A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE Late Ottoman Empire

M. ŞÜKRÜ HANİOĞLU

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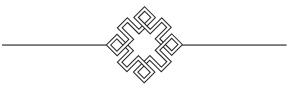

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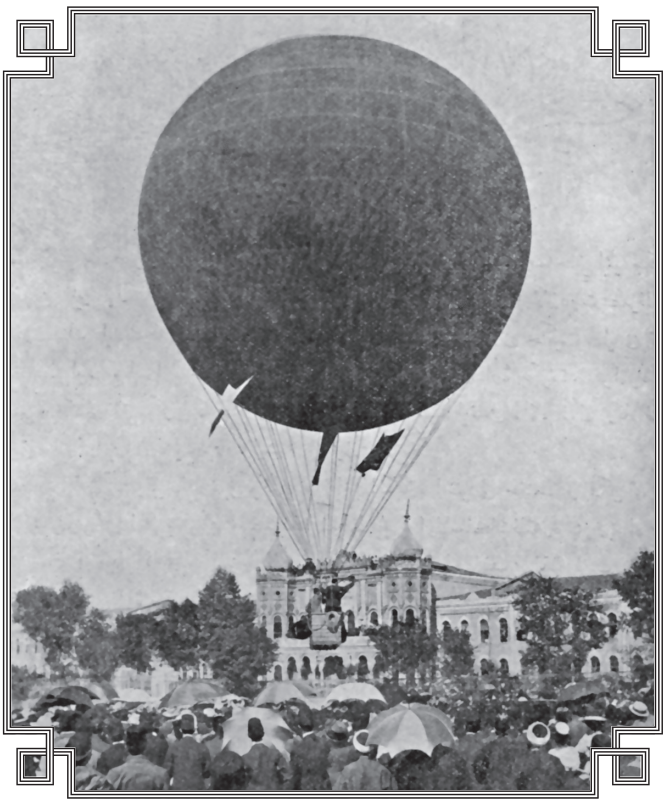

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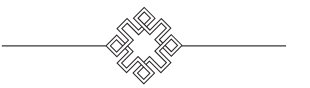
For Arsev



Mazi ve müstakbel ahvâline vakıf ve belki ezel ve ebed esrarını ârif olmağa insanda bir meyl-i tabiî olduğundan ale-l-umum nevʿ-i beşerin bu fenne [tarih] ihtiyac-ı maʿnevîsi derkârdır.

Since man has a natural aptitude for comprehending past and future affairs, and perhaps also for unlocking the secrets of eternities past and future, humanity's spiritual need for this science [history] is evident.

—Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 1 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1309 [1891]), pp. 16–17

Contents

Figures

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MŞH
Princeton, NJ
May 2007

Note on Transliteration, Place Names, and Dates

NAMES AND TITLES in Ottoman Turkish are rendered according to modern Turkish usage and not by strict transliteration. Arabic names and titles are transliterated according to a slightly simplified system based on that of the *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies (IJMES)*. For geographical names frequently encountered in material in the English language, common English usage is preferred. Thus we have Damascus, Monastir, and Salonica, not Dimashq, Bitola, and Thessaloniki. For all other place names, to avoid confusion, the designations current in the contemporary successor states of the Balkans and Near East have been employed. In accordance with The Chicago Manual of Style, foreign terms are italicized only on their first appearance. Gregorian equivalents of both Muslim *Hicrî* (*Hijrī*) and the *Rumî* (*Rūmī*) dates are provided in square brackets where considered necessary. The *Hicrî* calendar is lunar and starts from the Hijra in A.D. 622; the *Rumî* calendar was a solar version of the *Hicrî* calendar based on the Julian calendar.

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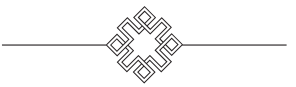


Ottoman Protectorates
A Principality of Guria (to Russia 1811)
B Principality of Mingrelia (Russian protection 1806, Russian annexation 1867)
C Principality of Imeretia (to Russia 1810)
D Principality of Abkhazia (to Russia 1810)
E Principality of Svanetia (independent 1810, Russian protection 1833, Russian annexation 1857)
Vienna
AUSTRIA
RUSSIA
Autonomous principalities
Boğdan (Moldavia)
Eflâk (Wallachia)
Province of Bosna Saraybosna (Sarajevo)
Dalmatia (Venice)
Province of Silistire
Province of Rumeli
Black Sea
Caspian Sea
Dubrovnik (Ragusa) Autonomous Republic Vassal to the Ottoman Empire
İşkodra (Scutari)
Karadağ (Montenegro)
Selânik (Salonica)
İstanbul
Sinop
Samsun
Trabzon
Rize
Kastamoni
Amasya
Ankara
Bursa
Sivas
Erzurum
Kars
Van
Bitlis
Semi-Autonomous Kurdish Principalities
Tehran
Ionaian I. (Venice)
İzmir(Smyrna)
Konya
Adana
Mar'aş
Diyar-ı Bekir
Mardin
Erbil
Province of Mora
İskenderun
Rakka
Musûl
Kerkük (Kirkuk)
IRAN
Tunis
Continued on inset below
Mediterranean Sea
Girid
Hanya (Canea)
Kıbrıs
Lefkoşe (Nicosia)
Magosa (Famagusta)
Tablus
Bağdad
Kerbelâ
Sayda
Akkâ(Acre)
Şam(Damascus)
Trablusgarb(Tripoli)
Bingazi
Kudûs(Jerusalem)
İskenderiye (Alexandria)
Kahire(Cairo)
Basra
KUWAIT
Trablus Garb-Bingazi (Tripolitania and Cyrenaica) Autonomous Karamanlı Principality of Trablus Garb-Bingazi
Province of Mısır (Egypt)
Province of Cidde
Under control of local rulers but
NAJD
BAHRAIN
QATAR
Medine (Medina)
MUSCAT

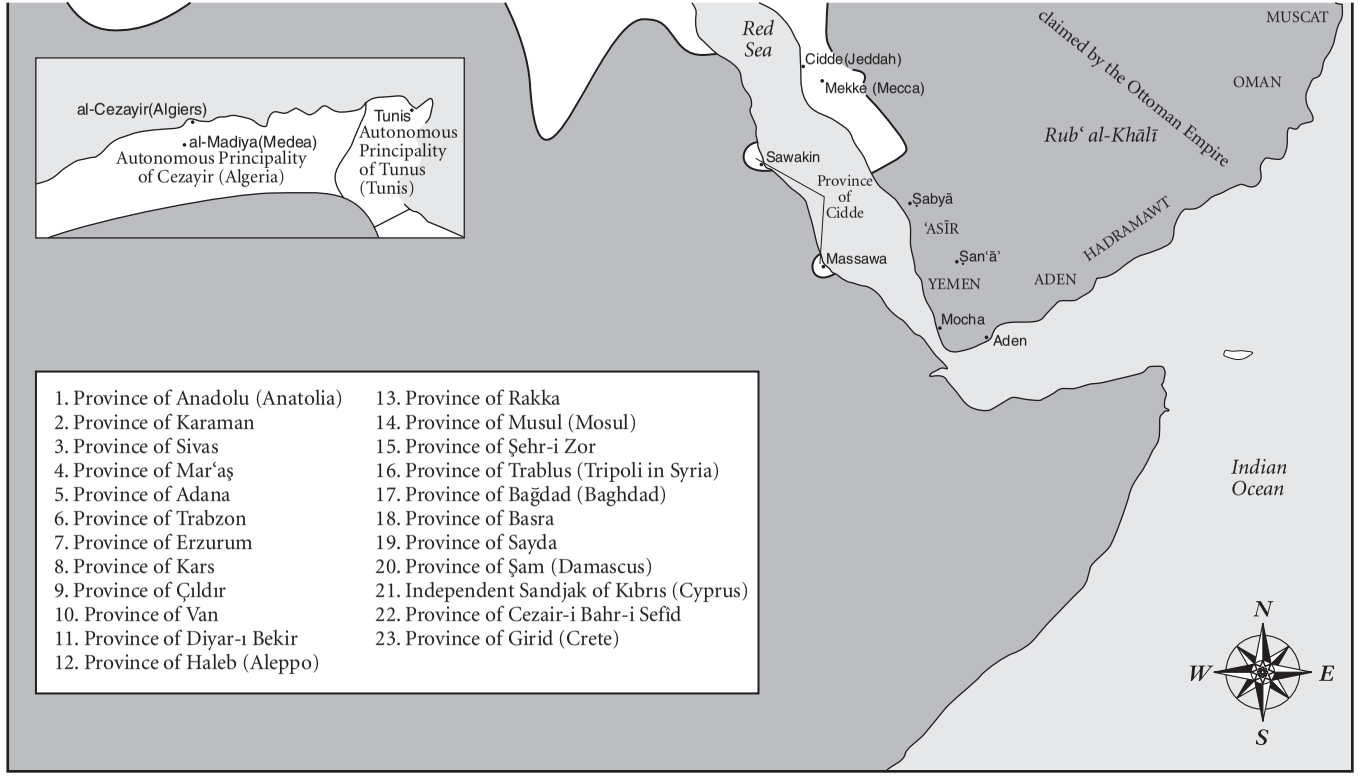

FIGURE 1. The Ottoman Empire ca. 1795.

Introduction

This brief history aspires to cover a period of almost one-and-a-half centuries, during which enormous changes took place over a vast geographic area. As if this were not ambitious enough, the need to place the events of 1798–1918 in context requires a description of Ottoman reality in the late eighteenth century by way of background, as well as some discussion of the legacy bequeathed by the late Ottoman Empire to the new nation-states that emerged on its ruins. The compression of so much history into a concise book naturally necessitates certain choices and omissions, as well as the privileging of trends and analyses over facts and figures. The general nature of this work thus precludes a thorough discussion of any particular issue or field. Specialists—whether of cultural, diplomatic, intellectual, literary, military, political, social, or economic history—may thus be somewhat disappointed with the result. But they may find some compensation in the attempt to integrate the advances made in multiple subfields into a general framework that offers a new approach to the study of late Ottoman history.

There is also a more ideological problem. The usual human failure to take account of historical contingency has been reinforced by prevalent nationalist narratives in the Ottoman successor states, producing a conception of late Ottoman history that is exceedingly teleological. It is often assumed that the emergence of the Republic of Turkey in Anatolia, and of the neighboring nation-states in the surrounding territories of the disintegrated Ottoman polity, was the inevitable and predictable result of the decline of a sprawling multinational empire. This retrospective approach to late Ottoman history has become, it seems to me, a major obstacle to viewing the period as it really was. In particular, it distorts key historical processes by pulling them out of their historical context and placing them in a contrived chain of events leading up to the familiar post-imperial world. The point is not to deny the significance of the link between the successor nation-states—especially Turkey—and their Ottoman past; on the contrary, retrieving the historical roots of modern phenomena is a vital and worthy undertaking. But the attempt to frame late Ottoman history in a narrative of imperial collapse to the relentless drumbeat of the march of progress—usually

associated with Westernization, nationalism, and secularization—prevents a clear understanding of the developments in question. Rectifying this error is a major goal of this book.

An illustration may help clarify this point. Any deep, evocative understanding of Turkish Republican ideology necessarily entails retrieving its intellectual progenitors of the late Ottoman period. But a nuanced, contextualized examination of the ideological debates of late Ottoman times should avoid projecting this later historical reality of a struggle between revolutionary secularists and religious conservatives onto an earlier, altogether different one. Nor will it do to simplify historical reality by depicting two imaginary camps upholding the contending banners of scientific progress and religious obscurantism—as is too often the case with modern commentators blinded by the modern republican reality. The importance of a work like *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought*,[1] in this context, is the corrective insight that the Young Ottomans were not secularist opponents of religious obscurantism, forming a link in the chain leading to secular republicanism; rather, they were the proponents of a uniquely Islamic critique of the new Ottoman order of the 1860s.

Thus, in order to locate the origins of modern Turkish official ideology in late Ottoman history, I have first tried to provide an account of late Ottoman history that does not assign it a teleological mission. More generally, I have avoided the fashionable but misleading tendency to see late Ottoman history primarily in terms of a struggle between competing ideologies. Although one of the tasks I have set myself has been to fill one of the more glaring lacunæ in the study of the late Ottoman period—intellectual history—I conclude that the ideas debated did not, in the final analysis, serve as the engines of historical change. A contextual analysis of the most important historical developments of the period places a premium not on ideologies as the driving force of history, but on the oppressive weight of circumstances, which inhibited the freedom of realistic policy makers who sought to innovate. For example, if we are to explain the Islamist policies adopted by the staunch secularists of the Committee of Union and Progress (hereafter CUP), we must first recognize that such contradictions exist (which is impossible from the Republican perspective), and then look to structural realities—like the increasing proportion of Muslim citizens in the empire that the CUP leadership inherited from its pious predecessor—to help us explain them. Likewise, if we are to make sense of the modernizing policies of Abdülhamid II, we must first avoid the trap of associating his rule with backward religiosity, and then look to imperial parallels in Europe, inter alia, to understand his reaction to the challenges of the day.

[1] Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).

My narrative emphasizes historical trends and processes more than single events, placing them within an analytical framework with four principal dimensions: the persistent imperial ambition to centralize, the shifting socioeconomic context, the key challenge of forging an Ottoman response to modernity, and the need to integrate Ottoman history into world history. Let me take each of these in turn.

First, where the nationalist narrative portrays the struggle of an oppressed people to liberate themselves from the Turkish yoke, I introduce a paradigm of struggle between the imperial drive to centralize and a variety of centrifugal forces. As the imperial center took advantage of the possibilities afforded by modern technology to launch an ambitious attempt to centralize and modernize the mechanisms of control over the loosely held periphery, nationalist movements, the aspirations of local rulers, and international encroachments exerted an ever-stronger pull in the other direction. Seen in this light, nationalism provided a powerful new ideological framework for the mobilization of the masses in the perpetuation of an older and more fundamental struggle between center and periphery.

Second, the struggle between center and periphery involved a wholesale transformation of the old order of the empire. Administrative reform entailed radical changes to economic relations, to Ottoman culture, and to the fabric of society. Thus, I have found it necessary to treat social, cultural, and economic developments within this larger context, and not as phenomena occurring in a vacuum. As with the question of ideas, here, too, I have avoided the tendency to ascribe historical developments to a single social or economic cause. Just as, for example, it is unhelpful to seek the origins of the Young Turk Revolution in the rise in inflation, it is equally misleading to ascribe opposition to the printing press to "religious fanaticism" alone, while ignoring the socioeconomic basis of this opposition among thousands of individuals who made a living from manuscript production. Historical developments in the late Ottoman period did not stem from simple economic, social, or cultural reasons, but were affected by all three.

Third, instead of the worn-out paradigms of modernization and Westernization, I have tried to write in terms of the Ottoman response to challenges brought on by the onset of modernity. The Ottoman state was not unique in adapting to modernity, though its task was perhaps more arduous than that of European states, if only because modernity was initially a European phenomenon (although a uniquely Ottoman version of modernity had emerged, arguably, by the late nineteenth century). Similar challenges confronted European contemporaries and provoked similar responses, of which the Ottoman establishment was not unaware. More important, analyzing societal transformation as the response of state and society to external challenge once again helps us avoid seeing change as driven by an ideology of modernization. This is not to deny that over time the concepts of

modernization and Westernization became slogans in their own right. But it is to assert that the simplistic picture of an uncompromising hostility to modernity confronting enthusiastic support for its wholesale adoption across an unbridgeable divide is to a large extent a fiction. The similarities between Young Ottoman constitutionalism, rooted as it was in Islamic principles, and later Young Turk constitutionalism, grounded in an intensely secular outlook, are greater than many would care to admit. Similarly, the "pious Caliph" Abdülhamid II's responses to the challenge of modernity did not differ significantly from those of his grandfather Mahmud II, nicknamed the "infidel sultan" by devout Muslims ever since. Westernization, too, was not just a matter of importation. Rather, it was a complex process of acculturation, in which Western ideas, manners, and institutions were selectively adopted, and evolved into different forms set in a different context.

Fourth, I have attempted to portray Ottoman history as an integral part of the larger histories of Europe and the world. Integrating Ottoman history into world history does not mean situating it in grandiose theoretical frameworks, such as the "World Systems theory," or reducing it to a matter of trade statistics. It does, however, involve the reintroduction of a long-neglected, now out-of-fashion area of study: diplomatic history. After the Congress of Vienna in 1815, the Ottoman Empire became fully integrated into the struggle for power in Europe. This makes late Ottoman history incomprehensible in isolation from European history. The story of European colonialism, of Anglo-Russian strategic rivalry, of the Austrian quest for stability—all hold vital keys to understanding Ottoman policy in the nineteenth century. Viewing Ottoman foreign policy through the lens of the centralization paradigm outlined above restores relations between the Ottoman government and the Great Powers of Europe to the proportions they held in the perspective of contemporary statesmen. It highlights the tension between the European wish to see a weak Ottoman entity subdivided into autonomous zones open to European commerce and influence on the one hand, and the Ottoman center's wish to extend the area under its direct control on the other. Moreover, to understand the final collapse of the empire in the twentieth century, one must also look abroad. After all, it was not the internal dynamics of the empire but the new international order brought about by the Great War that sounded the death knell of the "Sick Man of Europe." Although the Ottoman state lacked the innate power to transform itself into a new kind of empire, more suited to the modern age—as was the case for a while in the neighboring Soviet Union—its leaders might have prolonged the life of the empire considerably had they opted for armed neutrality in 1914.

