171-2, 313.

Istanbul "on business", as he put it.[73] He remained in the city for some time – it is unclear for how long – and returned to Damascus only three months after its fall to the allied forces, by which time the political situation had settled somewhat. It is most likely that the allied occupation of Istanbul (13 November 1918) also influenced his decision to return.

From his choice of refuge, one gets the impression that Istanbul was not really a foreign city to Kurd 'Ali, the Ottomanist. This is corroborated in a chapter in his memoirs in which he relates his activities in Istanbul in 1918.[74] As soon as he arrives, he visits Jamal Pasha, who helps him with his business plans and provides him with printing paper and money for his newspaper. Kurd 'Ali's previous services are his credentials. The author quotes Jamal directly as praising him for his loyalty to the Ottoman state.[75] In this regard, he recalls an earlier debate in Syria between Jamal and Enver Pasha over his trustworthiness, with the former defending him against the suspicions of the latter and declaring him to be 100 per cent pro-Turkish.[76] In addition to several close meetings with Jamal during his stay in Istanbul, Kurd 'Ali also mentions meeting with Jamal Pasha al-Mersini. Obviously, he was on intimate terms with several of the highest leaders of the Ottoman state. However, when that state falls, Kurd 'Ali cuts his ties and seeks his fortunes elsewhere.[77]

As already noted, nowhere in his writings about this period is Istanbul at the centre of the narrative. The faint traces of Istanbul in his memoirs suggest either that his personal interest in the Ottoman capital was not very strong or else that the issue was sensitive. An in-depth personal portrait of Istanbul probably did not serve the interests of the Arab nationalist that Kurd 'Ali had become. Even so, there are passages in his memoirs that indicate he felt at home in the city and appreciated Turks in general. For example, in his description of how he composed *Khitat al-Sham* and the time this work took to complete, he mentions his extensive searches for manuscripts in the libraries and bookcases of Istanbul even prior to his second sojourn in Europe.[78] He also notes that he was looking for rare manuscripts in Istanbul during the war in the Top Kapi and other libraries, with good results.[79] He remarks that in Istanbul he stayed in Kadiköy in the house of a Christian woman who was married to a senior army doctor.[80]

In a chapter entitled "Turkish Liberals", Kurd 'Ali portrays some of his Turkish friends over the years. He mentions two writers, Janab Shihab al-Din Bey [Cenap Shehabettin] (1870-1934) and Sulayman Nazif Bey [Süleyman Nazif] (1870-1927), as being among the closest. The former was especially welcoming:

> At his Sunday gatherings he used to introduce me by saying: "This friend of mine is one of the Arab liberals". He encouraged them to speak freely with me as if I were one of their circle.

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73 Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat,* 241. The explanation is repeated in *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 170, where he says that he made an agreement with some businessmen and took their money in order to do business in Germany and Austria. That is why he left for Istanbul.
74 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat*, vol. 1, 169-73 ("Shu'un m'a al-ittihadiyyin").
75 Ibid., 170.
76 Ibid., 171.
77 Ibid.
78 Ibid., 310.
79 Ibid., 313.
80 Ibid., 162.

These contacts enabled me to understand Turkish rank and reputation better than even some Turks themselves did [...] In reality the enlightened Turkish scholars liked the Arabs, admired their literature and history, and frowned on those who maligned them. Men of Istanbul were, in particular, an example of such kindness and understanding.[81]

In this chapter, Kurd 'Ali also named many other Turkish or Turkified writers, journalists and scholars whom he admired and was in contact with. When he compares the merits and accomplishments of these men with those of his Arab colleagues he, somewhat surprisingly for a proponent of Arabism, finds that:

Such types are few among us. The Turks are ahead of us in the fields of political and social science. I frequently compared our best newspapers with their best, and concluded that the Turkish newspapers were superior in style, depth and scope to those of the Arab countries [...] These are my opinions concerning the Ottoman Empire and its Turkish personalities before the Arabs had withdrawn from it.[82]

Here, Istanbul appears more like a beacon to the Arab intellectual than a backward wasteland. However, these recollections of friendship and expressions of admiration for Turks must be weighed against Kurd 'Ali's criticism first of Young Turk policies, and later Kemalist ideology. The author deplores the trend in Turkish politics towards cultural essentialism and ethnic and linguistic "purification" from Arab and Islamic elements. He feels it is necessary to distinguish between the ordinary Turk, who has always loved the Arabs and still does, and those in the orbit of power, among whom dislike for Arabs has become widespread. This enmity harks back to the days of the Turkish conquests, he says, when the spoils of war and office were a bone of contention between Arabs and Turks. Unfortunately, demagogues have begun to stir up this old conflict again. And the image of Islam and the Arabs in Turkish propaganda is so distorted, it exceeds the worst lies of the Crusaders even, he writes.[83] Nevertheless, the Arabs are innately pro-Turkish:

It is a well known feature of the mass of Arabs as well as their elite that they do not hate the Turks, but wish them the best, rejoice when they rejoice, and suffer when they are hurt. When the Turks were victorious against the Greeks at the battle of Sakarya [1921] [...], even though Ottoman despotism was still fresh in their memory, the people of Syria arranged feasts and festivals to celebrate this victory by the Turks, their brothers.[84]

In his memoirs, Kurd 'Ali devotes a chapter to the history and ideology of Turkish nationalism.[85] Even before the First World War, the idea of a "pure" Turkish nation had begun to appear, he states. Atatürk's revolution built on ideas that had been propagated when the future leader was a military cadet: that was when he absorbed them. In order to expose the absurdity of Turanist propaganda, Kurd 'Ali quotes a few lines, perhaps spurious, by the Turkish poet Tawfiq Fikrat [Tevfik Fikret] (1867-1915) in Turkish.[86] He translates the lines into

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81 Ibid., 146.
82 Ibid., 148.
83 Ibid., 158-60.
84 Ibid., 160.
85 Ibid., 166-8 ("Da'wa ghariba").
86 Pseudonym for Muhammad Tawfiq Nizami. Kurd 'Ali describes him as "one of the leading Turkish poets of later times". Ibid., 167.

Arabic to prove their absurdity: Turkey ought to be a place for Turks only; Islam ought to be abandoned in favour of Animism; and Genghis Khan ought to take the place of the Prophet Mohammad in Turkish history.[87]

The root of the problem is, in other words, old. The Kemalists merely completed what the Young Turks had begun. They proclaimed their ideology openly and implemented it. "If the state of the Committee of Union and Progress had survived after the Great War, they would have propagated the same things as the Kemalists did, and perhaps even more and worse", he speculates.[88]

Was Kurd 'Ali a turncoat and a charlatan without principles, as James Gelvin believes?[89] Or did he wisely practice *taqiyya,* "dissimulation of one's religion" in order to survive, as his defenders claim?[90] He was certainly not the only pro-Ottoman Arab who changed horses after the war.[91] Perhaps we should admire his cosmopolitan, modern ability to adapt to all circumstances and environments? Egyptian in Cairo, French in Paris, and Turkish in Istanbul, he was a polyglot: he read, spoke and wrote Turkish, Arabic and French fluently; he used all three languages in his research; he felt at home in all three of them.[92] He never approved of Turkification as a language policy and blamed it for giving rise to the Turkish-Arab hatred that became a reality when Mustafa Kemal came to power.[93] However, he certainly believed in the importance of language and literature as cornerstones of national identity, even if he preferred this identity to be Syrian and Arab.

Conclusion

What conclusions can one draw from these travel accounts about Istanbul by two major Arab intellectuals? Firstly, we have Ahmad Amin's short diary written in the late 1920s. Next, there is Muhammad Kurd 'Ali's five articles from 1909, another from 1914, a few lines in his autobiography dated 1928, and a more extensive narrative in the first part of his memoirs written and published in the 1940s. What do these Arab impressions of Istanbul represent? What sentiments do they express?

As Susan Gilson Miller rightly notes, travel accounts can be cultural benchmarks, revealing how an important social category negotiates a particular historical moment.[94] This seems to be an apt description of the value of the works analysed here. Obviously the material is too limited for large generalisations. One would need to study more Arabic travel accounts describing Istanbul to get

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87 Ibid., 167-8. The same chapter also contains another quote in Turkish from a satirical poem by Ashraf Bey, but this time the poem is in defence of the Arabs and Islam.

88 Ibid., 167.

89 James Gelvin. *Divided Loyalties. Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 101-2.

90 Muhammad al-Nasir al-Nafzawi. *Muhammad Kurd 'Ali. Al-Muthaqqaf wa-Qadiyyat al-Wila' al-Siyasi* (Tunis: Dar al-Janub li-l-Nashr, 1993), 128-9.