Finally, a word on sources. The dearth of local sources that might aid in the reconstruction of late Ottoman history from the vantage point of the

periphery compels the student to accept the well-preserved records of the central bureaucracy. The best one can do to avoid the obvious pitfalls of reliance on such evidence is to treat imperial documents not as reliable mirrors of events on the ground but as filtered interpretations of them. The general nature of this study has necessarily reinforced this emphasis on the state, its agencies, and its communities—rather than on the individual. Still, I have tried where possible to present the average person's view of the sweeping changes under way around him or her, however briefly.

Despite the general nature of the study, I have found it valuable to incorporate material from original archival sources in conjunction with histories and treatises produced during the late Ottoman period. Although the book in no way pretends to revolutionize the field with new archival discoveries, this approach, it is hoped, will enrich the reader's perspective on late Ottoman history. I have also drawn on major monographs devoted to various aspects of late Ottoman history, while staying away from extensive consultation of general studies of the period, so as to avoid producing a mere summary of these secondary works. Finally, while refraining from turning the text into a series of statistics and tables, I have tried to provide a measure of quantitative information to amplify the central themes of this narrative.

1

The Ottoman Empire at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

Shortly before his death in 1774, Sultan Mustafa III (r. 1757–74) composed a quatrain describing the state of the Ottoman Empire:

> The world is turning upside down, with no hope for better during our reign,
> Wicked fate has delivered the state into the hands of despicable men,
> Our bureaucrats are villains who prowl through the streets of Istanbul,
> We can do nothing but beg God for mercy.[1]

Whether or not fate was responsible for the desperate situation of the empire, both Mustafa III and his brother Abdülhamid I (r. 1774–89) spared no effort in the attempt to reform it. But it was Mustafa III's son Selim III (r. 1789–1808) who would make the most significant effort yet to reverse the seemingly inexorable process of decline. It was not that the empire had regressed in its administration, economy, or culture, as is often assumed; on the contrary, many of its provinces were thriving in all these respects. But from the perspective of its rulers, the decreasing ability of the empire to compete militarily and economically with its continental rivals was cause for considerable alarm.

A Tour of the Ottoman Lands at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century

The most salient characteristic of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the eighteenth century was its decentralization. In fact, the Ottoman state can

[1] Ahmed ʿAtaullah, *Tarih-i ʿAta'nın Eṣʿar Faslına Dair Olan Dördüncü Cildidir* (Istanbul, s.n., 1293 [1876]), p. 67.

only be considered an empire in the loose sense in which the term is used to refer to such medieval states as the Chinese under the late T'ang dynasty. Its administrative establishment, economic system, and social organization all call to mind the structure of a premodern state. On paper, Ottoman territory at the turn of the nineteenth century stretched from Algeria to Yemen, Bosnia to the Caucasus, and Eritrea to Basra, encompassing a vast area inhabited by some 30 million people.[2] In practice, the reach of the Ottoman government in Istanbul rarely extended beyond the central provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia, and then only weakly.

The remainder of the "sultanic domains" displayed a rich variety of administrative patterns, the common theme of which was the dominance of quasi-independent local rulers. Strong governors who controlled vast swathes of territory with the help of private armies naturally had their own styles of administration. Institutions that looked the same on paper worked quite differently in practice; the formal bureaucratic structure in Egypt under Mehmed Ali, for instance, might seem nearly identical with that of Ali Pasha of Tepelenë. In reality, however, Mehmed Ali's relentless efforts to transform the Egyptian bureaucracy in the early years of the nineteenth century turned it into a modern, effective machine of government, whereas Ali Pasha of Tepelenë's despotic administration was rigid and inefficient by comparison.[3] In the periphery, particularly in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, fluid boundaries fluctuated in tandem with the vicissitudes of tribal loyalty. Everywhere, population data, even vital information on taxpaying households, was hopelessly out of date. The first comprehensive modern Ottoman census did not take place until 1831.

In Europe, the empire faced imperial competitors who were steadily eroding the Ottoman gains of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Of these, Russia and Austria posed perhaps the most formidable threats to the integrity of the empire. By the terms of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty of 1774, the Crimean Khanate—the only de jure autonomous Muslim administrative unit in the empire—became an ostensibly independent state, only to be swallowed by Russia nine years later. The two other autonomous Ottoman principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, came under Russian protection. Thereafter, they drifted steadily away from Ottoman control. Local hospodars had ruled Wallachia and Moldavia on behalf of the Ottoman sultan until 1715–16, when the Ottoman center began to award these positions to imperial dragomans belonging to the major Greek Phanariot families in Istanbul.[4] This practice provoked considerable discontent in the

[2] Charles Issawi, "Population and Resources in the Ottoman Empire and Iran," *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, eds. Thomas Naff and Roger Owen (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1977), pp. 155–6.

[3] Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 11 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1309 [1891]), p. 44.

[4] Ibid., 1, p. 300.

principalities. Local resentment grew when the Ottoman administration introduced new trade regulations that required the sale of grain and animals to the imperial government at a set price. Russia, by contrast, came to be seen as the beneficent Orthodox protector. This sentiment acquired a legal basis in Article 16 of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty. Thus emboldened by Russian support, notables and intellectuals demanded that the Ottomans grant further autonomy to the principalities. In 1790, Ioan Cantacuzino submitted a petition to the Ottoman government in which, inter alia, he asked that they be granted the right to elect rulers according to local traditions. The Ottomans responded to such requests with a number of formal concessions, embodied in the New Law of 1792, which regulated relations between the imperial center and the principalities.[5] In practice, however, the Ottomans conceded little, and consequently failed to win the support of local notables.

The tributary city-republic and major port of Ragusa (Dubrovnik)—an Ottoman Hong Kong on the Adriatic, linking the imperial heartlands with Europe—was the center of endless Ottoman, Habsburg, and Venetian diplomatic maneuvers and bargains. Although Vienna became the second protector of Ragusa in 1684, the Ottomans succeeded in reestablishing sole protection in 1707 and kept this city-republic in the Ottoman fold until the French occupation in 1806. The French integrated Ragusa into their *Provinces illyriennes* in 1808, but ceded it to Austria at the Congress of Vienna, whereby the Ottomans lost this vital trade link forever.[6]

The remaining Ottoman provinces were divided into two major groups. The provinces in which the distribution of land was effected according to the *timar* system formed the first group. In these territories, Ottoman viziers, princesses, governors, and subgovernors administered royal fiefs (timars), collecting revenues through tax farmers. In principle, these provinces operated as autonomous financial units charged with maintaining a balanced budget. Examples of this type of province are Anatolia, Rumelia, Bosnia, Erzurum, and Damascus.

The second major group of provinces comprised those in which the timar system was not applied. Here the state claimed all tax revenues, paying governors a yearly salary in cash (the *salyâne*), while local authorities were responsible for the collection of taxes and the payment of all local salaries. The best examples of such provinces are the North African domains, Basra, Egypt, several Mediterranean islands, and parts of Baghdad province. Of these, Baghdad, Basra, and Egypt transferred surpluses to the

[5] Mustafa A. Mehmet, "O nouă reglementare a raporturilor Moldovei şi Ţării Româneşti faţă de Poartă la 1792 (O carte de lege—*Kanunname*—în limba turcă)," *Studii* 20/4 (1967), pp. 695–707.

[6] M[aren] M[ikhailovich] Freidenberg, *Dubrovnik i Osmanskaia Imperiia* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1989), pp. 252ff.

central government on a yearly basis, whereas other provinces of this type merely submitted gifts.

The Arab provinces had another distinctive administrative-economic characteristic. Following the conquest in the sixteenth century, the Ottoman authorities had decided not to alter the preconquest systems of land tenure and taxation, in order to ease the incorporation of these provinces into the empire. Accordingly, the inhabitants continued to pay taxes in the particular manner to which they had been accustomed for centuries. For instance, in Sayda (modern-day Syria and Lebanon with the exclusion of Aleppo province), the inhabitants paid a cash tax on saplings to the imperial treasury and another in kind of wheat and barley to local state depots. In Mosul, farmers paid half of their harvest as a tithe (öşür), while tribesmen paid taxes based on the number of tents or herds they owned. In Cyrenaica, the determining factor was the number of wells in a given tribe's territory.[7]

Among the Arab provinces, the North African dominions of Algeria, Tunis, and Tripoli of Barbary enjoyed varying degrees of self-rule. These provinces had been incorporated into the empire in the sixteenth century by leading corsairs, such as Hayreddin Barbarossa, who pledged allegiance to the sultans and served in the Ottoman navy. Tunis and Algeria were subsequently ruled by Ottoman governors in consultation with councils led by Janissary commanders of the local army. The leaders, or *Dayı*s, of these councils gradually encroached on the authority of the governors. They even seized power in Tunis and Algeria in 1582 and 1670, respectively. Although a later governor, Ramaḍān Bey, managed to reestablish central control in Tunis, one of his followers, Ḥusayn Bey, founded a hereditary governorship in 1705. Thereafter, Tunis became a virtually independent state with only loose ties to the imperial center. However, even after the establishment of French colonial rule in Algeria in 1830 and the declaration of the French protectorate in Tunisia in 1881, the Ottoman administration continued to claim a border with Morocco, considered Tunisia an autonomous province, and classified Algeria as an imperial region (the Ottoman term *hıtta* refers to a territory with vague boundaries).[8]

In 1714, a Janissary officer by the name of Karamanlı Ahmed became governor of Tripoli of Barbary and Cyrenaica (forming the Ottoman province of Tripoli). He subsequently established a hereditary governorship that lasted more than a century. Thereafter, Tripoli too became an essentially

[7] Abdurrahman Vefik, *Tekâlif Kavâidi*, 1 (Istanbul: Kanaat Kütübhanesi, 1328 [1910]), pp. 47–9.

[8] See the official maps and explanations in *Memâlik-i Osmaniye Ceb Atlası: Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin Ahvâl-i Coğrafiyye ve İstatistikiyyesi*, eds. Tüccarzâde İbrahim Hilmi and Binbaşı Subhi (Istanbul: Kütübhane-i İslâm ve Askerî, 1323 [1905]), pp. 267, 283–5; and p. 64 (map section).

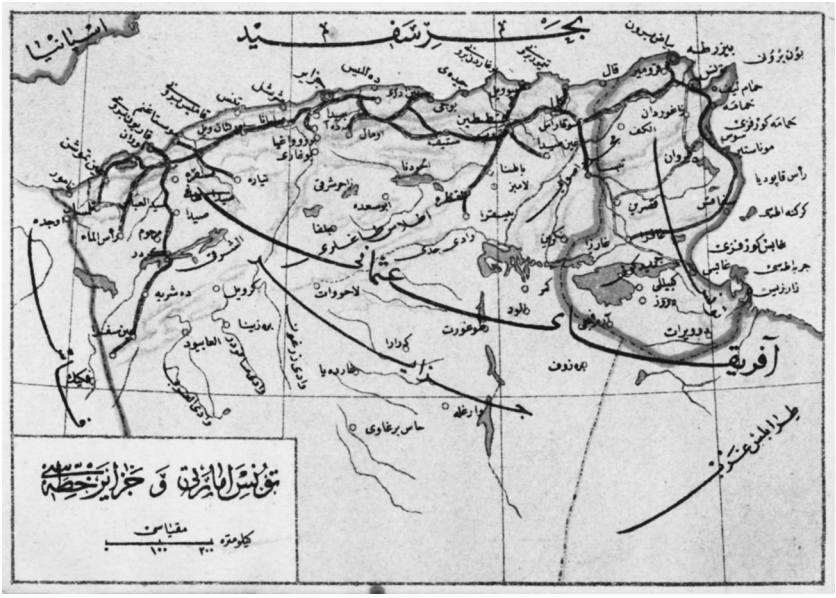

FIGURE 2. A map showing "Ottoman Africa" including the "Principality (*Emaret*) of Tunis" and the "Region (Hıtta) of Algeria," from the *Memâlik-i Osmaniye Ceb Atlası: Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniye'nin Ahvâl-i Coğrafiye ve İstatistikiyesi*, ed. Tüccarzâde İbrahim Hilmi and Binbaşı Subhi (Istanbul: Kütübhane-i İslâm ve Askerî, 1323 [1905]), p. 64 (map section).

independent province. Ahmed Bey and his successors went so far as to assume the title "commander of the faithful," a label hitherto restricted to the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph. The local economy thrived on piracy in the Eastern Mediterranean. But state-sponsored piracy and the regular holding of hostages for ransom inevitably led to trouble with foreign governments. In 1798, for instance, the governor demanded 100,000 French francs from the Swedish government, in addition to a yearly payment of 8,000 French francs, in return for safe passage for Swedish vessels. The Swedes' refusal prompted an all-out attack on their shipping, and only Napoleon's personal intervention secured the release of hundreds of hostages at a reduced rate of 80,000 French francs on top of the annual fee.[9] In 1801, a spate of attacks provoked the U.S. government to launch its first naval expedition to the Mediterranean. This conflict, known as the Tripolitan War, ended with a peace treaty signed on June 4, 1805. American terms were harsh and

[9] Mehmed Nuri and Mahmud Naci, *Trablusgarb* (Istanbul: Tercüman-ı Hakikat Matbaası, 1330 [1912]), pp. 140–44.

dealt a shattering blow to a state that was heavily dependent on ransom revenue. The Anglo-Dutch expedition of 1816 and the resultant pressure applied by the Congress of Aix-la-Chapelle (1819) worsened the economic situation and paved the way for the reestablishment of Ottoman central control in 1835.

In the province of Egypt, conquered by the Ottomans in 1517, local Mamluk houses held almost all the bureaucratic positions by the end of the eighteenth century. The leader of the strongest of these houses would be elected Shaykh al-Balad (Chief of the City). He ruled the country from Cairo in spite of the continued presence of an Ottoman governor.[10] Over the course of the eighteenth century, Ottoman frustration at this indignity gave way to a policy of restraint and accommodation[11]—an approach bolstered, no doubt, by the substantial tax revenues remitted from the province by local *amīr*s, who increasingly took over the duties of tax collection from the imperial authorities.[12] Bonaparte's invasion in 1798 reinforced the separatist drift of Egypt, completing the foundations for virtual independence under a hereditary dynasty.

The province of Ethiopia included parts of modern-day Eritrea and the Sudan, and was established in 1555 to preempt Portuguese domination of the region. But by 1800, it had lost so much territory to the Ethiopian emperors that in practice it had been reduced to the major port cities of Massawa and Sawakin with their environs; this territory was governed together with Jeddah and Mecca.[13] The port of Sawakin, now in the Sudan and formerly part of the province of Egypt, was later entrusted to a sea captain and attached to the new Province of Ethiopia. A customs director collected duties with the help of a local amīr and a handful of soldiers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, 3,200 Spanish silver dollars were remitted annually, from Sawakin to Jeddah.[14] However, this amount did not even cover the governor's salary.

Ottoman control of the Arabian Peninsula was no better. Despite claims to the entire peninsula, based on pledges of allegiance made by tribal leaders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, central rule was limited to the coastal areas along the Red Sea and Persian Gulf, and to the Ḥijāz. Control

[10] Stanford J. Shaw, *Ottoman Egypt in the Age of the French Revolution by Ḥuseyn Efendî* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), pp. 10–11.

[11] Michael Winter, *Egyptian Society under Ottoman Rule, 1517–1798* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 61.

[12] Stanford J. Shaw, *The Financial and Administrative Organization and Development of Ottoman Egypt, 1517–1798* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), p. 348.

[13] Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Güney Siyaseti: Habeş Eyaleti* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1974), pp. 37ff.

[14] [John Lewis Burckhardt], *Johann Ludwig Burckhardt's Reisen in Nubien* (Weimar: Landes-Industrie-Comptoirs, 1820), pp. 608–13.

of the Ḥijāz was essential for the legitimacy of the Ottoman sultans who, unable to trace their lineage back to the Prophet Muḥammad, based their claim to the Caliphate on their custodianship of the Two Holy Sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina. The Ottomans administered the Ḥijāz through the Sharifs of Mecca, and distributed large sums of money and handsome gifts on a regular basis in an effort to gain favor with the local population.