91 Cf., *Divided Loyalties,* 70.

92 "In France, French Belgium, and Switzerland I felt as though I was at home (*ka-annanī fī ardī wa-dārī*) and among friends because I knew the language," *al-Mudhakkirat,* vol. 1,185; "I considered Egypt my second homeland, and the Egyptians almost considered me as one of them," *Khitat, 416.*

93 Kurd 'Ali, *al-Mudhakkirat,* vol. 1,159.

94 Susan Gilson Miller, "Review (Nazik Saba Yared, *Arab Travellers and Western Civilization,* 1996)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30 (1998): 317.

a fuller understanding of Arab attitudes to the city as seen from a distance. Nevertheless, read as examples of cultural perceptions and ideological currents at an important historical juncture, these texts reveal the survival of pro-Turkish sentiments in Egypt and Syria well after the First World War. In Amin's account, Istanbul figures both as a real place and a symbol, with many positive connotations ranging from nostalgia to admiration: remarkable places, nice people, learning, reform and vitality. Kurd 'Ali's representations shift from an initially negative and critical vision of the Ottoman capital prior to the collapse of the empire to a more positive image after the establishment of the Turkish republic, when disaffection with the Ottoman system and immediate political interests no longer dictated the author's arguments.

This reading supports the revision of the nationalist paradigm of historical writing that Hasan Kayalı, Ernest Dawn, James Gelvin and others have initiated.[95] It challenges the mutual misconceptions that have become ingrained and persist to this day among Turks and Arabs, fed and nourished by "the nationalistic ideological concerns of official histories in the successor states of the Ottoman Empire".[96] It is mistaken to believe that the end of Turkish rule over the Arab provinces and its substitution by European powers was accompanied by all-out Arab rejection of everything Turkish and a general sense of liberation. While such has long been the standard image in Arab nationalist discourse, if you look closely at literary sources like those we have discussed, the story is not as simple. In both Egypt and Syria many people harboured admiration for the Turks, who successfully resisted the colonial powers, managed to retain their independence and launched an ambitious programme of national reform. For them, even after the fall of the Ottomans, Istanbul was not yet part of the Other, but still part of the Self.

Moreover, in Arabic literature, it is well known that trips abroad had an important influence on literary development and creativity, stimulating the imagination and serving as the occasion for inventive writing. Additionally, from the perspective of literary history proper, Arabic travel accounts deserve our interest. So far, most scholarly attention has been directed at the writings of the early *nahda* and travel accounts from the 19th century.[97] There are still many more texts to explore, especially from the interwar period, when writing in Arabic in general took on more creative forms and expanded in all directions. In this context, it is important not to forget the travels within the Middle East itself that have all too readily been eclipsed by experiences from faraway places with greater symbolic potential.

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95 Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*; Ernest Dawn, *From Ottomanism to Arabism: Essays on the Origins of Arab Nationalism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973); Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties*.
96 Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 4-5.
97 Yared, *Arab Travellers*, 8-10.

Iraqi Memoirs of Ottomans and Arabs: Ma'ruf al-Rusafi and Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi

SAMI ZUBAIDA

I embarked on research for this paper with some excitement. I knew that many Iraqi personalities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries knew Istanbul, lived there for periods of time, were involved in Ottoman affairs, and that some had Turkish mothers and/or wives. I anticipated narratives and gossip about Istanbul life, impressions, evaluations, anecdotes. Naively, I had in mind, if not parallels, then approximations to the travel literature of the Middle East: Evliya Celebi's narratives, Tahtawi's accounts of Paris. But I found very little.

The Iraqi statesman Jafar al-Askari (d. 1936) started as a student in the Harbiye in Istanbul, graduated as an officer in the Ottoman army, achieving high rank. He fought in many campaigns, including the Balkan war of 1913, then in Tripolitania against the Italians, with, among others, Enver Pasha. He ended up in British captivity, then joined the Arab Revolt, and embarked on a political career in the new Iraqi state till assassinated, as prime minster, after a coup in 1936. His memoirs for those earlier years are all about the military campaigns and political events and personalities.[1] Istanbul is blank.

Many of those men who wrote their memoirs in later years, when they had attained position and rank in the independent Iraq, presented their earlier years as a prelude to their Iraqi careers, validating their patriotic Arab and/or anti-colonial stance. As such, their Turkish experience was subordinated and overlaid, and only those aspects that contributed to their later careers were recalled. Personal recollections of daily life, of pleasures, of sexuality, marriage and family life are seldom, if ever, mentioned.

An earlier traveller, Abu al-Thana' al-Alusi (1802-54) was more forthcoming.[2] Having lived and died as an Ottoman, the question of subsequent Arabness did not arise. He was the scion of a distinguished family of ulama (his lineage continued to feature prominently in religious and political life until the 20th century). In a dispute with the Ottoman *wali*, he was dismissed as mufti of Baghdad. He travelled to Istanbul in 1851 to petition the sultan and his entourage, and to

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1 Jafar al-Askari, *Mudhakkirat Ja'far al-'Askari* (Surbiton: LAAM, 1988).
2 See Samia 'Itani, "The Travels of Muhammad Shihab al-Din al-Alusi, Abu al-Thana': Arabic Rihla Literature in the 19th Century," PhD thesis No. 2459, SOAS, University of London, 2003, in which the Arabic text is reproduced.

present his new Exigencies (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an. He wrote accounts of his journey to the city and his return (by land to a Black Sea port, then by boat to Istanbul). In his stilted rhymed prose writing (typical of the genre), Al-Alusi has many ornate passages describing the stops and hardships along his path, and about Istanbul. It is primarily about personalities, and how he was received in various places, and whether the people were welcoming or cool, and those who petitioned him for an *ijaza*, licence, and so on. He described the features of the places he visited sketchily, mountains and forests, climate and water, number of mosques, inns or houses of notables where he was lodged, mosquitoes and other insects, Christians, and so on. His most personal observations concerned hammams, bath houses, and in particular the quality and attractions of the *mudallik*, the masseur. He was charmed by the youths, *amrad*, who undertook these tasks in Turkish hammams: 'His skin more tender to the touch than butter, his saliva sweeter than honey (not that I tasted it)'. He recalled with disgust their equivalents in Baghdad, 'their white beards dripping malodorous sweat'. He then expresses pious reservations about such temptations: a man should only allow his wife or slave-girl to touch him.

For this chapter I will forego the exotic curiosities of al-Alusi in favour of the later Iraqi travellers, the two poets Rusafi and Zahawi, because of their greater pertinence to our times and concerns.

Rusafi,[3] 1875-1945

Ma'ruf al-Rusafi had humble origins: his father was a *bash-jawish* (sergeant) in the Ottoman gendarmerie in Baghdad. His education started at a *kuttab* school with traditional mullas teaching Arabic reading and writing through the Qur'an and religious literature. At the age of 11, he was accepted into the Rushdiya al-Askariya school, a government military academy, after being examined in reading and writing.[4] This was a great advance for a boy from a poor native background. The students were dressed in school uniform with a tarbush/fez: they became *efendiya*, a source of great pride for the family. Instruction was in Turkish, which Ma'ruf did not know well, and he subsequently expressed great surprise that he managed to progress from class to class with his poor competence in Turkish. He did, however, fail in the third year, but in arithmetic. He hated the regime in that school, which was harsh, with strict discipline and frequent beatings. When he failed he did not persevere, but left for a more traditional religious education in a mosque school. He changed costume again, now to the turban and the cloak of the religious classes. His teacher was the distinguished and renowned scholar and public figure, Mahmud Shukri al-Alusi (grandson of Abu al-Thana', mentioned above). It was there that Ma'ruf excelled in language, religion and the literary genres, becoming a favourite disciple of the said al-Alusi. He memorised many classic texts and much poetry, and from there proceeded to write his own. It was al-Alusi who gave him his title of Rusafi: one of the notable shrines in Baghdad was that of the mystic saint Ma'ruf al-Karkhi (al-Karkh being the west side of the Tigris in Baghdad, the other side being al-