But Ottoman rule of the peninsula met a vigorous challenge at the turn of the century. The influence of the teachings of the eighteenth-century scholar Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb spread following their adoption by his son-in-law Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd, sheikh of a local dynasty in Najd. The Wahhābīs, who called themselves al-Muwaḥḥidūn (Affirmers of the Unity of God), based their theology on the teachings of the controversial fourteenth-century Syrian scholar, Ibn Taymīyah, and those of his famous disciple, Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah. They followed the Ḥanbalī legal doctrine—the strictest of the four Sunnī schools of law. The Wahhābīs, who frowned on ostentatious displays of spirituality, espoused a puritanical and scripturalist interpretation of the Qur'ān and the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad, and advocated their stringent application to Muslim society. They mounted a deft challenge to the orthodoxy sponsored by the Ottoman state, denouncing traditional Ottoman religious practices as polytheistic innovations. The Wahhābīs condemned such Ottoman traditions as the construction of tombs and shrines, the decoration of holy buildings in Mecca and Medina, and various religious ceremonies, including pilgrimages to shrines and tombs and the celebration of the Prophet's birthday. For the Wahhābīs—who forbade all forms of music but the drum and viewed decorative arts as un-Islamic—Ottoman high culture represented the worst form of idolatry, toward which they harbored a visceral hatred reminiscent of Protestant attitudes toward Catholic religiosity.

During the last years of the eighteenth century, Muḥammad ibn Saʿūd's son ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz led campaigns against the Ottomans, pillaging towns in the Ḥijāz and Iraq. In 1798, following the defeat of his forces, the Sharif of Mecca signed an agreement permitting the Wahhābīs to come to Mecca on pilgrimage.[15] In 1801, Saʿūd ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz occupied the holiest city of Islam on behalf of his father. He extracted oaths of allegiance from the local tribes and, with their assistance, destroyed numerous tombs revered by the Ottoman authorities. The Wahhābīs seized control of the Two Holy Sanctuaries, prevented pilgrims from the Ottoman lands from performing the pilgrimage, and demanded that clerics not deliver the Friday sermons in the name of the Ottoman sultan—thereby undermining the most significant manifestation of Ottoman authority at the time.[16] In addition, until

[15] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 7, p. 197.

[16] Ibid., 8, pp. 123–4.

their final defeat in 1818, they refused to allow the sultan's *Mahmil* (Maḥmal), the special litter that carried the Ottoman sultan's yearly offerings to Mecca and Medina sent to Mecca at the time of the pilgrimage, to enter in the holiest city of Islam. In their words: it was "not permissible for us . . . to approve a symbol of polytheism."[17]

The transformation of the Wahhābī movement into a state stretching from the borders of Yemen to the outskirts of Basra prompted Ottoman statesmen to entertain the radical idea of seeking help from the British Royal Navy.[18] In the event, however, it was the Governor of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha, who dispatched his sons İsmail (Ismāʿīl) and Tosun (Tūsūn) Pashas to Arabia, defeating the Wahhābīs on the battlefield in September 1818. That the reestablishment of Ottoman rule in the Ḥijāz however tenuous was seen as crucial to Ottoman legitimacy is shown by the fact that Mahmud II (r. 1808–39) adopted the title of *ghazi* (holy warrior) upon receiving the key of the Kaʿbah.[19]

In many other parts of the peninsula Ottoman rule was a fiction, as illustrated by the following anecdote. In 1917, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry charged two ambassadors with the preparation of an official memorandum on the history of the Southern Arabian region of Hadramawt in order to substantiate Ottoman claims to this territory after the war. As an exhaustive search through the Ottoman archives yielded no data whatsoever on the area, the ambassadors resorted to composing their memorandum on the basis of the entry in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. If their research experience was any guide, they concluded, the region should be considered part of the British sphere of influence.[20] Similarly, into the twentieth century, the Law Bureau of the Grand Vizier's Office was still relying heavily on a sixteenth-century compilation of letters exchanged between Ottoman sultans and local leaders in Arabia in order to divine the nature of a given region's relationship with the imperial center.[21] Despite the evident weakness or nonexistence of Ottoman rule, over the course of the nineteenth century the Ottoman authorities developed an uncompromising claim to the entire Arabian Peninsula—including such regions as Oman, where there had never been any Ottoman administration, and whose rulers had signed international treaties with European powers.[22] This claim became one of the

[17] BOA-HH 19550 J. Saʿud ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz's letter to Yusuf Pasha [January 1809].

[18] BOA-HH 3831. Undated letter from the Governor of Baghdad, Süleyman Pasha, to Sufyan Ağa.

[19] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 10, p. 102.

[20] Mehmed Nâbi and Rumbeyoğlu Fahreddin, *Hadramut Mes'elesi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1334 [1917]), pp. 1–6.

[21] BOA-BEO/ file 353914 [February 6, 1912].

[22] However, in letters sent to the Ottoman authorities, the Omani leaders professed "sincerity and respect." See *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 2, p. 148.

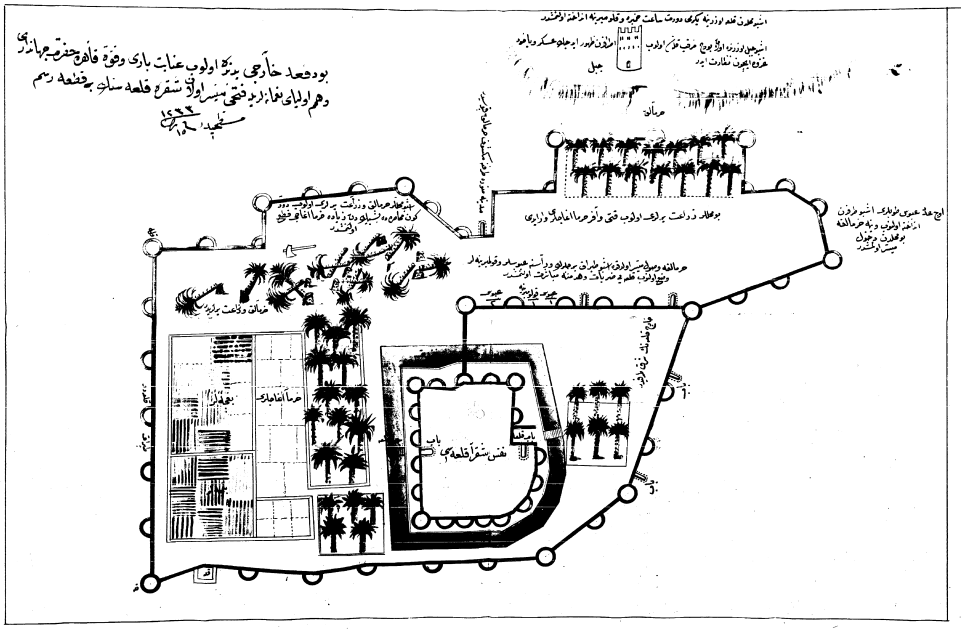

Figure 3. An Ottoman sketch dated January 23, 1818, depicting how the Shaqrā' fortress fell to the Ottoman-Egyptian expeditionary force during the campaign against the Wahhābīs. BOA, HH. 19533 (1818).

basic tenets of Ottoman foreign policy, tenaciously upheld until the end of the empire.[23]

In much of the rest of the empire, we find a pattern of strong governors compelling the central government to grant them various degrees of autonomy. In Baghdad, successive governors appointed an ever-growing number of slaves (Mamluks) imported in this case from Georgia, to important positions in government. The able Süleyman Pasha, appointed by the central government in 1749 to stem the rising tide of disorder, did so with the help of a massive influx of slaves. Ömer Bey, who eventually succeeded him as governor, further institutionalized the Mamluk role in Baghdad, which came to resemble the Mamluk position in Egypt, particularly in terms of the extent of autonomy from the Ottoman center and the strong local impulse toward modernization. A later governor, also named Süleyman Pasha, employed one John Raymond, a British military adviser from India, to reform the local military organization.[24] Like Mehmed Ali in

[23] Mehmed Nâbi and Rumbeyoğlu Fahreddin, *Maskat Mes'elesi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1334 [1917]), pp. 5–6.

[24] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 7, p. 289.

Egypt, the Mamluks of Baghdad expanded the area under their direct or indirect rule. In time, the area from Basra to Mosul fell under the control of semi-autonomous Mamluk governors allied to a powerful Mamluk bureaucratic class in Baghdad. The last Mamluk governor of Baghdad, Davud Pasha, was not defeated by the central government until 1831.

In Scutari in Albania, Kara Mahmud Pasha, a local governor whose grandfather Mehmed Pasha had established hereditary rule, went so far as to enter into cordial relations with Austria and Venice, the two archenemies of the Ottoman state during the last decade of the eighteenth century.[25] In southern Albania and northern Epirus, Ali Pasha of Tepelenë, a former brigand whose ruthless regime Lord Byron described as "lawless law,"[26] enjoyed a similar autonomy verging on independence. With the help of the French, to whom he promised that he would be their "best and most faithful ally," Ali Pasha managed to extend the area under his administration to the Peloponnese and Aetoloacarnania. Unlike his kinsman to the north, he worked against the Venetians.[27]

In Syria and modern-day Palestine the nature of local government and of relations with Istanbul hinged on the character of the man or group in power. The family governorship of the ʿAẓms in Damascus (beginning in the 1730s and continuing intermittently until the early nineteenth century) never questioned the authority of the imperial center.[28] The ʿAẓms' power over much of the Syrian hinterland rested on a strong local military and economic base coupled with a strategic partnership with the center: the family helped the central government keep the region in the Ottoman fold in return for a free hand in the conduct of local affairs. They were exceptionally adept at accommodating the changing expectations of the center while satisfying the demands of local elites and the broader populace. The ʿAẓms brought prosperity to Syria by increasing exports to Europe. A more independent local ruler emerged in Acre: Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar al-Zaydānī, who introduced an effective commercial monopoly system[29] later emulated by Mehmed ʿAli and the Ottoman center, forged independent trade deals with European consuls, straining ties with the imperial government. But the resulting economic prosperity garnered popular support for his rule. His army

[25] Ibid., 6, pp. 101ff.

[26] [George Gordon] Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* ed. A. H. Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931), p. 60.

[27] [Alphonse de Beauchamp], *The Life of Ali Pacha of Janina, Vizier of Epirus, Surnamed Aslan, or the Lion from Various Authentic Documents* (London: Lupton Relfe, 1822), pp. 68–9.

[28] *Al-usra al-ʿAẓmīya,* ed. ʿAbd al-Qādir al-ʿAẓm (Damascus: Maṭbaʿat al-Inshā', 1960), pp. 25ff.

[29] Thomas Philipp, *Acre: The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian City, 1730–1831* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), pp. 102ff, 128.

was notable for the role played in it by the Lebanese Shīʿites, now the military base of Ḥizballāh. His reign was followed by the iron rule of the dreaded Cezzar Ahmed Pasha (Aḥmad Pasha al-Jazzār, "the butcher") in the 1770s; his methods were so cruel that the locals named his rough successor Süleyman Pasha "al-ʿĀdil" ("the just"), by comparison. Unlike Ẓāhir al-ʿUmar, Ahmed Pasha, a Bosnian, did not have a local power base, but he succeeded in winning imperial favor by restoring order in Syria and weakening the notable houses. In return for his distinguished service, Ahmed Pasha was rewarded with noteworthy appointments, as governor first of Sidon and then of Damascus. His defense of Acre against Bonaparte earned him enormous fame. Once in power, Ahmed Pasha enhanced his authority by a policy of oppression and assiduous efforts to crush the independent power bases in the region, including that of the ʿAẓms. Possessing a private army and navy, he ruled like an independent prince, although he never acquired popular support. Ahmed Pasha's deafness to orders from above and appeals from below made him tremendously unpopular with subjects and overlords alike.[30] Yet he remained in power until his death in 1804.

Abuse of imperially sanctioned power was rampant throughout the empire. In several regions, individuals actually obtained official appointments through the threat or use of force against the imperial authorities. In Vidin in 1795, Pazvandoğlu Osman, a former mercenary in the service of the Wallachian prince, took advantage of being the son of a former notable who had been executed by the central administration, and subjected a vast area in present-day Serbia and western Bulgaria by force, dismissing local administrators and installing his own men. Two years later, the central government dispatched an army to put an end to this situation, but Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1789 compelled it to grant Pazvandoğlu Osman an imperial pardon and appoint him governor of Vidin with the rank of vizier.

In areas that had never fallen under direct Ottoman control, like Mount Lebanon, rival groups vied for power and recognition from Istanbul. The Bashīr clan in Lebanon reemerged victorious from a protracted period of internecine strife in the late seventeenth century. When, in 1788, Lebanese notables and other local leaders elected Bashīr Shihāb II as the new governor of Mount Lebanon,[31] the central government had no alternative but to recognize his rule (which he sustained, with brief interruptions, until 1840). As governor, Bashīr Shihāb II consistently resisted any Ottoman diktat: when Bonaparte attacked the empire in 1798, he declared his neutrality; and when İsmail Pasha laid siege to Acre in 1832, he aided him. A similar situation existed in Ottoman Kurdistan, where rival tribal leaders fought

[30] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 7, p. 47.

[31] Ibid., 6, p. 110.

each other for dominance without much interference from the center. Mere rumors of Ottoman troop mobilization were sufficient to trigger a revolt by a major Kurdish tribe.[32] Nevertheless, both in Lebanon and Kurdistan, local chieftains never went as far as the outright rejection of Ottoman suzerainty, and the Ottoman authorities carefully monitored the local political scene.

All the same, Ottoman understanding of the local dynamics of power was not always very accurate, as the following incident from the ostensibly vassal principality of Montenegro illustrates. In 1797, a man named Vinčić appeared at the imperial capital with a letter of introduction from the Ottoman ambassador to Prussia, claiming that he was a Montenegrin aristocrat duly elected by a local council. He furnished an election document, dated 1795, and promised to raise a 35,000-man army and collect the poll tax on behalf of the central government. The Ottoman authorities seriously entertained the idea of recognizing this person as the new ruler of Montenegro until the French ambassador informed them that he was a charlatan who had already attempted to dupe the French authorities by posing as a Croat prince.[33]

Even in the central provinces of Anatolia and Rumelia, imperial control was far from effective. Two social groups in particular gained considerable power vis-à-vis the state: local dynasts and notables. In many regions, local dynasts became so powerful that they exercised feudal control over large areas. Contemporaries termed such leaders "Mütegallibe," meaning usurpers or oppressors. Men such as Çaparoğlu Süleyman or Karaosmanzâde Ömer in Anatolia, or İsmail Bey of Serez in Rumelia, continued to contribute to military campaigns and did not challenge the authority of the state directly (e.g., by withholding taxes). In return, they secured the freedom to administer the territory under their control according to their desires, and often bequeathed their power to members of their own families.

The power of the *âyân*, or local notables, increased over the eighteenth century, as governors opted to appoint influential locals as tax collectors. A parallel development that reinforced this trend in 1726 was the end of the Ottoman practice of dispatching subgovernors from the center. This decision paved the way for the appointment of local notables as administrators to combat brigandage, safeguard tax collection, and recruit soldiers.[34] The notables thus emerged as a significant social class mediating between the central government and its subjects. Despite the official abolition of the title

[32] Ahmed Vâsıf, *Mehasinü'l-Âsâr ve Hakaikü'l-Ahbâr,* ed. Mücteba İlgürel (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994), p. 349.

[33] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 6, pp. 274–7.

[34] Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Âyânlık* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1994), pp. 141–68.

âyân in 1786, notables—such as Tirsinikli İsmail and Alemdar Mustafa Pasha in Rumelia, and Cizyedârzâde Hüseyin of Bursa in Anatolia—continued to represent a powerful social group in the empire until the success of the centralization policies in the mid-nineteenth century. The concentration of power in the hands of local dynasts and notables brought about a de facto change in the land tenure system, compeling the government to agnize private ownership of land, albeit unofficially. This significantly altered the relationship between landholders and peasants, providing impetus for peasant revolts, particularly in the European provinces of the empire.

The Ottoman Legal System

Ottoman law was based on two major sources: traditional Islamic *sharīʿa* law and sultanic law, the latter produced through legislation issued by the sultans. The sharīʿa served as the sole base for adjudicating issues concerning individual rights, family law, inheritance, commerce, and the rights of foreign subjects. In practice, standard works of *fiqh* (canonical jurisprudence) were used to settle disputes on such matters. Although Ottoman practice employed Muslim fiqh as a penal code, imperial *kanunnâme*s (code books) were also used as a major reference in this field. Numerous *fatwās*, issued by the highest judicial authorities, invested the sultan with the authority to legislate based on the principle of protecting the public interest.[35] The exercise of the sultan's right to issue laws in areas outside the sharīʿa led to the creation of a considerable body of law regulating administration, taxation, and international relations, as well as special rules for taxation and administration in the various provinces; these provincial regulations took local customs and traditions into account. The sultan, as legislator, could issue *yasaknâme*s (laws banning certain acts or establishing regulations for new circumstances), *adaletnâme*s (decrees requiring the authorities to act within the boundaries of the sharīʿa, sultanic law, or custom), and decrees for implementation by *qāḍīs*. These accepted forms of *lex principis* (sometimes based on *ius commune*) generated the Ottoman *örfî* (customary, sultanic) law.