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3 Yusif 'Izz al-Din, *Al-Rusafi Yarwi Sirat Hayatihi* (Damascus: Al-Mada, 2004) contains passages of autobiography, as well as biographical notes by other authors.
4 Rusafi'a account of his early life and education in 'Izz al-Din, *Al-Rusafi Yarwi Sirat Hayatihi*, 219-34.
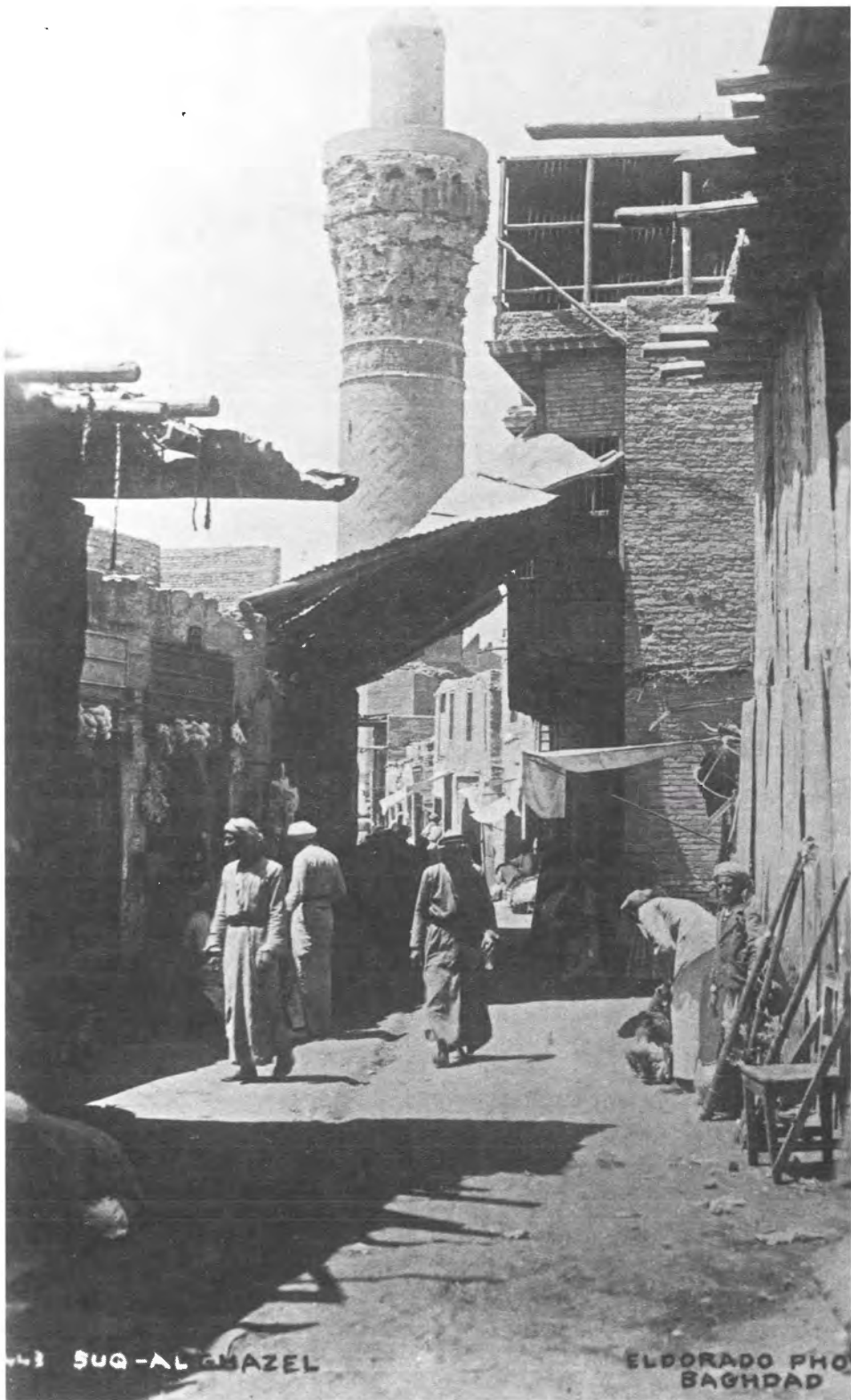
The bazaar surrounding the Suq-al Ghazel Mosque in Baghdad. Postcard from the early 20th century.
Cengiz Kahraman Archive

Rusafa). As a gesture of esteem for his pupil Ma'ruf, al-Alusi decided to call him al-Rusafi, in juxtaposition with the saint of the same name from the other side of the river.[5] After many years of study, Alusi granted Ma'ruf an *Ijaza*, a licence, the traditional equivalent of a degree.

At age 25, Rusafi started a career in teaching, first in various provincial schools, but ultimately in the I'dadi al-mulki school, a government high school in Baghdad, in about 1905. It is there that Ma'ruf learned to drink araq through his friendship with a history teacher. He became a devoted drinker for much of his life, till illness intervened. By then, Rusafi was acquiring renown as a poet, with work published in mainstream Egyptian and Lebanese literary reviews, as well as in Iraq.

Istanbul/Asetana

With the proclamation of the constitution in 1908, Rusafi was invited to Istanbul by Ahmad Jawdat Bey (Beg) of *Iqdam* newspaper with the object of editing an Arabic supplement.[6] He travelled with the deputies elected from Iraqi constituencies. The newspaper project failed and Rusafi was in Istanbul without work or income. He was taken in by Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi, the other prominent Iraqi poet (with whom he had a turbulent relationship), who was living in the city at the time. He received financial aid from other Arab intellectuals there. Eventually, Rusafi made contact with Hikmet and Khalid Sulayman, whom he knew through Baghdad connections, brothers of Mahmud Shawkat Pasha, then army commander in Salonica (later to become prime minister in the Young Turk government, and Rusafi was to write an eloquent eulogy after the assassination of Shawkat in 1913) and was encouraged to travel there. It was on the way to Salonica that the 31 March 1909 rebellion against the Unionists occurred. Rusafi, still clothed in traditional style with a turban, was arrested on suspicion of being in the ranks of the conspirators, but later released when his bona fides were established. When he returned to Istanbul after a few days, he hastened to change his turban for a fez, and wore a Western (Frankish) suit.[7] He stayed in Istanbul for some months, supported by Arab personalities, then provided with funds to return to Baghdad, but not for long. Rusafi was soon summoned back to Istanbul to produce a monthly Arabic magazine, *Al-Arab*. The owner, Ubaid-Allah Efendi from Mardin, then got him a job teaching Arabic in the Mulkiya school, which was subsequently closed down, upon which he moved to another teaching job at an Imam-Hatip school teaching Arabic rhetoric. This he continued to do for four years till he was elected a deputy in the second Majlis!

Rusafi was well in with the Unionists and an enthusiastic supporter of the constitution and modern reforms and secular orientations, views that were to remain with him in subsequent political affiliations, though not with much consistency (consistency wasn't a common virtue among the literate classes at the time, especially not in Iraq). In Istanbul, he was lodged in the house of the said Ubaid-Allah, next door to the residence of Talat Bey, later pasha, one of the Unionist

5 Ibid., 116-17, 183.
6 Accounts of Rusafi in Istanbul, ibid., 235-40.
7 Ibid., 99-100.

leaders, who engaged Rusafi to teach him Arabic. According to the latter, Talat was not a keen student, preferring to engage Rusafi in political discussions. Talat got Rusafi nominated as a deputy in the second Majlis of 1912, and he was asked which part of Iraq he would like to represent. He chose the constituency of Muntafik in the south, and was duly elected while sitting in Istanbul, probably never having been to that province! He never joined the Unionists formally, he related, nor was he formally engaged with Arab nationalist associations, though he was friendly to them (a position not always consistent with his Unionist and Ottomanist affiliations). It was during those years that Rusafi entered a Masonic lodge, paid for by his Unionist associates and Arab friends. He was, in this respect, integrated into the Unionist milieu. He subsequently tried to dismiss this episode as youthful conformity with his friends.

Rusafi remained in Istanbul till 1919, seeing the Great War there, but left no word about it. He then had a teaching job in Jerusalem. He was subsequently summoned to Iraq by the party of Talib al-Naqib, one of the contenders for the then proposed throne of the country, whose quest failed, and Rusafi was left unemployed. He then embarked on a career of opposition to the British and the monarchy of Faysal I, who was his contemporary in the Ottoman Majlis, and whom he resented and continued to attack with biting satires. At the same time, he begged for positions and favours, which he sometimes obtained through the personalistic networks and factions of Iraqi politics. At one point, he was elected to the Iraqi parliament, but continued to have a chequered and fractious career till his death in 1945.

Rusafi's personal life and his writings on religion[8] were considered scandalous by many. While drink and love of boys were not unusual, most respectable people pursued them discreetly, but Rusafi was open and boastful. In his later years in Baghdad, he inhabited a house in the neighbourhood of the official brothel area. Though not sexually inclined to the women there, he established close associations, and they were in and out of his house and participants in his parties, with dancing and drinking. He died in that house in poverty.

Rusafi did marry once, and the inconsistent stories of that marriage place it in Istanbul. He related that while living in Ubaid-Allah's house he returned one night drunk, and made sexual advances on the maid servant, who protested loudly. Ubaid-Allah then advised Rusafi that he get married, and offered to matchmake, with the aid of his sister, who then came up with a local girl called Fatima.[9] Rusafi related that he settled down to contented married life for some years in Istanbul, but could not take the wife with him when he left the city. He intended to bring her to Baghdad when circumstances allowed, but never had enough money to do so. One suspects that he did not pursue the matter earnestly. Eventually she divorced him. There is an alternative narrative from people who

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8 *Kitab al-shakhsiyya al-Muhammadiyya: aw hall al-laghz al-muqaddas*, (The Book of Muhammad's Personality: Or the solution of the sacred puzzle) (Cologne: al-Jamal Publications, 2008) is a biography of the Prophet in 765 pages, completed in 1933, following the episodes of his life and mission, highly favourable to Muhammad, but the 'solution' of the puzzle is always in terms of a rational interpretation of the history, which is seen by orthodox believers as heretical, detracting from the absolute truth of the sacred history and the Qur'anic text. As such, Rusafi did not want the book published in his lifetime, but gave the manuscript to his friend, the prominent intellectual and politician, Kamil al-Chaderchi. The Iraqi publisher in Cologne acquired the text and published it in 2002. It is sold under the counter in some Beirut bookshops.

9 'Izz al-Din, *Al-Rusafi Yarwi Sirat Hayatihi*, 257-8.

knew him that the wife in question was not Fatima from Istanbul but Balqis from Izmir, which is of little importance, except for the mystery of why there is this confusion.

What remains a great disappointment to the social historian is that Rusafi had so little to say about his daily life in Istanbul. We know that he wrote poems on the taverns and brothels of Beyoglu, which he, apparently, first frequented dressed in his traditional religious garb with a turban![10] One line on the quarter itself: 'The smile of civilisation (*hadhara*) shines out of its lips, and its lights are brighter than lightening'; and on its girls and drink: 'amongst them she who gives drink (*tasqi*), and she who takes drink (*tusqa*)'. This enthusiasm for civilisation, pleasure and fun, radical politics and disdain for religion and authority, continued to mark his life and social relationships, and got him into trouble as well as exhilarating adventure.

Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi 1863-1936[11]

Zahawi and Rusafi were the two most prominent and formative poets and public figures who straddled the late Ottoman era and the new Iraqi state, and marked the episodes of that turbulent history with their pronouncements. While Rusafi was always provocative and contrary, Zahawi was politically astute, and some would say, opportunistic, though he did take some principled stances.

Zahawi was born into a family of religious scholars and functionaries (his father was mufti of Baghdad), of Kurdish ethnicity, but not allegiance. He knew Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Kurdish, and attempted, with little success, to learn English in later life.[12] After the usual religious/literary education, he was appointed to the education (*ma'arif*) council in Baghdad, then as manager of the government printing press and editor of the Arabic section of the official gazette, *al-Zawra'*. Zahawi went to Istanbul in 1896, seeking a career and patronage. He ingratiated himself with Abu al-Huda al-Sayadi and his circles, and his break came with the Ottoman-Greek war of 1897, when he wrote a long poem in praise of Sultan Abdulhamid and the victorious Ottoman forces, entitled *Al-Fath al-Hamidi*, Hamidian Conquest, which he recited to Abu al-Huda, who admired it and relayed it to the sultan.[13] The latter awarded Zahawi with the Majidi medal, then sent him on a mission to Yemen as a preacher, *wa'idh*, part of the sultan's campaign to convert the population of the empire to Sunni Islam, preferably Hanafi. Zaydi Shi'ism and allegiance to its imam were among the rebellious elements in that country. Zahawi saw great poverty, hardship and oppression in Yemen, which, according to his accounts, disillusioned him with the Ottoman regime. He returned to Istanbul after a few months, in 1897, where he was appointed to a teaching post. It was then that he became involved with the liber-

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10 Ibid., 255-6.

11 Biographical material on Zahawi drawn from *Al-Zahawi: Dirasat wa-Nusus* (Al-Zahawi: Studies and Texts), collected and edited by Abdul-Hamid al-Rashudi (Beirut: Maktabat al-Hayat, 1966). This is a collection of autobiographical extracts, poems and commentaries by other authors. Henceforth cited as Rushudi. I also draw on the biographical introduction by Abdul-Razzaq al-Hilali to *Diwan Jamil Sidqi al-Zahawi* (Collected Poems) vol. 1, (Beirut: Dar al-'Awda, 1972). This is critical of what it presents as Zahawi's political opportunism. The pages of this introduction are not numbered but indicated by Arabic letters.

12 Autobiographical notes, Rashudi, 46-50, 118-26.

13 Hilali, Introduction.
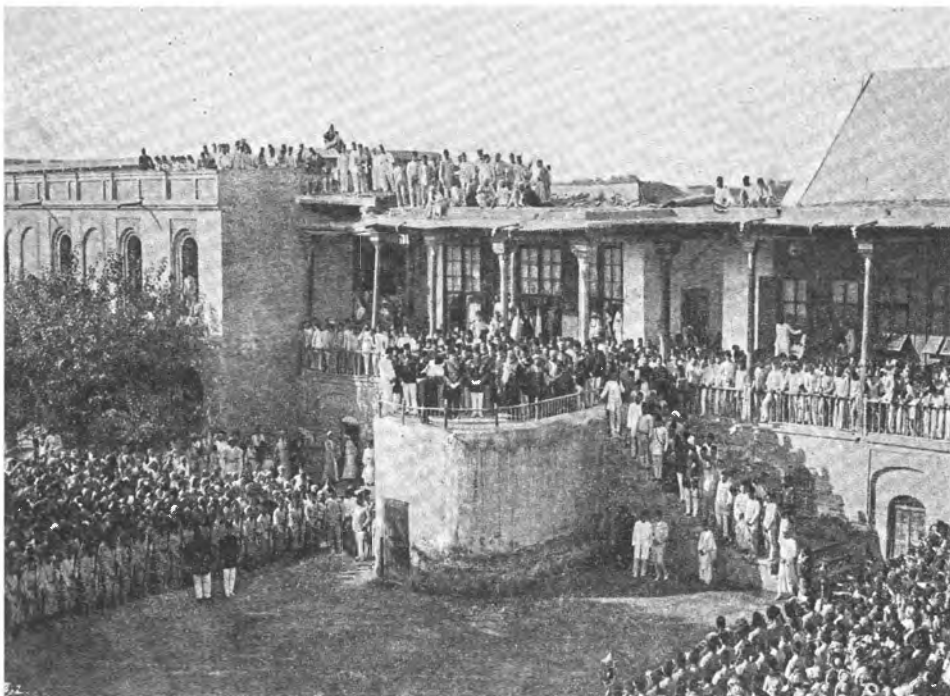
A more visible presence of the centre? Inauguration of the government building in Baghdad.
The journal *Malumat*, 4 July, 1895, Vol. 6.

al/constitutional opposition, and frequented the secret assemblies of one Safa Bey, a poet. It was at one of these meetings that Zahawi recited his poem containing a fierce and satirical attack on the Hamidian regime, its repression and its spies, and anticipating its demise (Zahawi claimed later that he read this poem to Abu Al-Huda, which seems strange).[14] Some of the verses are about the sultan's ubiquitous spies. It was one of those spies infiltrating the liberal groups who reported Zahawi's proclamations, leading to his brief imprisonment, then expulsion from Istanbul back to Baghdad in 1900.

Another episode in Istanbul at this time was Zahawi's visit to the British embassy to deliver a poem in praise of the English and their civilisation, and their military victories in the Boer War.[15] Zahawi related subsequently, in reply to his detractors, that he visited the embassy in the company of other Ottoman liberals, who were flattering the English in the hope they would support their constitutional aspirations. He was to return to the praise of the English after their occupation of Baghdad in 1917.[16]

In 1905, Zahawi, in Baghdad, in teaching and editing posts, then gets into trouble with the Ottoman *wali*, Abdul-Wahhab the Albanian. He is denounced for heresy and attacks on religion. Part of Zahawi's strategy in these tensions was to flatter Abdulhamid and render service to him, this time with a book and poetry against Wahhabis of Arabia and their propaganda against the Ottomans and their Islam. The book's title had an old-fashioned religious ring: *Al-Fajr al-Sadiq fi al-radd 'ala munkiri al-tawassul wal-karamat wal-khawariq*, 'The True Dawn in

14 Rashudi, 66, 159, 209, 227.
15 Hilali, Introduction
16 Rashudi, 403-7.

the refutation of those who deny intercession, miracles and wonders', in which he defends traditional popular religion of saint veneration (at odds with his rationalist and positivist philosophy, as we shall see). Included in the book was a poem entitled 'Yıldız', generously praising the sultan and his ever vigilant defence of Islam and Muslims.[17]

The year 1908 and the constitution fired Zahawi's enthusiasm, and saw him returning to Istanbul, now appointed by the Unionists to a university post teaching Islamic philosophy and Arabic literature. In 1912, he was elected deputy in the Majlis for the Iraqi constituency of Muntafiq.[18] There is an ambiguity here, given that Rusafi also claims to have been elected for Muntafiq, suggesting two deputies for the same constituency or perhaps election at different moments: Zahawi subsequently represented Baghdad. He was clearly close to the Unionists, but later claimed that he became disillusioned and attacked them when they showed their dictatorial tendencies, especially in relation to Iraq and the Arab world. One anecdote he recalled was regarding a proposal to introduce the *Sahih* of Bukhari (a canonical compilation of the Prophet's traditions, *hadith*) into the curriculum of the naval college, to which he retorted in a Majlis speech that ships were powered by *bukhar* (steam) and not Bukhari, which aroused a mixture of laughter and anger.[19] Illness forced his return to Baghdad, but he was then elected to the Majlis again, this time for Baghdad. It seems, however, that he was in Baghdad when the British forces arrived there. He relates that he was about to be arrested and exiled to India, but he was able to show them that he was a correspondent for the Egyptian *al-Muqattam* magazine, which was close to the British there. Consequently, he was released and appointed to the education council and to the law college, where he Arabised Turkish legal codes. It was at this time that he proclaimed his support for the British occupiers in a published poem, including the line: 'Pay attention, O Arab, and end your allegiance to the Turks, an evil nation/ and support the English, men of justice and sincerity in action and in speech'.[20] For an erstwhile Ottoman supporter of the 'Caliph' Abdulhamid, then of his nemesis, the Young Turks, such denunciation of the Turks in favour of the British may appear treacherous or overtly opportunistic. Hilali, in his introduction, demonstrates what he considered Zahawi's political opportunism. He ardently supported the Unionists and the constitution and considered himself to be an Ottoman liberal. That is after his advances towards and reversals in relation to Abdulhamid. During the Great War, he continued to champion the Ottomans, and in 1916 wrote a eulogy to Enver Pasha as the conquering hero. After the war, however, Zahawi protested his support for the Arab cause, and, according to Hilali, even inserted poems into his Diwan expressing grief and outrage at the hanging of Arab patriots in Syria by Jamal Pasha, while in fact he had been silent on that affair. He then transferred his allegiance to the British, as we have seen, praising their superior traits in comparison with the Turks. Hilali argued that in the 1920 anti-British revolt in Iraq, Zahawi continued to support the British and praised the governor, Sir Percy Cox. Zahawi subsequently claimed that he was neutral in that episode. There was clearly political