In theory, all laws and practices conformed to the sharīʿa, and were applied by qāḍīs in a uniform manner throughout the empire. In practice, however, the dualistic character of the legal system, the different administrative regulations for the various provinces, and their somewhat arbitrary implementation resulted in uneven application of the law. This phenomenon was exacerbated by the seepage of power to the periphery, as qāḍīs

[35] Halil İnalcık, "Osmanlı Hukukuna Giriş: Örfî-Sultanî Hukuk ve Fatih'in Kanunları," *Ankara Üniversitesi Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi* 13/2 (1958), pp. 104ff.

yielded to the authority of notables and imperial uniformity to local variation. One need not agree with Max Weber's depiction of *Kadijustiz* as the antithesis of Western legal formalism and substantive rationality to recognize that the uniform application of justice was severely disrupted by the rise of local notables. Another impediment to uniformity was the decline of the ulema as a class. As the foremost Ottoman court historian of the nineteenth century put it, religious scholars who could not even mount a coherent response to the challenge of Wahhābism[36] "existed only in name."[37] Selim III's angry remark—"May God help us and relieve us of our dependence on them!"[38]—attests to the waning respect for the ulema in official circles. The fragmentation of legal practice and the decline of legal practitioners contributed much to the disintegration of the empire as a whole.

In addition to the legislative latitude granted to the sultan, the Ottoman sharīʿa tolerated the existence, within limits, of parallel systems of law applicable to non-Muslims. Up to 1839, the Ottoman legal system recognized three major groups among the inhabitants of the empire: Muslims, *dhimmī*s (scriptuaries, or people of the Book, living under Muslim rule), and *musta'min*s (non-Muslim foreigners residing in the empire). The sharīʿa applied to all issues involving Muslims. But when it came to the adjudication of internal matters, such as family law, non-Muslims had a choice: they could submit cases either to their own religious institutions (e.g., Christian ecclesiastical courts or Jewish rabbinical courts) or to sharīʿa courts. By and large, non-Muslims preferred the former course of action. Cases between individuals of the same foreign nationality were settled according to the law of their country of origin by special magistrates located within their embassies or consulates. Legal conflicts between a non-Muslim foreigner and a Muslim were settled in sharīʿa courts with the presence of dragomans.

The Ottoman Economy

At the turn of the nineteenth century, the Ottoman economy was still pre-mercantilist and agrarian. Circulation and use of money was mostly limited to large towns. Like many other pre-industrial European economies, the Ottoman system was founded on local self-sufficiency, and state policy had a distinctly provisionist character. Production first satisfied local demand; any surpluses were either consumed by the state (especially the military) or sent to other provinces. The domestic and international customs

[36] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 7, p. 195.
[37] Ibid., 1, p. 117.
[38] Ibid., 5, p. 31.

regime discouraged long-distance trade, including exports, while providing an incentive for local distribution. At the same time, the state encouraged the import of scarce products and protected the merchants concerned by means of capitulations. Not surprisingly, the combination of state-sponsored imports and restrictions on exports was producing soaring trade deficits by the eighteenth century, giving rise to strong pressures to borrow money.[39] The persistence of provisionism as the cornerstone of economic policy in the Ottoman Empire up to the middle of the nineteenth century stands out in contrast to Europe, where criticism of its tenets had already emerged by the end of the seventeenth century (e.g., Pierre le Pesant sieur de Boisguilbert's *Le détail de la France; la cause de la diminution de ses biens, et la facilité du remède*, 1695), and sophisticated alternatives were being suggested in the eighteenth century (e.g., by the Physiocrats).

Because the Ottoman economy was founded upon agriculture, the structure of land tenure lay at the heart of the Ottoman economic system. In principle, the state recognized three primary types of landholding: private property belonging to Muslims (*öşrî* land), private property belonging to non-Muslims (*haracî* land), and conquered land under state control (*mirî* land). But in practice the first two types were rare, and were largely confined to Syria, Arabia, and various Mediterranean islands. Registration of a piece of land as *haracî* by a non-Muslim was irrevocable, even if the owner subsequently converted to Islam or sold the land to a Muslim. The same rigidity applied to land registered as *öşrî*. But almost all of the Ottoman heartland was state-owned property, on which peasants worked as tenants. Beginning in the sixteenth century, and based on some famous fatwās of Şeyhülislâm Mehmed Ebu'ssuʿud Efendi, all conquered territory here was considered state property. In practice, however, there was no consistent policy on the question whether landowners in conquered lands should be allowed to retain ownership of their property. Practical and economic considerations usually determined the status of a particular piece of land. For instance, although the state recognized the islands of Mitilíni and Crete as privately owned land belonging to non-Muslims, it considered Cyprus to be state-owned land.

Roughly 20 percent of Ottoman agricultural land belonged neither to private individuals nor to the state, but rather to pious foundations (*waqfs*). These foundations were established by sultans, members of the royal family, statesmen, ulema, and other wealthy individuals. The income from land (and buildings) owned by the foundations was earmarked for social purposes and for cash foundations that operated like banks. Although the state did receive a minuscule portion of the income derived from foundations

[39] Mehmet Genç, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Devlet ve Ekonomi* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 2000), pp. 88–9.

(the *divanî* share), the control of a huge part of the empire's agricultural land by charitable institutions represented a serious limitation on state revenue. Sultan Mustafa III once remarked that his forefather Bayezid II (r. 1481–1512) had "turned everything into pious foundations."[40] Beginning in the nineteenth century, the state strove to centralize the administration of pious foundations (eventually through the Ministry of Imperial Pious Foundations, established in 1826), and sought to transform vast amounts of land into state property by recourse to sometimes dubious legal arguments.

On state-owned lands, the most significant structural feature of the Ottoman economy was the ancient timar system, through which the state funneled agricultural taxes directly to its agents and the military. This institution continued to decay, but it still functioned, and as late as 1777 and 1790 the center was still producing proposals to reform it.[41] By the eighteenth century, a substantial portion of state-owned (mirî) land that had been distributed as timars had in effect become private land. In the later seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a significant portion of the remaining timars was transferred to *mültezim*s, who practiced a system of public tax farming (*iltizam*). This did little to halt the steady decline in state revenues.

In 1695, in an effort to improve efficiency and increase revenue, the state launched a major change in the method of tax collection. Instead of allocating the collection of public revenues (including various taxes, stamp duties, and customs revenues) to members of the ruling class for life, the state began to sell these rights to revenue farmers, usually gentry and urban notables, at public auctions. By doing so, the state extended prerogatives hitherto reserved for officialdom to the public at large, in an attempt to foster shared interests with a large, geographically dispersed sector of the population.[42] As a result of this new practice, called *malikâne*, between 1698 and 1774 the number of tax revenue farms administered through the chief accounting office increased by 209 percent and their revenues rose by 88 percent. In the same period, the tax revenues sold to tax farmers increased by 1,400 percent.[43] By 1780, however, the major sources of state income available for auction were largely exhausted, and investors displayed little interest in the minor public revenues pathetically put on the market by the state.[44]

[40] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 8, p. 277.

[41] Ibid., 2, pp. 85, 317–24; and 5, pp. 289–91.

[42] Ariel Salzmann, "An Ancien Régime Revisited: 'Privatization' and Political Economy in the Eighteenth-Century Ottoman Empire," *Politics and Society* 21/4 (December 1993), p. 409.

[43] Genç, *Devlet ve Ekonomi*, p. 117.

[44] Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi: XVIII. yy dan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih* (Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), p. 104.

Despite the advantages of the malikâne, the overall benefit of the system was cancelled out, for the most part, by the decline of central power and the concomitant reduction in the state's capacity to raise taxes. As a result, tax income increased by only 10 percent between 1700 and 1800, during a period in which prices quadrupled.[45] Inflationary pressures naturally gave rise to social discontent. Moreover, the malikâne often had a negative impact on local economies, because the farming out of many local fiscal resources by the central treasury deprived many provincial administrations of traditional sources of income.

A major debilitating factor for the Ottoman economy was war. Loss of territory and population reduced available sources of revenue; enormous war indemnity payments, such as the 7.5 million *gurush*es paid to Russia in 1775—equivalent to almost half of all state revenues for that year—bloated expenditure; and the need for a bigger and better military required an increasing flow of funds for investment and upkeep.

To address these economic problems, the state adopted new commercial, fiscal, and monetary policies. Adjusting trade imbalances was probably the most difficult problem for the Ottoman authorities to control. The state's ability to restrict imports was severely hampered by the capitulations granted to foreign powers. Accordingly, the state attempted to limit exports, reasoning that every bit of local production was needed to support domestic needs. But this too proved next to impossible to achieve. Many measures directed at the trade deficit were predictably futile: an imperial decree of 1783 requesting that officials and citizens of the empire wear only domestic products had little effect,[46] while restrictions on exports led only to a dramatic rise in the smuggling of banned products to Europe.

In order to increase state revenues, the government established new internal customs duties. To the dismay of the population, many new taxes, initially introduced as extraordinary wartime taxes, turned into regular dues after the war in question was over. State confiscations of property and assets became increasingly common during times of war or economic crisis. From the late eighteenth century, the state no longer restricted sequestrations to the estates of deceased members of the ruling *askerî* class, and began to seize the property of dead businessmen as well.[47] In 1775 the state resorted to internal borrowing, creating a hefty debt in a short period of time. Although the threat of economic instability led the government to begin liquidation of this debt in 1792, the French occupation of Egypt prompted a fresh round of domestic borrowing. To cover the deficit, the

[45] Genç, *Devlet ve Ekonomi*, p. 27.
[46] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 2, pp. 245, 359–60.
[47] Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesi*, p. 110, n. 86.

state was compelled for the first time to consider borrowing money from foreign powers. But efforts to secure a foreign loan in 1784–86 proved inconclusive.[48] By 1812, annuities paid on the internal debt had reached 25 percent of total revenues.[49]

Attempts to restrain expenditure complemented the efforts to increase state revenues in order to balance the budget. The greater part of the budget went on salaries and other compensation payments to state officials and members of the armed forces; the second principal item was expenditure on military provisions and equipment. The traditional principle of fiscal responsibility restricted budgetary sources to current revenues, thereby preventing irresponsible allocations of future income. The most prevalent drawback of this basic principle was that it made budgets enormously sensitive to the annual vicissitudes of production. Ottoman budgetary planning already suffered from the unpredictability of war, which always sparked an extraordinary rise in spending, and the unforeseeable lifespan of sultans, whose accession ceremonies were accompanied by enormous outlays of *cülûs bahşişi* (accession money) and salary raises.[50] Renewal of state licenses and certificates under the new sultan's name eventually covered part of the accession costs, but failure to grant these traditional gifts on time often resulted in Janissary revolts. Another tool used by the state to control spending was the practice of "public purchases," which allowed the state to buy goods at a special price set by the government; this price was always lower than the market price, and sometimes even below the cost of production.[51] But this practice naturally led producers to cut supplies, lower quality, or even abandon the production of goods needed by the state.

Inefficient purchasing by the state was only one of an array of factors working against the Ottoman manufacturing sector in the eighteenth century. Persistent deficits led to minuscule investment, the provisionist nature of the economy thwarted a shift to mass production, the capitulations favored foreign merchandise, efficient European manufacturing meant intensified competition from cheaper European products, war losses entailed the shrinking of the domestic market, difficulties in technology transfer stunted productivity growth, and poor infrastructure inhibited

[48] Ahmed Vâsıf, *Mehâsinü'l-Âsâr,* pp. 191–2; *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 5, pp. 295–6.

[49] Genç, *Devlet ve Ekonomi*, p. 192.

[50] During the time frame covered by this study, Sultan Mustafa III paid accession money but not salary increases; Sultans Abdülhamid I and Selim III disbursed neither due to ongoing military campaigns; and Sultan Mustafa IV was forced by the rebellious Janissaries who had put him on the throne to make an accession payment, despite the dire financial situation prevailing at the time. He was the last Ottoman sultan to grant accession money.

[51] Genç, *Devlet ve Ekonomi*, p. 89.

transportation and development. Although the state invested heavily in military-related industries, such as silk and wool for the production of sailcloth for the navy, the overall picture from the mid-eighteenth century onward was one of stagnation and decline relative to Europe. Many Ottoman manufacturers were bankrupt by the end of the century.[52]

Debasement remained the mainstay of Ottoman monetary policy. In the late seventeenth century an experiment with minting cheaper copper coins along with the traditional silver proved unsuccessful, primarily because provincial suspicion of the new coinage precipitated the flight of gold and silver to the periphery and the accumulation of copper in the cities. The Ottoman silver currency, the *akçe*, which contained 0.860 grams silver in 1469, had only 0.290 in 1600, 0.132 in 1700, 0.121 in 1750, and 0.050 in 1801.[53] In 1789, a major devaluation marked the beginning of a forty-year run of debasement that fed rising inflation. Despite repeated attempts (dating back to the late seventeenth century) to preserve monetary unity and ban the circulation of foreign gold coins,[54] at the turn of the nineteenth century all kinds of European and North African coins (and their counterfeits) circulated freely in the Ottoman market. In a classic illustration of Gresham's law, the more valuable gold and silver coins flowed out from the central lands of the empire to Egypt, Iran, and India. To combat the flood of foreign gold and silver and enrich the Ottoman mint, the state often resorted to the collection and confiscation of gold and silver artifacts for coin production. In 1789, the government sought and obtained a fatwā declaring the use of any kind of gold and silver artifacts (with the exception of women's jewelery) to be "un-Islamic."[55]

Ottoman Society

Straddling three continents and encompassing an extraordinary diversity of ethnic and religious groups, the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the century was perhaps the most cosmopolitan state in the world. On paper, the major division among the empire's estimated 30 million subjects was that between the ruling askerî class and the subjects, the *reʿaya*. The ruling class had three components: the ulema, the bureaucracy, and the army—itself

[52] Ibid., pp. 226ff.

[53] Şevket Pamuk, *İstanbul ve Diğer Kentlerde 500 Yıllık Fiyatlar ve Ücretler* (Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000), pp. 14–16.

[54] Mehmed Raşid, *Tarih-i Raşid*, 2 (Istanbul: s.n., [1865]), pp. 383–4.

[55] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 5, pp. 33–4.

composed of the janissaries and timariot cavalry.[56] Society at large was traditionally organized along religious lines, the principal division being that between Muslim and non-Muslim. An estimated 80 percent of the population was rural. The overwhelming majority of the subjects was illiterate.

The Muslim community, though far from monolithic, was regarded as the dominant one by virtue of the Islamic ideology of the state. Although there are no reliable population figures, Muslims clearly formed a majority over non-Muslims. Most Ottoman Muslims were Sunnīs who belonged to various legal schools and Ṣūfī orders; the rest of the Muslim population was a colorful mix of mainstream Shīʿites, Alevīs, and less significant sects (considered Muslim only by non-Muslims) such as the Druzes and the Nuṣayrīs. Among the Christians of the empire, various strands of Eastern Christianity predominated, comprising almost one-third of the subjects. Armenians, belonging to the Armenian Apostolic (Lusavorchakan) Church, existed in significant numbers. The Jewish population was small but prominent. Pockets of Roman Catholics, Assyrians, and other Christian groups existed in different parts of the realm. The major ethnic groups were Albanians, Arabs, Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Kurds, Serbs, Turks, and Vlachs.

Despite this ethnic diversity, faith constituted the primary organizing principle of traditional Ottoman society. Thus an ethnic Albanian, for example, could belong to the Muslim, Greek Orthodox, or Roman Catholic community depending on religious affiliation. In certain cases—as in the Muslim areas of Bosnia—religion fused with ethnicity to produce identity. But no, ethnic consciousness comparable to modern nationalism existed to an appreciable degree within any of the communities of the empire. In any event, the religious order of society was to crumble over the course of the nineteenth century in the face of the rise of ethnic nationalism. Nationalist leaders would then attempt to sever ties to their larger religious communities and form national religious institutions. Bulgarian nationalists, for example, would struggle against the domination of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and form the autocephalous Bulgarian Exarchate.

The political, military, and economic instability of the empire aided the spread of brigandage throughout its domains. The deterioration of the timar system resulted in the release of numerous rural laborers, who became itinerant workers drafted into temporary military service by the state whenever

[56] Others who were considered members of the ruling class included freed slaves and concubines of the sultan, freed slaves and concubines of a member of the askerî class and their children, and individuals who could prove descent from the Prophet Muḥammad through his two grandsons. A widow of a member of this class could be considered an askerî only if her father was a member and she had not remarried.

necessary. In times of political and social upheaval, many of these *levend*s resorted to brigandage, and large bands of them terrified populations mainly in Anatolia and Rumelia.[57] The most organized banditry took place during the Mountaineers Revolt of 1791–1808 in Rumelia, when former soldiers and deserters, in league with local notables, subjected large areas to their rapacious rule, sacking major towns and rendering transportation insecure.[58]

The economic and political problems of the empire, as well as the new policies formulated to resolve them, rendered the classical social structure of Ottoman society obsolete. In particular, the non-Muslims gained new power and influence, undermining the traditional ascendancy of the Muslims. The stark division between the Muslim ruling class and the non-Muslim reʿaya became increasingly meaningless in a state in which Greek subjects now controlled much of Ottoman naval transportation, with ships sailing under the Russian flag, large numbers of non-Muslims engaged in commerce as "privileged merchants" under foreign protection, and many other non-Muslims obtained tax farms through state auctions. Finally, the emergence of romantic proto-nationalist ideas among the non-Muslim elites of the empire was to render the administration of the non-Muslim subjects more difficult than it had ever been before. But the significance of proto-nationalist ideas in the instigation of early nineteenth-century revolts should not be exaggerated. Neither the new constitution project of Rigas Velestinlis-Pheraios (1797), which envisioned for the subject peoples of European Turkey a Pan-Balkan government based on the principles of the French Revolution, nor the Slavo-Bulgarian history of Paisii Hilandarski (1762), who celebrated the glorious Slavic past of the Bulgarians, can be considered true progenitors of national liberation. Nevertheless, in a time of political, social, and economic upheaval, their ideas could furnish a firm basis from which to launch and legitimize rebellion and separatism, and they were so employed by enterprising rebels. Later nationalist reconstructions turned such thinkers into heroic popular leaders and founders of nation-states. In present-day Bulgaria, the image of Hilandarski adorns two-*Leva* banknotes, presenting him as the man who envisioned the modern Bulgarian nation-state, while that of Velestinlis-Pheraios figures on ten-cent Euro coins.[59] At the time, such recognition would have seemed absurd.

[57] Mustafa Cezar, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Levendler* (Istanbul: Güzel Sanatlar Akademisi Yayınları, 1965), pp. 238ff.

[58] Yücel Özkaya, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Dağlı İsyanları,* 1791–1808 (Ankara: A. Ü. Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi Yayınları, 1983), pp. 20ff.

[59] The Bank of Greece justifies its choice thus: "[Velestinlis-Pheraios] was a fervent defender of the movement for Greece and a martyr of the then-enslaved nation." Bank of Greece, "The Greek Themes on Euro Coins," www.bankofgreece.gr/en/euro/eurocoins.asp.

Material Culture

In a vast area encompassing myriad peoples, traditions, climates, population densities, and economic conditions, material culture was far from uniform. A look at material culture in Istanbul may convey some idea of the situation in the larger urban centers of the empire. Life in rural areas was, of course, very different.

In an attempt to provide a more vivid reconstruction of the physical environment surrounding the residents of Istanbul in the second half of the eighteenth century, I examined the inventories of estates left by members of the askerî class who died between 1750 and 1800.[60] These inventories, found in religious court registers, offer a rare glimpse into the homes of the lower-middle-, middle-, and upper-class in the capital. Overall, they reflect the modest and utilitarian attitudes of their owners. They also reveal that material culture remained remarkably constant during the second half of the eighteenth century. Although various imperial edicts restricting female clothing attest to shifts in fashion,[61] for instance, it is difficult to detect major changes in clothing types or household materials and implements. It was only from the mid-nineteenth century onward that the pace of change began to pick up in the urban centers of the empire, especially after the emergence of press advertisements.

[60] I selected a sample of 204 individuals who died between 1751 and 1801 (four for each year) from among the registers of the askerî kassam (distributor of the inheritance shares of the askerî class members) of the city of Istanbul. The data come from the following volumes of records in the *İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi: ŞS* volumes. 125, 127–48, 150–52, 154, 159, 162, 167, 170, 173, 176, 178–93, 195, 203, 209, 211, 215, 226, 239, 243, 251, 256, 263, 269, 274, 276, 278, 281, 283, 285, 289, 291, 293, 297, 298, 302, 304, 308, 313, 317, 320, 322, 326–7, 329–30, 336, 338–9, 341, 343, 346, 351, 357, 363, 368, 373, 377, 380, 382, 386, 388, 390, 392, 395–6, 403–4, 410, 413, 417, 420, 426, 429, 432, 436, 440, 442, 447, 451–2, 458, 462, 468, 473, 478, 483, 487, 491, 493, 496–98, 501, 504, 507, 511, 514, 516, 523, 527, 531, 536, 540, 544, 549, 551, 556, 558, 560–61, 563, 565, 572, 576–7, 580, 582–3, 586, 590–91, 598, 601, 604, 608, 614–15, 618, 622, 624–5, 628, 631, 635, 639, 643–4, 647–8, 653–4, 660–61, 667, 672, 676, 679, 684, 687, 689, 691, 694, 696, 701, 707, 710, 715–16, 718, 720, 734, 736–8, 740, and 743–4. The sample includes one individual from each of these registers. I selected at random 34 people from each of the following six estate size categories: less than 10,000 akçes; between 10,000 and 50,000 akçes; 50,001 to 100,000 akçes; 100,001 to 140,000 akçes; 140,001 to 300,000 akçes; and more than 300,001 akçes. The aggregate wealth of these 204 individuals was 32,523,871 akçes. The cumulative value of their landed property was 7,838,253 akçes, or 24.1% of their collective net worth. Cash and loans to others totaled 13,334,782 akçes, or 41% of the total, while slaves and concubines accounted for 487,858 akçes, or 1.5% of the total. The physical belongings of the individuals in question (including animals) amounted to 10,862,978 akçes, which is 33.4% of the total value of the estates.

[61] See, for example, an imperial decree dated June 22, 1792 in Ahmet Refik [Altınay], *Hicrî On Üçüncü Asırda Istanbul Hayatı, 1200–1255* (Istanbul: Istanbul Matbaacılık, 1932), p. 4.

Middle-class and lower-middle-class residents of Istanbul tended to own simple clothing, extremely rudimentary furniture, and few personal items. Household contents were simple and easy to move. Sparse furnishings suited not only the traditional lifestyle of the people but also an architectural style that emphasized wooden structures vulnerable to fire. Living-room seating in an average middle-class house included a large cushion for the master of the house and a mattress with cushions and pillows for all other inhabitants and guests. Sleeping arrangements consisted of simple cotton mattresses; these were folded for storage during the day to save space. Coffers and basket boxes served dual purposes as seats and storage containers for garments. Meals were eaten sitting on the floor and required little more than a piece of cloth (or a tray in some upper-class houses) on which to place the pot. With the exception of the upper classes, people ate their meals from the same pot using spoons; dishes were rarely used, obviating the need for cupboards. Chairs were extremely rare and were owned mainly by the more affluent. That most of the objects in the possession of all but the rich were heavily used is attested by the fact that overwhelming numbers of the items in estate inventories were marked as worn out (*köhne*).

Most physical possessions were of domestic origin. Exceptions tended to be luxury items, such as velvet from Iran and India, high-quality furs from Russia, and select British garments. Catalogs of household items demonstrate an impressive flow of trade within the empire, with brand names closely associated with regional expertise: knives, sweaters, and other clothing from Damascus, shawls from North Africa, pillows from Amasya, silk and cushions from Bursa, floor mats from Salonica, face towels from Mosul, and purses from Yambol.

Decorative art was rare in Muslim houses and was generally limited to framed works of calligraphy and miniatures. Upper-class mansions often featured other traditional art forms, such as *ebru*, the Ottoman art of making marbled paper, and decorated tiles. Although non-Muslim houses were not subject to the iconoclastic prohibitions of Islam, as a rule they too contained little art. Upper-class Orthodox households constituted an important exception, in that they often possessed gilded icons. In terms of objects of utility, however, the inventories reveal a surprising degree of uniformity across social strata. The difference in clothing among the various classes, for example, turned on quality, not the type of garment. Apparently, nearly everyone in the capital owned some sort of fur: lower-middle-class people tended to wear robes partially lined with cheap fur (generally white or black cat), while members of the middle-class wore inexpensive fur robes (mostly rabbit and squirrel), and the rich wore higher quality furs such as ermine, fox, pine marten, and sable, depending on their position in high society.

An important determinant of material culture was the combined impact of religion, state regulation, and tradition. In a society organized along

strictly religious lines, identity was closely linked to physical markers, especially clothing. The dominant faith, for instance, determined the color codes appropriate for non-Muslims, stipulating which color of robe or shoe a scriptuary was forbidden to wear, such as bright green robes or yellow shoes. As members of a privileged religious class entitled to bear arms, Muslims typically owned various types of weapons, ranging from daggers to rifles. Sartorial regulations also stipulated the type of headgear to be worn by a Muslim male, while imperial decrees reserved certain luxury garments, such as sable and lynx furs, to the imperial family, high-ranking bureaucrats, and ulema. The guidelines changed from time to time, as did the level of enforcement. For example, the Ottoman Muslim religious establishment of the empire forbade the ownership of silver and gold objects by Muslim males. Exploiting this prohibition, many sultans issued decrees ordering subjects to hand over to the imperial mint all silver and gold objects other than women's jewelry. However, estate inventories prove that many Muslim men possessed silver watches, inkstands, plates, and knives in contravention of such directives. Similarly, state restrictions on tobacco use seem to have been ignored, at least in private. On the other hand, Islamic traditions[62] forbidding non-Muslims to ride on a beast or in a horse-drawn carriage past a pedestrian Muslim, although unevenly enforced, did reduce ownership of riding animals and carts by Christians and Jews.

Religion affected material culture in other ways as well. Most Muslims, for instance, owned prayer rugs as well as ewers and bowls for ablution. The strict timetables of Islamic ritual necessitated private means of chronometry, which were in fact ubiquitous. Watches, quadrants, and hourglasses were commonplace, supplementing state-sponsored mechanisms of timekeeping.

The following are lists of the belongings of ten individuals, selected from among different professions, classes, and age groups so as to provide a taste of the material culture of the Ottoman capital (without any pretensions to statistical significance).[63] The inventories of the first five were recorded in *Hicrî* 1164 (1750–51), while those of the others were registered in *Hicrî* 1215 (1800–1801). In the Ottoman system, the total worth of a given estate was equal to the aggregated worth of all possessions of the deceased, including physical belongings, property, cash savings, loans to other individuals, and slaves and concubines. This was different from the total

[62] Specifically, the Covenant of the Second Caliph ʿUmar and the *ḥadīth* stating *"al-Islām yaʿlū wa-la yuʿlā ʿalayhi"* (Islam overtops, but is not overtopped).

[63] All of the inventories for the year *Hicrî* 1164 (1750–51) were given in akçes. The inventories for the year *Hicrî* 1215 (1800–1801) were given either in akçes or in gurushes and paras. For purposes of rough comparison, I converted all these values to 1998 U.S. dollars by using the ratios provided in Pamuk, *İstanbul ve Diğer Kentlerde 500 Yıllık Fiyatlar ve Ücretler*, pp. 28–9 in accordance with the following parities: 1 akçe = 0.15 U.S. dollars in 1750–51; 1 akçe = 0.068 U.S. dollars in 1800–1801; 1 gurush = 5.81 U.S. dollars in 1800–1801.

scheduled for distribution to heirs, which the executor (*askerî kassam*) determined after subtracting funeral expenses (women's funeral expenses were paid by their husbands), outstanding debt, execution fees, and transaction dues. In the case of Janissaries, one-tenth of the estate was given to the Janissary establishment.

Summary Estate Inventories from Hicrî 1164 (1750–51)

1. Sheikh Abdülkerim Efendi, son of Abdullah, resident at the Hüseyin Ağa Medrese. The total worth of the estate is 5,905 akçes [$886]. The estate covered only the funeral expenses, transaction dues, and outstanding debt of the deceased. Recorded on June 6, 1751 (*İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS* 130, f. 3a).

10 pieces of clothing (one quilted turban, a belt, a shirt, robes, trousers, handkerchiefs, and underwear)
3 personal items (one tobacco knife, some tobacco, and a copper inkstand)
3 household objects (two small carpets and a piece of a pillow)
9 pieces of hardware (one cleaning cup, copper food dishes, one knife, one pickaxe, one hatchet, a candlestick, and some scraps)

2. Molla Hasan, son of Ahmed, from Niğde in Anatolia, died at the Sofu Mehmed Pasha Medrese while staying there as a guest. The total worth of the estate is 11,587 akçes [$1,738]. Recorded on October 6, 1751 (*İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS* 133, f. 10a).

7 books on religion, including a collection of verses from the Qur'ān
4 pieces of clothing (one fur, two robes, and a handkerchief)
8 personal items (one silver case, a watch, three inkstands, rags, a seal, and a saddle bag)
1 household item (pillow)
1 piece of hardware (a cup)

3. Watch-maker Baltacızâde İbrahim Ağa, son of Mehmed. The total worth of the estate is 50,400 akçes [$7,560]. Recorded on September 4, 1751 (İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS 132, f. 54a).

8 books on religion, history, and a watch-making manual
25 pieces of clothing (three furs, one quilted turban, a silk cloak, a shawl, a shirt, trousers, robes, underwear, and handkerchiefs)
5 personal items (a quadrant to determine prayer times, a silver inkstand, a haircloth sack, a saddle bag, and a new silver watch)
3 pieces of hardware (one clock, a silver knife, and rags)
8 household objects and pieces of furniture (quilts, pillows, a mat, and a mattress for sitting on with pillows)

6 pieces of professional materials (four watches, watch-making tools in a coffer, and some copper)

4. Leather manufacturer Elhac Hüseyin, son of Mustafa. The total worth of the estate is 371,607 akçes [$55,741]. Recorded on March 12, 1751 (*İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS* 127, f. 30a).

12 books on religion and grammar, including a Qur'ān
24 pieces of clothing (one quilted turban, a turban wrapper, two furs, a belt, a shawl, jackets, trousers, robes, underwear, a pair of boots, and handkerchiefs)
1 personal item (a pair of scissors)
31 household objects (mats, a cotton mattress, mattresses, pillows, five velvet pillows, two large cushions, quilts, quilt covers, a wooden coffer, and a chair)
1 piece of hardware (a candlestick)

5. Teenager Ayşe, daughter of medical doctor Mustafa Efendi. The total worth of the estate is 376,150 akçes [$56,423]. Recorded on August 23, 1751 (*İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS* 135, f. 33a).

24 pieces of clothing (six furs, ornamented shirts, ornamented robes, dustcoats, an ornamented drawer band, a scarf, pieces of wool, and handkerchiefs)
13 personal items (pieces of gold, a gold belt, gold bracelets, gold jewelry ornamented with diamonds, pearls, and emeralds, jewels, a small towel, ornamented saddle bags)
9 household items (six wool cushions, one big cushion, a mat, and a quilt)
4 pieces of hardware (a copper tray, a ritual ablution bowl, a ewer, and a copper food dish)

Summary Estate Inventories from Hicrî 1215 (1800–1801)

1. Esseyyid Hasan Ağa, son of Abdullah, former chief inkstand-holder of the qāḍī of Istanbul, Ebubekir Paşazâde Ömer İzzet. The total worth of the estate is 182 *gurushes* 5 *paras* [$1,061]. Recorded on October 20, 1800 (*İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS* 738, f. 13a).

3 books on religion and grammar, including a Qur'ān
35 pieces of clothing (two quilted turbans, two furs, shirts, trousers, handkerchiefs, a pair of light shoes, a pair of shoes, garment belts, and worn-out pieces of clothing)
8 personal items (one silver watch, a garment tobacco pouch, an amber set of worry beads, a pipe, a coffee cup, a comb cover, a saddle bag, and bars of soap)

5 household objects (one basketwork trunk, a mattress, a small prayer rug, a quilt, and bed sheets)
1 piece of hardware (a knife)

2. Artashir Artoian, son of Yovhannēs, an Armenian syrup producer. The total worth of the estate is 16,800 akçes [$1,142]. Recorded on March 13, 1801 (İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS 740, f. 37b).

13 pieces of clothing (one fur, a fur waistcoat, robes, a shirt, a garment belt, trousers, a fur cap, and worn-out pieces of clothing)
2 personal items (one pinchbeck watch and a gold ring)

3. Opium seller Elhac Ömer, son of Mehmed, son of Abdullah. The total worth of the estate is 34,412 akçes [$2,340]. Recorded on December 10, 1800 (İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS 738, f. 50b).

30 pieces of clothing (one quilted turban, six furs, two overcoats, a shawl, a garment belt, robes, shirts, trousers, handkerchiefs, and a pair of shoes)
9 household items (cushions, pillows, bed sheets, a small prayer rug, a box, and coffers)
2 personal items (a rifle and a small sword)
2 pieces of hardware (a big knife and a copper brazier)
1 piece of professional material (some opium)

4. Hafız Hüseyin Efendi, son of İbrahim, a qāḍī who served in Rumelia. The total worth of the estate is 679 gurushes and 9 paras [$3,950]. Recorded on September 5, 1800 (İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS 738, f. 30a).