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17 Ibid., 228, 401-2.
18 Ibid., 48, 228-9.
19 Ibid., 210.
20 Ibid., 403.

opportunism here. In addition, however, we may discern some consistency in the shifts: the aspiration to modernity, rationality and 'civilisation'. This was first expressed in his Ottoman liberalism, positivism and 'scientism'. With the demise of the Ottomans, he turned to British imperialism for the delivery of the region into modernity and away from tradition and obscurantism. He subsequently, in the 1930s, expressed his admiration for Atatürk and his reforms, as well as for Reza Shah in Iran, both of whom he ranked as renewers and reformers, alongside Hitler and Mussolini, whom he included in that pantheon.

Zahawi says very little about his personal, family or sexual life in Istanbul or elsewhere. He wrote that he was married to a Turkish girl, Zakia Hanim, when he was 30 and she 16. He hints that this marriage was arranged by his family, so it is not clear whether he married in Istanbul or Baghdad.[21] They had no children but the marriage lasted all his life. Zahawi, like Rusafi and other liberals, was a firm defender of women's rights, and articles he wrote on the subject got him into trouble, at one point costing him his post at the law college. He also stated, in passing, that in his first period in Istanbul he fell in love with a 'Spanish' Jewish girl, Rahel, who returned his love, and was very sad when he was arrested and expelled back to Baghdad. He mentions this several times in his memoirs, but always in one or two sentences in passing, without attention to context or consequence.

The Ottoman Cultural and Political Milieu

We note in both our Iraqi poets a strong attraction to the ideas and tropes of European modernity, of science and rationality in human affairs, and an ambivalence towards religion, with strong dislike of its conservatism in social matters. They were both advocates, for instance, of Darwin and evolutionism. Zahawi related that he was confronted in a Baghdad cafe by an angry reader of an article expounding and praising Darwinism. 'Are you saying that my father was a monkey'? demanded the angry man. 'No', he replied, 'it was *my* father'. Zahawi wrote treatises on scientific subjects (but with little knowledge). He advanced a refutation of the theory of gravity, arguing that objects fell not through attraction, but repulsion from heavenly bodies. He also wrote on diverse subjects such as the science of horse racing and the habits of birds. Zahawi proposed a new universal script in which all languages could be written. As we saw, both poets were ardent advocates of women's liberation and critics of the traditional sharia.

In terms of their ideas and worldviews, our two poets were very much of their generation of the Ottoman modern intelligentsia, including their ambiguities and inconsistencies. Niyazi Berkes, among others, has surveyed this ideational landscape.[22] Under Hamidian censorship, little could be written or published directly on politics and religion. The discourses of science and modernity/'civilisation', however, found full scope in the publications and public debates of the day. News of scientific discoveries, biographies of famous men, and science fiction were all popular themes. The Jules Verne and Alexandre Dumas romances, translated and serialised, had a large readership. Positivism and rationality and the

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21 Ibid., 47.
22 Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (London: Hurst, 1998 [1964]), 276-81.

ideas of the European Enlightenment were prominent features in the discourses of the intelligentsia through the 19th century, boosted by the Young Ottomans in their publications, and in the Masonic lodges that harboured them. This positivism, oddly, seems to have coexisted for many with strands of Sufi mysticism. Thierry Zarcone[23] has chronicled these dual orientations, with the same personalities subscribing to Bektashi *tariqas* and Masonic lodges, to Ibn Arabi and Herbert Spencer. What these seemingly odd couplings shared was a rejection of the orthodox, legalistic religious authority of the ulama, in favour of free philosophical speculation and rational social reform. We see similar syndromes among the Iranian intelligentsia of the time: mystical secret societies, positivist modernism and Masonic lodges. Rusafi and Zahawi partook in these ideational currents and their contradictions. Rusafi was to reject religious orthodoxy in his poetry and social critiques, as well as in his bohemian lifestyle of open drink (again echoes of the Ottoman intelligentsia's celebration of drink as an aspect of *medeniyet,* civilisation), pederasty and association with prostitutes. Zahawi, more respectable and diplomatic, continued to pursue science and reform, dabbling in scientific theories and getting into trouble through his social advocacy against religious and patriarchal authority.

The two men constituted ideational bridges between the ferment of Ottoman reform and the ideologies battling for the modern nation state and society. In the current difficult situation in Iraq and much of the Arab world, liberal and secular intellectuals are trying to revive the memories and thoughts of these pioneers.

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23 Thierry Zarcone, *Mystiques, philosophes, et francs-maçon en Islam: Riza Tevfik, penseur ottoman 1868–1949* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1993).

Istanbul's Intellectual Environment and Iranian Scholars of the Early Modern Period

MOHAMMAD FAZLHASHEMI

In studies of the history of Persian/Iranian ideas we can readily notice the significant role Europe (or rather the image of Europe) has played in the political and cultural life of Persia/Iran. Europe has been either an exemplary model or warning and has served as justification for Persians to pursue particular policies or cultural movements. Europe has been synonymous with "modernisation", when phenomena such as secularisation, democratisation and pluralism are emphasised. The image of Europe has also been freighted with different meanings depending on what one wishes to focus on.

One interesting point for me has been studying the interplay between the image of Europe and different special interest groups in Iran. Another has been investigating how the dominant image of Europe has developed. To this end, the intermediaries or mediators of the image, and what they have mediated, have been examined. It is the Ottoman empire's, and especially Istanbul's, role in the evolution of the image of Europe in Persia/Iran that is touched on in this chapter. The narrative begins with a short historical introduction before focusing on three different categories of intermediaries who, through their contact with Europe, mediated an image of Europe to Persia/Iran. These intermediaries had different points of departure and different motives for doing what they did, but they have one thing in common: all of them obtained various images of Europe through contact with Ottoman intellectuals in 19th century Istanbul. It was through their voluntary or involuntary sojourns in Istanbul that they came into contact with European-influenced constitutional movements and mediated images of Europe, which on the whole were congruent with one another.

Historical Background

The fall of Constantinople and the Ottoman conquests in the Balkans and eastern Mediterranean had great significance for Iran's contacts with Europe, primarily in that connections between Iran and Europe were cut. Businessmen from France, England and Italy who had previously traded in silk with Iran, for example, were forced to turn to Istanbul, Bagdad and Aleppo, all of them now under Ottoman rule. The Ottomans profited from this trade partly by selling their wares to the Europeans and partly by being able to gain access to the technical advances

of Europe, military technology in particular. Access to so-called "hot weapons" (firearms) bought from Europeans was one reason the Ottomans achieved such momentous victories in their wars against Persia, Egypt and other Arab forces.

The battlefield successes of the Ottoman empire were a great threat and major obstacle to European countries. Ten years after the fall of Constantinople, the Venetian state decided to initiate political relations with the Persian ruler Hassan Bey Akkoyunlu and form an alliance with him against the Ottomans. Accordingly, political and financial representatives from Venice arrived in Persia, bringing with them symbols of the new civilisation in the form of gifts or commodities, for example various types of rifle, artillery, mortar, and so on. Thus, weaponry was among the first products of the new civilisation brought to Persia.[1] Nothing came of the Venetian plans, for the Ottomans proved to be more powerful than both the Venetians and the Persian ruler, who, moreover, had to fight internal battles and meet the Uzbek threat from the east. The Venetians made their peace with the Ottomans and a new dynasty, the Safavids, took over from Hassan Bey. This dynasty promoted the unification of Iran and normalised relations with Constantinople. However, the great influence enjoyed by the Safavids in Anatolia resulted in Sultan Selim declaring war on the Safavidian king, Shah Ismail, a war that he won primarily through armed superiority. As an aside, it may be mentioned that the so-called Qizilbash troops of Iran considered the use of rifles and artillery in battle unworthy of their bravery.[2]

This defeat led the Persians to turn to Europeans to secure new weapons in order to be better placed to face the Ottomans. New weapons were procured and European experts hired to school the shah's army in the use of the new technology. Some of these experts were recruited from Europeans dissatisfied with the Sublime Porte. During the era of the Safavid shah Abbas, European discipline and battle strategies were instilled in the Persian army with the help of two British brothers, the Scherleys, who had been given the task of encouraging the Persian king to commence a war against the Ottomans and create conditions in Iran advantageous to British businessmen. They succeeded in their mission and equipped the Persian army with an enormous arsenal. When the shah next fought the Ottomans, he won.[3]

During the Safavid era (1504-1722), Europe's connections with Persia were of the highest priority, since the Ottomans represented a major threat to Europe. For the Europeans, it would be highly advantageous if the Ottomans in turn felt threatened by Persia. Throughout the era of the Safavid dynasty, many European emissaries, businessmen, missionaries and travellers visited Persia. During the second half of the 18th century, some 52 books on Iran were published in France alone.[4]

The rivalry between Persia and the Ottoman empire predisposed Persian governments towards the Europeans. However, apart from the progress in military technology, this interest led to no significant changes in the social or political

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1 Abdul-Hadi Hairi, *The Early Encounters of the Persian Thinkers with the Two-Sides Civilization of Western Bourgeoisie* (Teheran: Amir Kabir, 1988), 140-1.