8 books, including a Qur'ān and a collection of verses from the Qur'ān, and miscellaneous papers
30 pieces of clothing (one quilted turban, three furs, robes, trousers, a pair of boots, light shoes, a garment belt, handkerchiefs, and caps)
23 personal items (one rifle, one rifle with barrel, a powder flask, a gun powder measurement box, a pair of scissors, a worry bead, a cover, a small bag for carrying verses from the Qur'ān, a reed pen sharpener, an inkstand, a silver inkstand, a garment saddle and stirrup, tobacco pouches, a tobacco cup, an ash tray, a quiver, a turban cover, a turban holder, a leather saddle bag, a horse-hair sack, and a comb)
24 household objects (chairs, small prayer rugs, a fleece, quilts, bed sheets, big cushions, pillows, mattresses, pillow covers, sacks, bottles, a rose-bowl, a dessert spoon, a soup bowl, a framed inscription, and a glass frame)
17 pieces of hardware (one pickaxe, a big knife, lanterns, a candlestick, copper alloy, a copper brazier, a copper bucket, a coffee grinder, a coffee cup, a coffee cup cover, ewers, a large bowl, a ladder, and rags)
1 item of material (some lumber)

5. Süleyman Ağa, son of Mehmed son of İsmail, a former Janissary officer, who later served as chief saddler. The total worth of the estate is 132,510 akçes [$9,011]. Recorded on August 28, 1800 (İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS 744, f. 2b).

2 books (a Qur'ān and a collection of verses from the Qur'ān)
22 pieces of clothing (quilted turbans, two furs, robes, shirts, garment belts, handkerchiefs, waistcoats, garment waist-strings)
6 personal items (one silver watch, a comb, a tobacco case, garment cases, and a saddle bag)
15 household items (pillows, cushions, bed sheets, a chair, and quilts)
21 pieces of hardware (one lamp, coffee cups, copper alloy, a glass lantern, braziers, a dessert spoon, silver coffee cup containers, knives, glass plates, a water-pipe, brass cups, an onion basket, a big wicker box, and candles)
1 item of material (some sand)

The Languages of the Empire

When in 1911 the Union of All Ottoman Elements, a public affairs committee, published an appeal to all Ottomans to form a united front,[64] it did so in nine languages: Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, Armenian, Bulgarian, Greek, Laḍino, Serbian, Syriac (in two different scripts, Nestorian and Serta), and French. This appeal, although it left aside numerous languages in use in the Ottoman lands (such as Albanian, Kurdish, Rumanian, and numerous Caucasian tongues, to name a few of the most significant), gives some idea of the multilingualism of the empire. In such an environment, it is not surprising that bilingualism and trilingualism were common in urban centers. Like other polyethnic empires, the Ottoman state featured a central language of bureaucracy and ceremony based on the language of the founding ethnicity; this in turn was surrounded by a host of other languages, which were widely used although they had no official status. But unlike its counterparts in other empires, Ottoman Turkish was an elaborate language of governance that had evolved so extensively over the centuries that it was in fact no longer the same tongue as the vernacular Turkish spoken by the dominant ethnic group.

The evolution of Anatolian Turkish under Seljuq and Ottoman rule resembled the transformation of Urdu from a North Indian dialect to an imperial language during the Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Empire under the influence of Persian, Arabic, and, to a lesser degree, Turkish. Ottoman

[64] "İttihad-ı Anâsır-ı Osmaniye Hey'eti Tarafından Neşr Edilen Beyânnâmedir," *İttihad-ı Anâsır-ı Osmaniye* [July 23, 1911], pp. [1–4].

Turkish grew out of a dialect belonging to the Oğuz group, one of the major branches of the Turkic languages. It employed a predominantly Turkish syntax, but was heavily influenced by Persian and (initially through Persian) Arabic. It borrowed words not only from the subject peoples of the empire, but also from the languages of its neighbors, such as Italian (especially the Venetian dialect). Incorporation of all these borrowed words and structures from Indo-European and Semitic languages into the syntax of an Altaic tongue produced numerous complexities and problems of standardization. The Ottoman expansion into the Arab Near East and North Africa in the sixteenth century intensified the direct impact of Arabic on the development of Ottoman Turkish. Spanish influence, though never as strong as Italian, also grew, especially after the migration of Iberian Sephardic Jews to the empire in the aftermath of their expulsion from Spain in 1492.

The late eighteenth century marked the start of major borrowing from another European language, French. A memorandum from the significant year 1789 attests to the use of the term *status quo* (istatüko) by bureaucrats; the spelling makes it clear that this Latin phrase had entered Ottoman Turkish from a French source.[65] Thereafter, French words flooded the imperial language: words such as *avance* (avans), *civil* (sivil), *console* (konsol), *journal* (curnal), *manteau* (manto), *physiologique* (fizyolojik/fizyolociaî), and *politique* (politik), became commonplace in Ottoman usage. Admiration for French culture, and not just a shortage of vocabulary, underlay this process of importation; thus the deluge included words that had perfectly acceptable synonyms in Ottoman usage, such as *commission*/*komisyon* (hey'et), *docteur*/*doktor* (tabib), *dépôt*/*depo* (anbar), *dualiste*/*dualist* (süna'î), *économie*/*ekonomi* (*iktisad*), and *police*/*polis* (*zabtiye*, *inzibat*). Much of this borrowing was of course associated with the Ottoman reform movement, which drew upon French legal codes and fiscal regulations, opened the Ottoman market to European materials and techniques of production, and welcomed European advances in the sciences.

The process of linguistic mixing within the empire was a multidirectional one. In the border areas where Kurds and Turks lived side by side, for example, many Kurdish tribes adopted Turkish, while several Turkic tribes made Kurdish their tongue. The non-Turkish languages of the empire, such as Albanian, Bulgarian, and Greek, acquired Turkish loanwords, some of them originally from Arabic and Persian. Ottoman Turkish, in turn, picked up many words from Greek, particularly nautical terms. All the languages of the empire, from Hungarian and Albanian to various Slavic tongues and Armenian, contributed in different ways to the enrichment of the imperial language.

[65] [Mehmed] Sa'id, *Gazeteci Lisanı* (Istanbul: Sabah Matbaası, 1327 [1909]), p. 40.

By the nineteenth century, Ottoman Turkish, although not widely spoken, had become one of the richest and most complex languages in the world. Its use was limited to a highly educated portion of the ruling elite, who employed it to conduct affairs of state and to write bureaucratic documents, literary masterpieces, and scholarly works. Ottoman Turkish could be heard at government meetings, in literary conversations, at poetry recitals, and in scholarly conventions; however, even those who mastered the language did not speak it in the market or at home, where it would not have been understood. For Ottoman Turkish was unintelligible to an uneducated native speaker of Turkish. In fact, due to its heavy debt to other languages, Ottoman Turkish was often more comprehensible to non-Turkish intellectuals than to Turks. Only fellow bureaucrats across the empire could follow the stilted language used in the documents of Ottoman officialdom; a seventeenth-century "Turkish" *divan* (a collection of poems composed in rhymes running through the entire alphabet) was more intelligible to a literate Iranian than to a common Turk; an educated native speaker of Arabic would have had a better chance of making sense of a scholarly essay on religion than a simple Turk, while a Greek or Venetian could figure out more words in a naval instruction manual than a Turk who lived far from the sea. In a way, Ottoman resembled Latin as used in medieval or early modern Europe. It supplanted Persian, which had served as the literary language of the cultured upper classes during the first three centuries of the empire. The only exception to this displacement of Persian among the elite was the Kurdish upper class in the autonomous regions, where Persian persisted longer.[66] Those who used the Ottoman language were not necessarily Turks. Rather, they constituted the educated upper classes of a variety of Ottoman groups. Thus, to a certain extent the language formed a transnational link bonding elites together within the empire and alienating them collectively from their respective peoples. Not even all members of the bureaucracy mastered the complexities of the imperial idiom. The gradual expansion of the machinery of government and its concomitant evolution from a tiny elite force to a vast cadre of bureaucrats, beginning in the nineteenth century, exacerbated this problem. One maladroit speaker of the language made it to the position of grand vizier in 1878. Even though he had a fair command of written Arabic and French, his underlings could not resist making fun of his Turkish.[67]

[66] For instance, the Kurdish rebel leader Bedirhan Bey did not know any Turkish and in 1846 negotiated the conditions of his surrender in Persian. Since he quoted verses from Khayyām when he later had an audience of the sultan, his mastery of Persian may be considered firm. See *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 8 (Istanbul: Sabah Matbaası, 1328 [1910]), pp. 143, 503.

[67] İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrıazamlar*, 6 (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1940), p. 939. This grand vizier was Hayreddin Pasha of Tunisia, who served between December 4, 1878 and July 29, 1879.

The Ottoman state never sought to impose Turkish on subject peoples. Even those conquered peoples who adopted Islam did not forsake their traditional languages. For instance, both Serbian Orthodox and Catholic converts continued to speak in Serbo-Croatian in Bosnia. In fact, Pomaks (Bulgarian converts to Islam) employed fewer Turkish words than their brethren who had chosen to remain Christian. Some ethno-religious groups, when outnumbered by Turks, did accept the Turkish vernacular through a gradual process of acculturation. While the Greeks of the Peloponnese, Thessaly, Epirus, Macedonia, Thrace, and the west Anatolian littoral continued to speak and write in Greek, the Greeks of Cappodocia (Karaman) spoke Turkish and wrote Turkish in Greek script. Similarly, a large majority of the Armenians in the empire adopted Turkish as their vernacular and wrote Turkish in Armenian characters, all efforts to the contrary by the Mkhitarist order notwithstanding. The first novels published in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century were by Armenians and Cappodocian Greeks; they wrote them in Turkish, using the Armenian and Greek alphabets.

In areas heavily populated by Turks, vernacular Turkish naturally became the lingua franca even without state-sponsored promotion or imposition. These regions included central, western, and northeastern Anatolia, the eastern parts of Rumelia, and various parts of the provinces of Aleppo, Mosul, and al-Raqqa (Rakka). In the Balkans, the impact of centuries of Byzantine administration was not so easily effaced. As a result, Greek remained both the language of culture among the upper classes—whether Bulgarian, Macedonian, Vlach, Greek, or Orthodox Albanian—and the lingua franca of the major trade centers, coastal regions, and islands, where ethnic Greeks predominated. For instance, two upper-class Bulgarian merchants could have the following exchange in three languages at a café in Varna: "Dobrutro vi, gospodine" (Bulgarian for "Good morning, Sir"), "Ulan, Bulgar burada yok, 'Καλημέρα' desene! [Turkish for "Hey, fellow, there is no Bulgarian here, say Καλημέρα (Greek for 'good morning')]!"[68] A second factor that abetted the retention of Greek was the state-sanctioned authority of the Greek Patriarchate over eastern Orthodoxy. The use of Greek as the liturgical language and the appointment of ethnic Greeks to important positions within the church hierarchy solidified the bond between Orthodoxy and the Greek language, despite occasional protests from Orthodox speakers of Slavic tongues and Arabic. For instance, even in the mid-nineteenth century, the Greek Patriarchate's bishops of Sofia would usually communicate with the Bulgarian laity in Greek. On important occasions, however, bishops would switch to Turkish, addressing their flock

[68] I[van] A[ndraev] Bogorov, *Niakolko dena razkhodka po bŭlgarskite mesta* (Bucharest: K.N. Radulescu, 1868), p. 53.

in this language when seeking to impose heavier church taxes and fees on them.[69]

As the language of the Qur'ān, Arabic was taught in Muslim schools of all levels throughout the empire, though knowledge of the Arabic literary language was of little practical use. In the Arab Near East and North Africa, vernacular Arabic continued to be the lingua franca, although the bureaucracy and the Turco-Mamluk elite in Mamluk Egypt and Iraq spoke the imperial language. As late as the first half of the nineteenth century, official Egyptian documents and even the official state gazette (*Vekayiʿ-i Mısriyye*, established in 1828) were published both in Ottoman Turkish and in Arabic.[70]

One might say that the empire had one imperial language for the bureaucratic elite (Ottoman Turkish), three major lingua francas (Turkish, Arabic, and Greek), and a host of local languages split into a variety of dialects. The absence of widely read publications perpetuated the linguistic fragmentation of the empire. The persistence of local dialects was especially evident in heavily tribal communities lacking a strong literary culture, where difficulties in communication were most apparent. For instance, a speaker of the mainstream Albanian Tosk dialect (not to mention a speaker of Arvanítika, a subdialect of Tosk spoken by Albanians in the Peloponnese and Epirus) would encounter grave difficulties in conversation with a speaker of Geg, the other major Albanian dialect. The adoption of the Latin, Greek, and Arabic alphabets by Albanians of different faiths only complicated matters further. Similarly, some Kurdish dialects were mutually incomprehensible to such a degree that locals considered them to be independent languages. At the end of the eighteenth century, this linguistic fragmentation corresponded to the general political state of the Ottoman empire.

In the nineteenth century a process of standardization, affecting all Ottoman languages, took place across the empire. Some, which had been all but reduced to the status of defunct ecclesiastical languages, were revitalized and became popular once again. The leveling of language affected Ottoman Turkish as well, although the infiltration of French also continued apace. State-led efforts to standardize and simplify the imperial language, amplified by the emergence of a lively press, the centralization of the bureaucracy, and the adoption of a more inclusive state ideology—Ottomanism—made Ottoman Turkish accessible to more people than ever before. Nevertheless, the language of government did not penetrate below the upper middle classes of society.

[69] See Petŭr Dinekov, *Sofiia prez XIX vek do osvobozhdenieto na Bŭlgariia*, 9: *Materiali za istoriiata na Sofiia* (Sofia: Bŭlgarski arkheologicheski institut, 1937), p. 147.

[70] Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, *Mısır'da Türkler ve Kültürel Mirasları* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2006), pp. 67ff. and 253ff.

Intellectual Life

The end of the eighteenth century and the dawn of the nineteenth witnessed an increasing interest in science, medicine, and geography among the learned elite of the empire. İsmail Gelenbevî (d. 1791), who produced important essays on algebra, logarithms, and other mathematical subjects alongside works on religion, might be considered the last major Ottoman scholar of traditional bent—that is, an *ʿālim* (scholar) who combined serious religious scholarship with pure science.[71] One of the factors contributing to the intellectual ferment of the age was the decision of the authorities to permit the printing of books dealing with nonreligious subjects in Turkish. A fatwā dated 1727, and an imperial decree based on it, paved the way for the establishment of the first Ottoman printing house to publish such books. The late arrival of the printing house in the empire has often been cited as one of the major reasons for the relative decline of Ottoman science and culture in comparison with Europe. It should be noted, however, that the major Ottoman printing houses published a combined total of only 142 books in more than a century of printing between 1727 and 1838.[72] When taken in conjunction with the fact that only a minuscule number of copies of each book were printed, this statistic demonstrates that the introduction of the printing press did not transform Ottoman cultural life until the emergence of vibrant print media in the middle of the nineteenth century.

A comparison of the books registered in the inventories of deceased members of the ruling askerî class for the years 1164 *Hicrî* (1750–51) and 1215 *Hicrî* (1800–1801) provides insight into Ottoman cultural life in the capital. In 1164, 82 percent of the 616 books in the possession of 44 individuals were religious:[73]

Religion	494
History	30
Literature	21
Poetry	18
Dictionaries	15
Grammar	9
Law	5

[71] Abdülhak Adnan-Adıvar, *Osmanlı Türklerinde İlim* (Istanbul: Remzi Yayınları, 1943), pp. 160ff.

[72] Joseph von Hammer [-Purgstall], *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, 7: *vom Carlowiczer bis zum Belgrader Frieden, 1699–1739* (Pest: Hartleben's Verlage, 1831), pp. 583–95, and idem; *Geschichte der osmanischen Dichtkunst*, 4: *von der Regierung Sultan Suleiman's II bis auf unsere Zeit*, 1687–1838 (Pest: Hartleben's Verlag, 1838), pp. 598–603.

[73] *İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi: ŞS* volumes 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, and 135.

Geography and Cosmography	4
Administration	2
Education	2
Mathematics	2
Military Affairs	2
Encyclopædias	1
Unspecified	12
TOTAL	616

The most popular books seem to be the Qur'ān and collections of verses from the holy book (a combined total of 40 instances), Mehmed ibn Pir Ali Birgivî's (d. 1573) catechism *Vasiyyet-i Birgivî*, and its commentary by Ahmed el-Kürdî (14); Ibrāhīm ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥalabī's (d. 1549) *Multaqā al-abḥur*, a book on Ḥanafī jurisprudence (13); Çatalcalı Ali Efendi's (d. 1692) *Fetava-yı Ali Efendi*, a collection of legal responses (9); Muṣliḥal-Dīn Saʿdī's (d. 1292) *Gulistān* a classic of Persian literature (9); ʿAbd al-Raḥman Jāmī's (d. 1492) *Nafaḥāt al-uns min ḥaḍarat al-quds*, a treatise on the biographies of Ṣūfīs (8); Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Jazūli's (d. 1456) *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, a common prayer book (10); Birgivî's *Tarikat-i Muhammediye*, a work of puritanical pietism (8); Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad al-Qudūrī's (d. 1037) *Mukhtaṣar al-Qudūrī fī al-fiqh al-Ḥanafī,* on Ḥanafī canonical jurisprudence (8); Hüsrev Molla's (d. 1480) *Dürer el-hükkam fi şerh-i gürer el-ahkâm*, also on Ḥanafi canonical jurisprudence (8); ʿAbd Allāh ibn Yūsuf ibn Hishām al-Miṣrī al-Anṣārī's (d. 1360) *Al-iʿrāb ʿan qawā'id al-iʿrāb*, a work on Arabic grammar (5); Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Saʿdī's *Bustān* another classic of Persian literature (4); Mustafa ibn Abdullah (Kâtib Çelebi/Hacı Halife)'s (d. 1657), *Cihannümâ*, a major Ottoman work of geography and cosmography, which used sources by Western authors like Gerardus Mercator (d. 1594), Giovanni Lorenzo d'Anania (d. 1607), Philippus Cluverius (d. 1622), and Abraham Ortelius (d. 1598) (4); and Mehmed ibn Süleyman Fuzûlî's (d. 1556) *Leyla ve Mecnun*, a romantic poem (4).