2 Pietro Della Valle, *Safar Name-ye Pietro Della Valle*, trans. Shuj' al-dîn Shafa (Teheran: Khwarazmi, 1969) , 348.

3 Hussein Mahboubi Ardakani, *Tarikh-e mu'assesat-e tamadduni-ye jadid dar Iran*, vol. 1 (Teheran; Teheran University Press, 1978), 14.

4 Hairi, 1988. *Early Encounters,* 141-56.

structure of Persia. A general lack of interest in the wider world prevailed within Persia's borders, and there was a concomitant lack of knowledge about these Europeans, their customs, traditions and, most importantly, their intentions and ambitions in courting the Islamic world. The hallmark of these contacts between Persia and Europe was that Persian rulers turned to the Europeans mainly for military help when they found themselves hard-pressed. There was no matching interest in rational, so-called "worldly" knowledge among the Persian authorities. Furthermore, the efforts of the Persian kings to modernise their armies proved to be only temporary in nature.[5] The fact that Persia was going through an unstable period with four different dynasties replacing one another and with intervening periods of total chaos didn't make matters easier. The British historian Ann Lambton refers to "political shrinkage and economic decline" as the foremost characteristics of this period.[6]

The Intermediaries

At the beginning of the 19th century, all this changed as a result of the Persian setbacks in the wars against Russia. Interest in modernisation increased. Once again, modernisation of the army was the main focus, but eventually modernisation also spread to other areas. The period between 1850 and 1900 was a formative one in Persian history, during which debates on Europeanisation were common. Among the leaders of the Europeanisation efforts was Crown Prince Abbas Mirza. He saw to it that European books were translated into Persian and that students went to study in Europe. A debate began in earnest as to the degree to which Europe could be a model for the reformation of society and government in Iran. In time, the number of groups mediating the image of Europe in Persia increased. These included Persian travellers to Europe, students sent to Europe, traders who travelled to Istanbul or other cities with close contacts with Europe, diplomats and exiled intellectuals seeking a safe foreign haven. There were also many people whose very first contact with Europe was through Istanbul. Through their contacts with Ottoman intellectuals or by having seen firsthand the reforms introduced into the Ottoman empire, these people began to convey an image of Europe to the Persian public.

Istanbul became a meeting place for the Islamic world and Europe. Despite the long periods of warfare between the Ottomans and Europe, there were also intervals of peace. And with peace, came commerce: European diplomats resided in Istanbul, and European merchants and scholars travelled in the Ottoman realms. Many came to stay, refugees from political or religious persecution seeking shelter under Ottoman power.

Initially, the Turks were chiefly prepared to turn to Europe to learn the latest arts of war. The first deliberate attempt at a Europeanisation policy, that is the first conscious step towards imitating and adopting selected elements of European civilisation occurred in the early 18th century. The treaties of Carlowitz (1699) and Passarowitz (1718) had given formal expression and recognition to two

5 Ibid., 160-4.

6 Ann Lambton, "The Tribal Resurgence and the Decline of Bureaucracy in the Eighteenth Century," in *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, ed. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), 108-9.

humiliating defeats of the Ottoman empire at the hands of the Austrians and their allies. On the other hand, the example of Peter the Great suggested that a vigorous programme of Europeanisation might enable the empire to shrug off its weakness and once again become a major power.

Journalism

One of the modern inventions brought to the Ottoman empire from Europe was the art of printing, introduced successively by Jews (1493-94), Armenians (1567) and Greeks (1627). However, nothing written in Turkish or Arabic was allowed to be printed. This trend ended in 1727, thanks to the efforts of Said Çelebi and Ibrahim Mütefferrika. Apart from the reforms introduced into the Ottoman empire, the new literature and the press had the most significance outside the empire's borders. Liberal forces within the empire intended to use the press to constitute a form of "public opinion", which they hoped would play the same role in the Ottoman empire as it had in Paris and London. They claimed that progress was dependent on free institutions and free institutions were maintained by public opinion.

The growth of journalism and the press in Europe had great significance in the meditation of the image of Europe in the Islamic world. The first non-government newspaper in the Ottoman empire was founded in 1840 by an Englishman, William Churchill. The weekly *Ceride-i Havadis* (Journal of News) devoted some of its attention to news from both at home and abroad. However, this was not the very first Turkish newspaper. Between 1796 and 1798, the French embassy in Istanbul had published a newspaper in French for distribution to the French colony and others who knew the French language. In 1831, the first newspaper in Turkish appeared, *Takvim-i Vekayi*, the official Ottoman gazette.[7] The advent of the press in the Islamic lands created a new perception and a new awareness of events taking place at that time. The need to discuss and explain these events led to the creation of new languages, from which modern Arabic, Persian and Turkish have evolved. It also led to the emergence of a portentous new figure, the journalist, whose role in the mediation of the image of Europe was profound. In 1860, the monopoly of *Ceride-i Havadis* was broken. In that year, Çapanzade Agah Efendi took the initiative to found a new weekly, *Tercûman-i Ahval* (Interpreter of Conditions). Associated with him as editor and writer was Ibrahim Şinasi, the poet and modernist.

European-influenced journalism in Istanbul played a significant role in the mediation of the image of Europe in Persia. For many Persian intellectuals, this journalistic tradition opened a window on a new culture and a new civilisation. Through newspapers and the image they provided of Europe, Persians became acquainted with that continent. In many ways, these images had a rhetorical, somewhat utopian character. One problem that emerged rather early on was that the Persian intellectuals and their audience were completely unprepared for the message being mediated by the press. The image of Europe and the solutions to various problems related to that image became the only way out of the tribulations suffered by the country. The mediation of the image of Europe by Persian

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7 Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 95.

Mirza Malkum Khan (1833-1908)
Muhit Tabatabai, *Majmo'e athare Mirza Malkum Khan* (Tehran: Entesharate Elmi, 1948), 1.

intellectuals took on the character of one-way communication. No real dialogue emerged, and no one ever reflected on how these contacts and new impressions should be received. Instead, there was constant praise. This narrow view, primarily based on a lack of knowledge of the new world, led to an "either-or" situation: one either wholeheartedly embraced the new impressions or rejected them out of hand. In sum, Persian newspapers, through the prism of European journalism and the newspapers of the so-called "front states", were the windows through which Persian intellectuals viewed the new world.

One of the foremost figures of modern Persian journalism was the secularised Armenian diplomat Mirza Malkum Khan (1833-1908). In 1858, he founded the so-called *Faramushkhana*, a counterpart of the Order of the

Freemasons in Europe. Deported to Istanbul in 1863, he remained there until 1871, first as an exile and later as a diplomat. In Istanbul, he also married an Armenian woman.[8]

Malkum Khan's sojourn in Istanbul coincided with the second phase of the constitutional movement in the Ottoman empire. In 1867, Mustafa Fazıl Pasha joined the Young Ottomans in Paris. The same year, he wrote an open letter to the sultan, Abdülaziz, demanding the creation of a constitutional government. During his time in Istanbul, Malkum also made contact with many Turkish intellectuals, among them Kemal Pasha, Ali Pasha and Fuad Pasha. In his work, Malkum emphasised the significance of modernisation and the new values of Europe. He advocated total submission to European civilisation. His general feeling about Europe was that the ancient institutions and structures of Persia were barbarous and irredeemably corrupt and that only the rapid adoption of a European form of government and way of life would admit Persia into the rank and privileges of a civilised state. Malkum wrote:

> I myself will not introduce any innovations. I wish that our government would to a decreasing degree depend upon its own faculties of reason and make fewer changes in the principles we have learned from Europe. Their experiences are the result of knowledge and experience. These principles should be accepted in their entirety or rejected in their entirety ... As far as questions of form of government are concerned, we neither can nor ought to present our own initiatives. We must either have the knowledge and experience of Europe before us or continue going around in our own barbaric circles.[9]

The books of Malkum Khan bear the distinct stamp of John Stuart Mill. He himself had translated parts of Mill's *On Liberty*, and in his books he discussed a wide range of political, social and economic matters. Among these were the systems of taxation, banking and education; monarchy, republic, equality and despotism; the courts, a new penal code and freedom of speech; the role of people in politics and elections; forming a government on the European model, the bicameral parliament and the responsibilities of ministers before the parliament; national unity and changes to the Arabic alphabet; and industrialisation, new technology and the new civilisation in Europe.

From his experiences in Istanbul, Malkum recognised that religion and the constitutional government along European lines that he advocated were incompatible. However, he sought to effect some sort of formal reconciliation between the two. On the one hand, he stressed the significance of language as a unifying factor for the nation, and that the ulama should follow the directives of the ministry of education and not vice versa. On the other, he wrote that the constitutional system did not contradict Islam and that the laws of Islam were the most consummate laws known to man. According to Malkum, the Europeans had not properly understood the Qur'an. Furthermore, the ulama should play an active role in a parliament. The laws of the constitutional system were so fully consistent with Islam that one might believe that they were lifted directly from Islam.

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8 Esamail Ra'in, *Mirza Malkum Khan: Zendegi va kousheshhaye siyasi-ye ou* (Teheran: Safialishah, 1974), 21-4.

9 Mohammad Muhit Tabataba'i, *Majmoe-ye athar-e Mirza Malkum Khan,* vol. 1, *Nazm-e jaded* (Teheran: Elmi, 1948), 24-5.

This idea was later to play a very large role in the relationship between Islam and Europe in Iran.[10]

In 1889, Malkum came into conflict with the Persian king, Naser al Din Shah, and was removed from his post as Persian ambassador in London. He then joined the ranks of the opposition in exile and published a newspaper, entitled characteristically for the time *Qanun* (Law). The first issue of this paper was published in 1890. It was sent via messenger and the mails to Iran. Distribution in Iran was stopped after seven issues, after which it was smuggled into Iran by businessmen and other travellers to Istanbul, Iraq or the Caucasus. The expressed intent of the paper, with its motto of "Unity, development and justice", was to fight the despotism of the Persian court and the absence of the rule of law in the land. In his paper, Malkum argued for the establishment of a constitutional government. His agitation for a constitution expressed itself in the demand for the rule of law to replace the outmoded and centuries-old tradition of rule based on the whim of an autocrat.

The newspaper *Qanun* was neither the first nor the only Persian-language paper printed outside Iran. A number of other journals were also active. The first of the Persian-language papers in the Ottoman empire was *Akhtar*, published in Istanbul in 1870. This paper refused to toe the government line (as was the usual case among the press in Iran) and served to inspire Malkum Khan's *Qanun*. The founder and editor-in-chief of *Akhtar* was Aqa Muhammad Taher Tabrizi, aided by the then-Persian ambassador to Istanbul, Mirza Muhsen Khan Mu'in ul-Mamalek. A number of exiled opposition intellectuals wrote for his paper, and very soon its distribution was forbidden in Iran. However, it was smuggled into the country and before long served as the foremost window on to the West for Persian intellectuals. *Akhtar* was very critical of the Persian royal house and the state of the nation, and played a significant role in the burgeoning constitutional movement in Iran. After some 20 years of publication, it was finally banned by the Ottoman authorities in 1891. *Akhtar* was the first newspaper to write of the necessity of the rule of law in Iran. Its publication in Istanbul also meant that both the publisher and the intellectuals who wrote for it betrayed the influence of intellectual life of Istanbul. For example, this newspaper was the first to translate and publish Midhat Pasha's draft of a constitution for a Persian public. The newspaper also served as a meeting place for many exiled intellectuals in Istanbul.

Constitutional Movement

The movement that culminated in the constitutional revolution in Persia in 1906 had begun at the outset of the 19th century. A number of different factors contributed to the widespread appeal of this movement in Persia. One of the most significant was the increased contacts between Iran and Europe. The Ottoman empire was the first of Persia's neighbours to come into contact with the constitutional movement in Europe. Political developments in the Ottoman empire during the period 1839-76 produced a number of reforms in the country's political system. The 19th century constitutional movement in Western Europe encouraged liberal-minded elements in the Ottoman empire to press the sultan not only

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10 Malkum, *Qanun*, No. 3-4.

Naser al Din Shah (1831-96). Oil painting on canvas by Fazl-ulla b. Mirza Muhammad 1881/82.
Hermitage Museum.
Cengiz Kahraman Archive

for reforms, but also for some form of constitutional government to protect these reforms once they were granted.

In the Ottoman empire, the *Tanzimat-i-Hayriye*, a programme of reform that took effect in 1839, opened up an era of progress and liberty in both thought and

action. The movement experienced many vicissitudes, but its ultimate success seemed assured when, through the influence of Midhat Pasha, the Sultan Abdulhamid was induced to establish a constitutional administration in 1876.

Developments in the Ottoman empire, including new legislation and a number of reforms to the educational system, had great significance for Persia. In other ways as well the technology of the new world reached the Ottoman empire before it did Persia. New roads were built, the telegraph arrived in 1855 and a railway was built in 1866, all of which facilitated communication between the Ottoman empire and Europe.

Istanbul came to be the first stop for many of the Persian intellectuals who eventually played significant roles in the cultural and political life of Iran. At the end of the 19th century, a number of Persian intellectuals, influenced by events in Persia's neighbouring states (including the Ottoman empire and Russia), began writing a new type of literature. In these publications, the constitution and constitutional monarchy were discussed. Persian intellectuals who had studied in Europe or had by some means come into contact with Europe were determined that European civilisation and European technological advances be disseminated in Iran. They also felt that the Persian form of government needed to be based on legislation. In 1811, the first students were sent to Europe with the task of learning these new ideas. These students would later comprise the core of the intellectual elite in Iran, eventually securing distinguished posts in the country. Mirza Saleh Shirazi was one of them. While training as an engineer, he not only imbibed the new knowledge but was also influenced by European culture. He wrote a book in which he advocated parliamentarianism and the importance of legislation for the country.[11]

His foremost successor was Mirza Seyyed Jafar Khan Mushir al-Daula, who served as ambassador to England, Germany and the Ottoman empire. He too wrote a book for the Persian king, in which he compared Persian government with that of European states, suggesting, among other things, the establishment of government ministries. Eventually, he was appointed head of an advisory council, established on the European model. His intention was to effect reforms to the administration similar to those which he had firsthand experience of in Istanbul.

Taking over the initiative from Mushir al-Daula was Mirza Hussein Khan Sipahsalar (1826-81), who had studied in France and served as a diplomat in India and the Caucasus. During his 12-year term as ambassador to Istanbul, Sipahsalar proposed that Persia take measures similar to those in the Ottoman empire, including railway construction, establishing new schools and creating an advisory council, which would act as the nation's legislative organ. In 1871, he was appointed chancellor and returned to Persia. During his sojourn in Istanbul he had made contact with a number of Ottoman intellectuals and been influenced by their ideas. He devoted much attention to the legal system, using Europe as his model. In his letters to the royal court and the Persian department of foreign affairs, Sipahsalar described the successes of the Turks in their modernisation efforts. He also commented on Mustafa Fazıl Pasha's famed letter on the creation of a parliament. He had been influenced by the new laws in the Ottoman empire and praised legislation that ensured the equality of all citizens in the eyes of the law.

11 Fereydoun Adamiyyat, *Amir Kabir va Iran* (Teheran: Khwarazmi, 1983), 369.

Sipahsalar had also been in contact with Turkish thinkers such as Ali Pasha, Fuad Pasha and Midhat Pasha and been swayed by their quest for liberty. His letters to various authorities in Persia deal mainly with new political movements in Europe, the creation of parliaments and the constitutional movement in the Ottoman empire, whose example he wanted Persia to follow. According to Sipahsalar, introducing a parliamentary system into the country, banning religious discrimination and protecting the rights of citizens and their equality before the law were all prerequisites for Persia's joining the new epoch and the new civilisation. By providing a positive image of conditions in the Ottoman empire and its political reforms, Sipahsalar wanted to induce Persian officials to take similar steps. He likened the king to a physician who must cure new diseases with new drugs. In one of his letters, he writes: "The political reforms made by the Ottomans after European models are made for their own best [interests]. Even if these changes can seem somewhat unpleasant at the outset, in the end they will lead to success and the progress of the country". Of the educational system and establishment of new schools in the Ottoman empire, he writes: "These schools raise the educational level of the population and new and competent men are educated who can lead their country toward the new civilisation". He also described the building of railways in the empire, undertaken by a British company, as a new lifeline.

However, most of what he writes addresses political reforms in the Ottoman empire. The key to changes in the Ottoman empire, he remarks, lies in the creation of a parliament with popularly elected members. Referring to a letter written by Mustafa Pasha, he says that it should be carefully translated and studied. Concerning the establishment of a parliament, he feels that this should happen only after a number of democratic rights are first established, for example, legal equality for all. This, according to him, made it possible for representatives of all the empire's ethnic groups to take their place in the Ottoman parliament. As regards constitutional reform, he emphasises a key point for the Persian king, namely the esteem in which the nation is held in the world's eyes. He considers the Ottoman empire's recently introduced constitutional system, along the lines of the European model, to have significantly increased the empire's stature in Europe. He sent the Ottoman sultan's speech to his parliament to the Persian minister of foreign Affairs, insisting that he study it carefully as it would yield new insights. In one letter to the Persian king, Sipahsalar compares the Ottoman empire's economic successes with Persia's decline and cites this as yet more proof that Persia must strive to imitate its neighbour to the west.