By 1215 *Hicrî* /1800–1801, a half-century later, the situation had not changed dramatically. Similar records of 1,267 books owned by 44 members of the ruling class reveal that 76 percent of the specified books dealt with religious topics:[74]

Religion	928
Poetry	74
Literature	56
History	53
Medical Sciences	25
Dictionaries	14

[74] Ibid., volumes 734, 736, 737, 738, and 744.

Law	14
Grammar	13
Natural Sciences	8
Biographical Works	7
Astronomy	6
Administration	6
Mathematics	6
Geography and Cosmography	5
Maps	4
Calendars	2
Music	1
Astrology	1
Unspecified	44
TOTAL	1,267

Again, the Qur'ān and collections of verses from the holy book came first (a combined total of 64 instances). Among the most popular books were the *Multaqā al-Abḥur* (18), *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt* (15), *Vasiyyet-i Birgivî* with Ahmed el-Kürdî's commentary (15), *Fetava-yı Ali Efendi* (9), *Nafaḥāt al-uns min ḥaḍarat al-quds* (8), and *Dürer el-hükkam fi şerh-i gürer el-ahkâm* (8); these are all works of religious law or piety. Among literary works, ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī's *Yusuf ile Züleyha* (8), Muṣliḥ al-Dīn Saʿdī's *Gulistān* (8), and *Bustān* (5), and Yusuf Nabî's (d. 1712) *Hayriyye* (5) seemed to be the most popular. Clearly, although a nascent interest in science is apparent, these members of the ruling class still favored religious works by a considerable margin.

The late eighteenth century was a period of turbulence and change in the Ottoman Empire as in all of Europe. In some ways, the imperative of change facing the rulers of the Ottoman Empire was a direct result of the upheavals in Europe, which had unleashed new and dangerous forces. But the growing awareness of the need to evolve or perish stemmed equally from internal weaknesses. To far-sighted contemporaries it was clear that the Ottoman order could survive only if the seepage of power from the center to the periphery were reversed, and if the empire could successfully adjust to new European realities, in particular the military might of the industrializing nation-state. Certainly, a loosely bound association of disparate, semi-independent territories could not expect to survive long in the Napoleonic era. The attempt to establish a new balance between center and periphery was thus an existential imperative. Similarly, the acquisition of new defense capabilities became crucial, and in particular naval power to protect the empire's extended and vulnerable coastline along the eastern Mediterranean and Red Sea against increasingly effective naval competitors. These challenges were so daunting, and so closely bound up with the structural

characteristics of the state, that traditional measures of reform were no longer sufficient. To survive, the empire's leaders had to do more than change the state; they had to reinvent it. The story of how they set out to do this, of the environment in which they operated, and of the intended and unintended consequences of their actions, forms both the essential narrative of late Ottoman history and the background to the formation of much of the modern social and political landscape of Southeastern Europe, the Near East, and North Africa.

2

Initial Ottoman Responses to the Challenge of Modernity

The cumulative impact of military, economic, and administrative challenges at the end of the eighteenth century obliged the rulers of the empire to come to terms with the imperative of reform. Their conservative instincts at first produced only superficial changes at first. But once cosmetic alteration had failed to yield substantial results, a more radical response became inescapable.

Upon conclusion of the Iaşi treaty which ended war with Russia in 1792, Sultan Selim III approached twenty-two prominent men and asked them to pen memoranda on the new order to be implemented in the Ottoman Empire. Those whose opinion was solicited included twenty eminent Ottoman statesmen and ulema, one French military adviser, and Mouradgea d'Ohsson (Muradcan Tosunian), an Armenian intellectual in the service of the Swedish embassy. The resulting papers, which may be likened to the French *Cahiers* of 1789, focused on proposals for military and fiscal reform. There was unanimous agreement among those consulted on the dire need for reorganization. The authors shared the implicit assumption that strengthening the state was the prerequisite for administrative reform and a reorientation of the empire's foreign policy. But their specific proposals for change differed markedly, falling into two distinct categories: those advocating a return to the practices of the golden age of the Ottoman Empire, and those embracing reform through the emulation of contemporary Europe. Among the latter, advocates of the Russian model of reform sponsored by Peter the Great figured prominently.[1] In the words of one proponent, "the Muscovite nation of inconsiderate animals has in thirty years reached the point of posing a danger to states five hundred or a thousand years old." "Since not only the civilized Ottoman but even the ordinary Muslim peasant . . . is

[1] See, for instance, [Rasih Mustafa], *Sefaretnâme-i Rasih Efendi*, IUL, Turkish Mss., no. 3887, ff. 7/b–8/a.

FIGURE 4. A painting (ca. 1791) depicting Sultan Selim III (r) and his Grand Vizier Koca Yusuf Pasha (l) (d. 1800). *Resimli Kitab,* 1/6 (March 1909), p. 526.

more competent than the cleverest European," it was argued, similar reforms could be carried out with ease in the Ottoman context.[2] The admiration for the new Russian army evident throughout the memoranda also attests to the paramount importance contemporaries attributed to the reform of the military.[3]

Military Reforms

The unavoidable consequence of defeat, military reform had been a priority of the Ottoman state since the early eighteenth century. Awareness of the need to borrow European knowledge was just as old. As an Ottoman officer admitted to his Austrian counterpart in a fictitious dialogue written circa 1718, "although I have spent my life on the battlefield, the Christian

[2] Mehmed Emin Behic, *Sevânih el-Levâyih*, Topkapı Palace Library (hereafter TPL), H. 370, f. 65.

[3] Ahmed Âsım, *Âsım Tarihi*, 1 ([Istanbul]: Ceride-i Havâdis Matbaası, [1867]), p. 266. In 1854, during the later Tanzimat era, a bureaucrat in the Sublime Porte's Translation Bureau—the most important link between the Ottoman administration and the West—composed a History of the Reign of Peter the Great. See İlber Ortaylı, *İmparatorluğun En Uzun Yüzyılı* (Istanbul: Hil Yayın, 1987), p. 202.

skills at manufacturing weaponry and devising superior strategies are beyond my power."[4] Thus the collection of information about European military methods,[5] and especially the translation of major European works on military strategy, became increasingly popular.[6]

By the reign of Sultan Selim III, the entire Ottoman military establishment was in desperate need of reorganization. But, as the proposals he solicited for reform clearly demonstrate, the overhaul of the military was threatened by opposition from the Janissary corps. It was not that the leaders of the Janissaries opposed reform per se; even they recognized that humiliating defeats—such as the rout of more than 120,000 Janissaries at the hands of 8,000 Russian troops on the shores of Danube in 1789—rendered reform inevitable.[7] At the same time, fearing a fate similar to that of the rebellious Strel'tzy at the hands of Peter the Great in 1698, they staunchly opposed the establishment of a new army, or the wholesale transformation of the existing one into a European-style institution.

Initially, therefore, Selim III chose to pursue the policies of his predecessors, but with greater determination. He invited foreign officers to serve as advisers to the Ottoman army[8] and established colleges to teach European military sciences. The Royal College of Naval Engineering had been founded in 1773, but was not functioning effectively. In 1796, Selim III revitalized this school and established another dedicated to Army Engineering. Both institutions were imitations of French academies. They used French as the language of instruction, housed a library imported from France, and employed French instructors—thereby reflecting the Ottoman wish for an officer corps modeled on that of France.[9] Unlike famous predecessors like Baron François de Tott or the Comte de Bonneval (Humbaracı Ahmed Pasha), the new advisers came as formal emissaries of the French government and retained their French ranks and loyalty to France.

Selim III also initiated structural changes in the army. His reformers placed the Artillery and Transportation branches under a single command to enhance the efficacy and mobility of Ottoman firepower. They wrote new regulations for Bombardiers, Sappers, and Miners[10] and introduced

[4] *Su'al-i Osmanî ve Cevab-ı Nasranî* (a copy made in 1719), TPL, H. 1634, f. 2.

[5] See, for instance, Ambassador Ebubekir Ratib's *Tuhfet'ül-Sefare fi Ahvâl-i Asâkir el-Nasara ve'l-İdare* (Submitted to Selim III), TPL, H. 613.

[6] See, for instance, translations by Constantinos Ypsilanti from Vauban and other French military strategists in Vauban, *Darben ve Def'an Muhasara ve Muharese-i Kıla' ve Husun,* TPL, H. 614; and *Tercüme-i Risâle-i Fenn-i Harb,* TPL, H. 615.

[7] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 6, p. 5.

[8] Ibid., p. 70.

[9] A[ntoine] de Jucherau de Saint-Denys, *Révolutions de Constantinople en 1807 et 1808,* 1 (Paris: Brissot-Thivars, 1819), pp. 75–80.

[10] *Âsım Tarihi,* 1, pp. 34ff.

new battlefield bombing techniques based on those employed by European armies.[11] Similar reforms were launched to make the navy competitive.[12] Yet reform of the technical branches of the military alone, however indispensable, was insufficient as long as the bulk of the army, the infantry and cavalry, remained unchanged. In 1793, a new ministry for Trained Infantry Troops was formed to oversee the reform of the army. Fearing the reaction of the Janissaries, the leaders of the reform persuaded the sultan, who wanted to establish a brand new class of trained infantry, to transform one of the old army formations, the imperial guards, instead. But the sultan insisted that the Janissaries, contrary to their long-standing traditions, drill and train on a regular basis. Though they formally submitted to the order, the Janissaries did everything in their power to obstruct its implementation.

Under the circumstances, the reformists decided to increase the number of new troops by establishing new divisions in the capital and Anatolia. The Janissaries categorically refused to join these divisions, known as "New Order Troops." When the new units were tested in battle against the French expeditionary force at Acre in 1799, their superior performance (in contrast with the regular troops) convinced the reformists to persevere along this path of reform. They did not, however, dare to abolish the Janissary corps—a weakness for which they were to pay dearly in 1807. By the end of 1806, there were 22,865 soldiers and 1,590 officers in the new army, half of which was stationed in Anatolia, while the remainder served in the capital.[13]

Economic Reforms

One of the reform memoranda submitted to Selim III focused on the new economic policies to be implemented by the state. The author, Finance Minister Mehmed Şerif Efendi, proposed the gradual abolition of major timars, albeit without dismantling the system as a whole. Mehmed Şerif Efendi recommended a similar approach to the outdated malikâne system. He also suggested that the state liquidate its enormous internal debt in the interest of economic stability.[14] In another memorandum, Tatarcıkzâde

[11] See, for instance, İsmail Çınarî, *Humbara İrtifaʿat ve Mesafât Cedveli,* TPL, H. 640; İbrahim Kâmi, *Humbara Risâlesi,* TPL, H. 619; Mehmed bin Süleyman, *Risâle-i Humbara,* TPL, H. 631.

[12] Ali İhsan Gencer, *Bahriye'de Yapılan Islahât Hareketleri ve Bahriye Nezâreti'nin Kuruluşu, 1789*–1867 (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1985), pp. 61ff.

[13] Stanford J. Shaw, *Between Old and New: The Ottoman Empire under Sultan Selim III, 1789–1807* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 132–3.

[14] [Mehmed Şerif], "Sultan Selim Han-ı Sâlis Devrinde Nizâm-ı Devlet Hakkında Mütalâʿat," *Tarih-i Osmanî Encümeni Mecmuası,* 7/38 [June 14, 1916], pp. 75–6.

Abdullah Molla described at length the devastating effects of debasement, and proposed a return to the old monetary practices.[15] All the memoranda underscored the importance of finding fresh sources of revenue to finance the reform of the military.

In order to address these issues, in 1793 the government decided to establish a special treasury named the "New Revenues Treasury." This institution was to finance the new troops and their military campaigns. It was charged with retaining (and not reselling) tax farms and state bonds left by deceased holders, thereby simultaneously liquidating both the malikâne system and the internal debt. In 1801, the new treasury became the sole authority sanctioned to procure state bonds left as inheritance.[16] The new treasury was also to confiscate timars belonging to deceased holders, which were to be converted into tax farms or administered directly by the treasury.[17] The government also granted the new treasury the authority to collect major taxes on commodities such as alcoholic beverages, cotton, wool, and oak apple.[18] By these means the new treasury generated a total of 1,884,803 gurushes in revenue between 1793 and 1797, representing 21 percent of the total expenditure of 8,304,826 gurushes from this treasury during the same period.[19] In 1805, the rising naval expenses compelled the administration to establish an additional treasury, the Arsenal Treasury, which operated along similar lines.[20]

The administration also reinvigorated the monetarization of the economy. A major step in this direction was the gradual adoption of cash salaries in place of the allocation of taxation rights. In 1813, the Imperial Treasury paid 23,140 purses to officials as cash salaries out of a total expenditure of 33,621 purses.[21] One negative consequence of this practice was severe cash shortages. Both the interest expressed by Ottoman statesmen in public lotteries and the admiration professed for European systems of public finance attest to the urgent need for new revenues.[22]

Another concern voiced by the reformists was the need to balance the Ottoman trade deficit. They maintained that the major cause of the deficit was foreign control of Ottoman trade and the consequent flow of trade revenues to foreign countries. Accordingly, they proposed to return control

[15] [Abdullah Tatarcıkzâde], *Lâyiha-i Tatarcıkzâde Abdullah Molla Efendi,* Istanbul University Library (hereafter IUL), Turkish Mss., no. 6930 (a copy made in 1813).

[16] Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesi,* p. 173.

[17] *Âsım Tarihi,* 1, pp. 355–6.

[18] Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesi,* pp. 183–92.

[19] Ibid., p. 178.

[20] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 7, pp. 286–8.

[21] Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesi,* pp. 66–70.

[22] Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III' ün Hat-tı Hümayunları: Nizam-ı Cedit, 1789–1807* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1946), pp. 134–5.

over foreign trade to Ottoman hands.[23] In the early seventeenth century, the Ottoman government had instituted a preferential 3 percent customs v traders thus obtained a considerable advantage over Ottoman non-Muslims, who paid a 5 percent tariff, and Ottoman Muslims, who paid a 4 percent tariff. Furthermore, the system was corrupted by many non-Muslim Ottomans, who abused the privileges granted to Ottoman dragomans and servants in the service of foreign embassies and consulates, becoming merchants under foreign protection. In 1792, for example, instead of six dragomans serving the six consulates in Aleppo, some 1,500 individuals were listed as dragomans, the vast majority of them non-Muslim merchants in disguise.[24] The reformists were determined to end this state of affairs. In 1802, an imperial decree redefined the status of Ottoman merchants engaged in commerce with Europe. Henceforth, all Ottoman merchants, regardless of their religious affiliation, were entitled to the same privileges previously bestowed on aliens. In addition, the government adopted strict controls over the process of enlistment for service in foreign embassies and consulates.[25] Although these were well-considered, astute measures designed to protect Ottoman, and especially non-Muslim, merchants, they did little to solve the main problem confronting the commerce of the empire: the deficiency of Ottoman production. This was a problem that would only grow worse during the age of European industrialization. Selim III enthusiastically supported the creation of military industries, but achieved little in this regard.[26]

The New Ottoman Diplomacy

Isolationism had been the trademark of Ottoman foreign policy for centuries. By the end of the eighteenth century, it was no longer practicable. The traditional policy of isolation from the "infidels" had proven unworkable in the face of new threats from rising European powers. Averting wars originating in Europe necessitated active Ottoman participation in the European diplomatic arena. The habit of isolationism thus gave way to the principle of engagement, which governed the conduct of Ottoman foreign policy until the collapse of the empire.

In order to implement the new strategy of engagement, the state needed more detailed information on European powers—their domestic politics, their alliances, their capabilities, and their goals. One obvious prerequisite

[23] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 6, p. 69.

[24] Ibid., p. 130.

[25] Ali İhsan Bağış, *Osmanlı Ticaretinde Gayrî Müslimler: Kapitülasyonlar, Avrupa Tüccarları, Beratlı Tüccarlar, Hayriye Tüccarları, 1750–1839* (Turhan Kitabevi, 1983), pp. 63–73.