He considered the press and its freedom to write about occurrences inside and outside the country as important to the success of a nation. According to him, the press in the Ottoman empire was outspoken in writing about the necessity of the parliamentary system and in criticising those authorities who mismanaged their offices. The press, in his view, was an important factor in rousing the people. In contrasting the Turkish press and official Persian government newspapers, he concludes the latter have failed to convey news of the great progress and transformations happening in Europe, choosing instead to report on trivial matters of no interest to the general public. For instance, in one issue of the government organ *Ruzname-ye-Daulat-e 'Alliya-yi Persia* a report appeared under the heading of "Foreign News" that a Frenchwoman of birth had been deceived into pur-

The Shah at sea. Naser al Din Shah with his officers (*pasha*s) in 1901.
Photo: Ali Sami
Cengiz Kahraman Archive

chasing a depilatory that turned out to be a fake! Sipahsalar also published a bilingual paper in Persian and French with the intention of rousing popular opinion. He hired a Belgian as his editor-in-chief. However, the paper was banned after its first issue, since it contained articles on equality and justice and was considered too outspoken.

In 1871, Sipahsalar was tasked with forming a cabinet, consisting of nine ministers and an advisory council. The latter was short-lived, but it was a first step on the long road towards constitutional revolution in Persia. His modernisation aspirations led him into making one of the gravest errors of his political life. In 1872, he persuaded the king to grant the Englishman Julius de Reuter the concession to Persia's mineral assets and for the construction of its railroads, canals and irrigation systems, along with the lease on all customs income. This concession was supposed to last 70 years, but the government was forced to annul it in the face of Russian protests and massive popular unrest, during which the government was accused of selling out the nation's natural resources to a single foreign businessman.

The positive image these advocates of modernisation conveyed of the Ottoman empire was not necessarily accurate. Their uncritical depictions were in some cases built on naive and unrealistic assumptions about constitutional government in the Ottoman empire. The most important objective for these intellectuals was persuading the Persian government to implement constitutional reforms by following the supposedly good example of the Ottoman empire. The image of Europe mediated by Persian diplomats working for the Persian court

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1837-97)

eventually resulted in the Persian king, Naser al-Din Shah (who had heard of the successes of Europe and even seen some of them during his travels in Europe – at the suggestion of Sipahsalar), conceding a number of cautious reforms intended to transform Persia's old-fashioned system of government into a modern, European type of monarchy and to solve Persia's problems. The king agreed, for instance, to establish an advisory council, create a ministry and establish a legislative organ. A number of social initiatives were also set in motion. These included opening new schools, a telegraph bureau and a short railway line, as well as building town squares where statues could be raised. Gaslight and horse-drawn streetcars were introduced into the capital, a modern police corps was instituted and a limited number of European novels were translated. In addition, there was a change in the dress codes for men and women, and marching music could be played during military parades.

The problem with these reforms was that they were executed so that Persia would resemble Europe outwardly. The resolution of the serious internal political and economic crises of the country was not addressed.

Religious Authorities

The Persian constitutional movement was by no means limited to intellectuals. It was also strongly supported by the merchant class as well as many enlightened ulama, religious authorities whose great influence among the masses contributed in no small measure to the movement's ultimate success. The attitude of

these spiritual leaders was all the more remarkable and praiseworthy given that it must have been obvious to them that the establishment of a democratic regime would inevitably result in the curtailment of their power and influence. There were, however, other members of the ulama who at first supported the popular movement, because they imagined it could result in a theocracy such as existed for a time in Persia some four centuries earlier. When they realised this aim could not be achieved, some of them withdrew their support and joined the opposition.

Among the members of the religious establishment who were influenced by European-type reforms and new ideas received through contacts with Turkish intellectuals was the highly unusual *alim* Jamal al-Din Asad Abadi [al-Afghani] (1837-97). He came to Istanbul in 1869, at the end of the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz, when the constitutional movement had begun to gather momentum in the Ottoman empire. His stay in Istanbul coincided with the last stages of the Tanzimat reform period. In these years, major educational and legal reforms were launched. By 1869, the two leading reform ministers were reaching the end of their lives – Fuad Pasha in 1869 and Ali Pasha two years later. al-Afghani was a member of the official Council of Education, a leading modernising organ, and he had contacts with its president, Münif Efendi. He also had ties to Tahsin Efendi, the director of the new Darülfünun university. After his religious studies, Tahsin had spent many years in Europe, becoming a scientist and freethinker. al-Afghani also made serious efforts to promote modernised education as a means of self-improvement. One might conclude from the reformist and modernising tone of al-Afghani's talks and actions during this period that he was impressed by Istanbul as a centre of strength and modernisation in the Islamic world. He was also impressed by the power of Europe, which he saw as largely due to European scientific and educational advances. He now thought the Muslim world, if it were ever to recover, must revive its former openness to intellectual innovation, including borrowing from non-Muslims. With his own knowledge of philosophy and of heterodox ideas it was easier for him to make the transition to supporting science and reason as man's best guides than it would be for those with a more traditionally orthodox background.

al-Afghani advocated liberal constitutional reforms that would protect the rights of the citizenry and set lawful bounds on the power the state, which would not pry into the private lives of its citizens. al-Afghani even attempted to show that these European ideas and reforms were not only fully commensurate with Islam but were part of its very nature. For example, he related the demand for popular government to divine providence and tried to show that Islam was a religion of choice.

al-Afghani was a so-called neo-traditionalist. He rejected pure traditionalism and also uncritical mimicry of Europe. He was undoubtedly influenced and attracted by the new socio-political reforms and values of Europe, but he sought their analogue within Islamic tradition instead of openly borrowing them from Europe. His approach enabled him to achieve an influence among religious authorities not feasible for those who simply appropriated European ideas.

al-Afghani was best-known for his pan-Islamic ideas, but after his first visit to Istanbul he began to advocate constitutional government in Persia. He was influenced by currents in European thought both through his contacts with Turkish intellectuals and through political literature and the press in Istanbul.

The influence of Europe was strengthened by his travels to London and Paris. He considered freedom of the press to be a significant reason for the success of the Europeans. During his 30-year long political career, al-Afghani showed great interest in the role of the press. He encouraged its development and participated in the publication of numerous newspapers and journals in Persian, Arabic and Urdu.

al-Afghani's greatest contribution to the constitutional revolution lay in the fact that while the Europeanised secular intellectuals favouring constitutional government in Persia were unable to entice the masses to support them, the religious establishment to which he belonged could. Through their traditional channels, they could reach many more people than could the intellectuals, who generally lacked all contact with the populace and, furthermore, struggled to make themselves understood by them. al-Afghani, under the influence of constitutional ideas, served as a bridge between the two groups. However, the popular rebellion that accompanied the repeal of the tobacco concession in 1891-92 confirmed that the most effective channel through which to inform the public of new ideas was the ulama.

Such an alliance was created by al-Afghani. He had close contacts with both ulama and intellectuals. The ulama's foremost goal was toppling the despotic king. In their speeches, writings and pronouncements they supported the idea of a parliamentary system. They interpreted the constitutional system with the aid of the writings produced by Persian and other Islamic intellectuals.[12] One leading ulama, Seyyed Muhammad Tabatabai, expressed himself thus:

> We ourselves have not seen the lands which are ruled by constitutional governments. But that which we have heard and that which those who have been to these lands have told us implies that a constitutional government leads to security and development. On the strength of this we wish to undertake measures for the establishment of constitutional government in this country.[13]

Influences from Persia's neighbour to the west continued even after the constitutional movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was not only the intellectuals and the religious authorities who were inspired by the Ottoman empire: there were also statesmen who followed in that empire's footsteps.

The best-known example in modern Persian history was the dictator Reza Shah, who imitated the Turkish model. He undertook an extensive state-sanctioned modernisation and secularisation campaign during the 1920s and 1930s with the aim of accomplishing the reforms in his country that Kemal Atatürk had implemented in Turkey. Reza Shah changed the name of the country from Persia to Iran to emphasise his and the country's Aryan origins. He also initiated a brutal and relentless campaign with the aim of pushing religious leaders from Iran's socio-political stage. The modernisation and occidentalisation policy was continued by the pro-West regime in Iran from 1953 until the late 1970s, a policy that ultimately failed and resulted in the Islamic Revolution of 1979.

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12 Nazem al-Eslam Kermani, *Tarikh-e bidari-ye iranian*, 3rd ed., vol. 1 (Teheran: Amir Kabir, 1992), 48-50, 161.

13 Ibid., 339; Ahmad Kasravi, *Tarikh-e mashroute-ye Iran,* 14th ed., vol.1 (Teheran: Amir Kabir, 1977), 85-6.

Three decades after that revolution, the Turkish model is once again of interest to Iran. State and religion have been separated in modern Turkey since the 1920s. Secularist and modernist intellectuals have discussed the relationship between state and religion and a separation between them since a theocratic state was established in Iran in 1979. Today, this question is of immediate interest among those who once were faithful to the ideals of the Islamic Revolution and the idea of the inseparability of state and religion. The model that many Islamic intellectuals now look to for inspiration is the Turkish secular state, run by a government in which the Islamic Justice and Development (AK) party is the leading party.

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