[26] Edward C. Clark, "The Ottoman Industrial Revolution," *IJMES* 5/1 (January 1974), p. 66.

was the establishment of permanent Ottoman embassies abroad. Information provided by the hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia was simply not adequate, although these sources continued to supply intelligence even after the establishment of permanent Ottoman embassies in their domains.[27]

The need to counter new and powerful enemies forced Ottoman policy makers to form alliances along the simple lines suggested by the maxim "the enemy of my enemy is my friend." Accordingly, throughout the eighteenth century the Ottoman government would naturally turn to Sweden whenever the Russian threat resurfaced.[28] The Ottomans also communicated on a regular basis with local principalities, some of which were formal Ottoman protectorates, in the Caucasus,[29] sending them instructions for action in the event of a war with Russia.[30] In such alliances the Ottoman state was always the senior partner. However, a series of Ottoman defeats at the hands of Russia, then a weak European power, compelled the Ottomans to join the European game of the balance of power and to seek to manipulate it to their advantage. In return for more meaningful alliances, the Ottomans had to accept junior status. In 1786, while still heir apparent, Selim III sought French help in his famous exchange of letters with Louis XVI. In 1790, the Ottoman Empire for the first time concluded a "defensive and offensive alliance" with a Christian power, Prussia.[31]

Ottoman behavior under Selim III illustrates the strategic premise that a meaningful alliance with a major European power, however unpleasant, was necessary to secure the future of the empire.[32] As Bonaparte's attack on Egypt in 1798 underscored, the Ottoman state, in order to survive, would have to harness European power and turn it against any potential attacker. This premise was a constant of late Ottoman diplomacy throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. When mirrored by a similar strategic design on the part of a European power, an alliance was feasible, although by no means guaranteed; for European governments usually had to navigate an unpredictable obstacle to the conclusion of an alliance with the Ottomans, namely public opinion. When, for instance, the British House of Commons in 1791 debated possible British support for the Ottoman

[27] See, for example, BOA-HH 41024 [June 6, 1814] and 41029 [June 6, 1814].

[28] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 4, pp. 303–4; 360–62.

[29] Up until the early nineteenth century, the principalities of Abkhazia, Guria, Imeretia, Mingrelia, and Svanetia continued to be Ottoman protectorates. See M. Sadık Bilge, *Osmanlı Devleti ve Kafkasya: Osmanlı Varlığı Döneminde Kafkasya'nın Siyasî-Askerî Tarihi ve İdarî Taksimatı, 1454–1829* (Istanbul: Eren, 2005), pp. 195ff.

[30] See, for example, BOA-HH 21379 [undated].

[31] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 5, pp. 15 and 294–6.

[32] Enver Ziya Karal, *Selim III.ün Hatt-ı Humayunları* (Ankara: TTK Yayınları, 1942), pp. 10–17.

Empire against Russia, Edmund Burke stated that he intensely "dislike[d] this anti-crusade" and opposed "favouring such barbarians and oppressing [C]hristians, to the detriment of civilization and hindrance of human refinement."[33] As the Ottomans quickly learned, the role of public opinion meant that strategic partnership with European powers came with a string attached: the demand for administrative reform, often with the aim of improving the status of the empire's Christian subjects.

Selim III's efforts to secure a European ally produced mixed results. While his efforts to conclude a Franco-Ottoman alliance went up in flames in 1798, Bonaparte's aggression yielded alliances with Russia and Great Britain. Subsequently, a combined Anglo-Ottoman force fought the French in Egypt and a joint Russo-Ottoman flotilla struggled to free the Ionian Islands from French occupation. In 1799, the Ottoman government struck up an alliance with the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Further indication of a new Ottoman desire to play by the European rules of the game came in 1807, when the Ottoman government declared war on Russia and, instead of imprisoning the Russian ambassador according to Ottoman custom, allowed him to leave the capital aboard a British vessel.[34]

In 1802, the Ottoman Empire signed a peace treaty with France. Three years later, and only one day before news of the French victory at Austerlitz reached Istanbul, the Ottoman government contracted a defensive alliance with Russia. In both cases, the Ottomans insisted on inserting a mutual guarantee of "territorial integrity" into the treaty.[35] In November 1806, the Russians proved the worthlessness of such guarantees when they attacked their Ottoman allies without an official declaration of war. The attack triggered a British demonstration of naval force, culminating in the unprecedented appearance of a foreign navy before the Ottoman capital in February 1807. The British fleet returned without achieving anything worthy of mention, but the incident further demonstrated to Ottoman statesmen that even the capital was not safe without the protection of a major power.

Administrative Reform

In 1795, the government launched a major reorganization of Ottoman provincial administration designed to strengthen central control over the

[33] *The Parliamentary History of England,* ed. William Cobett, 29 (London: R. Bagshaw, 1817), col. 78.

[34] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 8, p. 102.

[35] Articles 4 and 5 in the respective treaties, *Muʿahedat Mecmuası* 4 (1298 [1881]), p. 15, and 1 (1294 [1877]), p. 37.

periphery. A new law decreed that there would be twenty-eight provinces in the empire, each to be governed by a vizier. These were: Adana, Aleppo, Anatolia, Baghdad, Basra, Bosnia, Crete, Çıldır, Damascus, Diyar-ı Bekir, Egypt, Erzurum, Jeddah, Karaman, Kars, Marʿaş, the Mediterranean Islands, the Morea, Mosul, Rakka, Rumelia, Sayda, Şehr-i Zor, Silistra, Sivas, Trabzon, Tripoli in Syria, and Van. In practice, however, central control remained weak. The Mamluk governor of Baghdad was also granted control of Basra and Şehr-i Zor, and Adana, Marʿaş, and Kars were deemed not large enough to support a vizier. Nor did the government seek to alter the traditional dispatch of *beylerbeyis* (governor-generals), instead of viziers, to Mosul and Tripoli in Syria. The number of viziers was thus fixed at twenty-one, although it had the potential to grow if the government were to reestablish central control over detached provinces. The new rules stipulated that governors should serve at least three years and no more than five, in a given province under normal circumstances. The government reserved the right to grant an extension if "the state finds the governor's performance acceptable" and the local "population is satisfied" with his administration. The state also undertook to appoint "intelligent, pious, seasoned, just, moderate, loyal, and honest" governors, and to avoid candidates who "were ignorant of the state apparatus, unqualified, feudal lords, leaders of irregular cavalry, and unknown." Furthermore, the government affirmed, in cases where a governor desired the appointment of a subgovernor unknown to the center, the government would approve the appointee "only after summoning him to Istanbul and getting to know him."[36]

The legislation of 1795 reveals the government's strong desire for centralization. But lacking adequate military and fiscal powers of enforcement, that goal remained an unattainable ideal. Legislation represented only a neat paper solution to the enormous challenges posed by the fragmentation of the empire. The illustrious career of Mehmed Ali illustrates this gap between the ideal and the real. Mehmed Ali volunteered to join the Ottoman force of irregulars sent to Egypt to expel the French in 1798. He advanced swiftly to become administrative director of an Albanian division. In 1802, the French withdrew and the subsequent disengagement of British forces in 1803 left a major power vacuum. A bitter struggle ensued between the Ottoman center and the Mamluks, with the participation of Janissaries and Albanian irregulars. After three years of chaos, serial assassinations, and much intrigue, Mehmed Ali, in May 1805, compelled the notables and religious leaders of Cairo to declare him governor of Egypt. Though dismayed, the sultan nevertheless approved the fait accompli.[37] Mehmed Ali did not fit the gubernatorial profile designated by law. In fact, he possessed many

[36] BOA-MM 7584 (Vüzera Kanunnâmesi).

[37] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 8, pp. 26–8.

characteristics that should have barred him from ever being considered for the position. His boldness underscored the fecklessness of Ottoman administrative reform and demonstrated just how far a provincial governor could go in challenging the imperial center.

But the traditional threats to central control—insubordinate governors, defiant notables, and proliferating local dynasties—were soon to be dwarfed by a new centrifugal force: nationalism.

The Emergence of Nationalism

Ottoman statesmen scoffed at the French revolution.[38] Nevertheless, the revolution had a profound impact on the empire's elites, while the short-lived French occupation of Egypt and the Ionian Islands immeasurably aided the dissemination of revolutionary ideas throughout the empire. In a world of turmoil and inequality, many Ottoman intellectuals succumbedto the charms of nationalism, adopting a romanticized image of the nation rising up from the ruins of a decadent empire. The Ottoman world, and especially its more heavily Christian European provinces, offered fertile ground for such ideas. To be sure, this was a problem shared by all contemporary polyethnic empires, but it was graver in the Ottoman context because of the weakness of central control, the severity of socioeconomic problems, and the structural reality of an empire dominated by Muslims but well-nigh encircled by Christian powers. Under these circumstances, local uprisings, ostensibly indistinguishable from their numerous historical antecedents, took on a deeper significance. All the old grievances—from excessive taxes to maladministration—remained; but they were increasingly supplemented and amplified by new aspirations to equality and self-rule, often nurtured from abroad. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the European powers became much less inclined to dismiss Christian rebellions as instances of re ʿaya disobedience best left to the sultan's discretion. Instead they came to regard them as nationalist movements worthy of support. Such movements soon began to pull the empire apart at its ethno-religious seams.

The first revolt to acquire a national character was the Serbian uprising of 1804. The Ottoman authorities had always considered the Serb population particularly difficult to rule.[39] However, the origins of the Serbian national awakening lay in Austria, not in the Ottoman Empire. Beginning in the late seventeenth century, northbound Serbian emigration turned Karlóca (Sremski Karlovci) in the Austrian *Militärgrenze* into the most important

[38] Ibid., 6, pp. 394–401.

[39] Grand vizier to the Governor of Vidin [February 18, 1825], BOA-Ayniyat, 611.

center of Serbian culture. The first Serbian *gimnazija* (high school) was established in Karlóca in 1791. After the closure of the Serbian Patriarchate in 1776, the town emerged as a major religious center, sporting the second most important seminary (after the one in Kiev) in Orthodox Christianity. Moreover, it was Colonel Mihailyevich of Austria, not one of the leaders from Serbia proper, who boasted that he and his Austrian-backed *Freicorps* had liberated a substantial portion of "Old Servia" and led the national struggle against the "Turk."[40] There was of course an old tradition of epic *hajduk* (brigand) poetry in which the "Turk" featured as the enemy. But such sentiments can only be considered a distant precursor to the modern protonationalist awakening of Serbia.

There were significant socioeconomic reasons for Serbian resentment which had little to do with Ottoman rule. Chief among them was the emergence of large, illegal, quasi-private *çiftliks* (arable farms) owned by Janissaries. These were different from the traditional small farms run by *sipahi* (timariot cavalry) families. In the new çiftliks, Serbian sharecroppers, who for centuries had enjoyed a fair amount of liberty under the sipahis, became de facto serfs on their own land. Although the introduction of fresh cash crops by these farms revitalized the local economy, the new system considerably downgraded the status of the peasants. Indeed, one of the initial demands of the rebels was the abolition of the çiftliks.

Another contributing factor was a local power struggle that became more acute in the vacuum left by the disappearance of central power. Pazvandoğlu Osman, who wished to extend the area under his control at the expense of the Paşalık of Belgrade, challenged Hacı Mustafa Pasha—nicknamed *Srpska Maika* (Serbian mother) for his just and nonviolent rule. The local Janissaries, who disliked the pasha's strict law enforcement, sided with the challenger. Upon learning that a Serbian delegation had gone to the imperial capital to beg for the sultan's mercy, the Janissaries killed a number of local Serb leaders. Their action triggered a Serbian retaliation and a major conflagration ensued. Although later called the Serbian revolt, it was a more complex affair than the nationalist narrative will allow; for example, a group of the original Serbian rebels (wearing fur hats donated by Pazvandoğlu Osman[41]) subsequently changed sides, pledging allegiance to their "August sovereign" and protesting strenuously that they had neither rebelled against the Sublime State[42] nor imagined a "Serbian nation." Moreover, as was the case in all ostensibly nationalist uprisings, old traditions—such as the Serbian representative body, the *Skupština*—were revived and adapted to meet contemporary needs.

[40] Leopold von Ranke, *Die serbische Revolution: Aus serbischen Papieren und Mittheilungen* (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1844), p. 79.

[41] BOA-HH 5490 (1220/1805–6).

[42] BOA-HH 16134A (1221/1806–7).

A new and significant aspect of the Serbian revolt of 1804 was outside intervention. Not only did Montenegrin leaders and Serbian clerics in Hungary support the Serbian insurrection; Russia too allied with the Serbs against the Ottoman Empire. Thus, the subsequent Ottoman defeat at the hands of Russia had major implications for the fate of the Serbian cause. The Treaty of Bucharest, signed with Russia in 1812, contained an Ottoman commitment to discuss the demands of the "Serbian community," but did not grant explicit privileges to Serbia.[43] This changed in 1816, when the Ottoman government authorized a measure of Serbian self-rule pertaining to the election of their Chief Knez, the collection of taxes, and judicial administration. These concessions were repeatedly extended until 1838, when an imperial edict to Chief Knez Miloš Obronović created a fully autonomous Serbia, Ottoman only in name.[44]

Obstacles to Reform

Initial Ottoman responses to the challenges of a new era produced duality in every field: a modern, European-style army alongside a stubbornly conservative corps of Janissaries; an increasingly monetary economy together with the medieval timar system; glimmerings of fiscal responsibility yet multiple budgets; modern academies boasting libraries stuffed with French books along with Ottoman *medreses* whose curricula had not changed for centuries. It was this inherent tension between the old and the new which issued in the violent rupture of 1807.

The first sign of the coming explosion was the Edirne incident of 1806. On the pretext of sending an expeditionary force against the Serbian rebels, the government dispatched a small army to establish the first headquarters of the New Order Troops in Tekfurdağı in European Turkey. This provoked local notables, Janissaries, and conservatives into an alliance against the new force. As the local *qāḍī* attempted to read out the imperial decree announcing the establishment of the New Order Troops, the Janissaries lynched him. They then proceeded to rally local armies against the expeditionary force, which beat a hasty retreat back to the capital.

Then, in 1807, Janissary auxiliaries stationed in the Bosphorus forts refused to don the European-style uniforms issued to the New Troops, and launched a rebellion. They marched into the capital, where they were joined by the Janissaries themselves. Popular attitudes were mixed. The population of the capital appreciated the security provided by the New Troops, but

[43] *Muʿahedat Mecmuası,* 4, pp. 53–4.

[44] Raşid Belgradî, *Tarih-i Vakʿa-i Hayretnümâ Belgrad ve Sırpistan,* 1 ([Istanbul]: Tatyos Divitçiyan Matbaası, 1291 [1874]), pp. 242–51.

resented the military reforms because of the additional taxes levied to support the Treasury of New Revenues.[45] Moreover, the average person found the "super-Westernization" displayed by the leaders of the reforms utterly distasteful.[46] The ulema openly supported the rebels. Upon receiving their backing, the rebels submitted an ultimatum demanding the abolition of the New Troops and the surrender of twelve prominent statesmen into their hands. Then, finding Selim III's affirmative response insufficient, they demanded his abdication. The sultan yielded and was dethroned, bringing the reform movement to an abrupt end.

The new sultan, Mustafa IV (r. 1807–08), was a well-known supporter of the reactionary movement. For a time, it seemed likely that he would lead a wholesale return to the old policies.

[45] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 8, pp. 141, 146.
[46] Ibid., pp. 146–8.

3

The Dawn of the Age of Reform

The victory of the forces opposing reform was to be short-lived. A communiqué to all foreign and Ottoman ambassadors blamed "unwise ministers, who only wished to acquire more power and property," for "innovating and inventing the regulations named 'New Order'," and reaffirmed the abolition of all new institutions, including the new army and treasury.[1] As the new sultan and his anti-reform allies soon realized, however, so-called imperial rule extended only to the capital and a number of its surrounding districts; they were powerless to conscript or tax anyone outside this small area.[2]

One way to project imperial power beyond the capital was to bestow imperial favors on powerful notables in the outlying provinces. But doing so necessarily entangled the center in the web of intra-notable rivalries, and could provoke a powerful backlash. For instance, in 1807 Tayyar Mahmud Pasha, leader of the Caniklizâde family—one of the three most powerful Anatolian notable houses—was appointed as acting grand vizier; this pushed the rival Cebbarzâde clan to the verge of all-out rebellion.[3] In the meantime, leading reformists made common cause with notables in European provinces, fleeing to Rumelia to seek refuge in Ruscuk (Ruse) under the protection of the rising notable Alemdar Mustafa Ağa.

Alemdar Mustafa was the primary beneficiary of the erosion of Ottoman power in the European provinces in the wake of the Serbian revolt. The surrender of large areas to Serbian control had considerably diminished the size and importance of Vidin province, once controlled by the famous rebel (turned pasha) Pazvandoğlu Osman. İdris Pasha, governor of Vidin, could muster only 8,000 troops from his truncated lands to face the threat from Alemdar Mustafa, who controlled a vast area between the Danube and the capital, and established an important alliance with Serezli İsmail,

[1] Ahmed Âsım, *Âsım Tarihi*, 2 ([Istanbul]: Ceride-i Havâdis Matbaası, [1867], pp. 56–60.
[2] Ahmed Cevdet, *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 8 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1309 [1891]), p. 277.
[3] Ibid., pp. 274–5.

ruler of modern-day Macedonia. Serezli İsmail was not a warlord in the strict sense of the word. Lacking a substantial military force, he ruled by the consent of his subjects—Muslim and non-Muslim alike. He was especially popular among non-Muslims for the encouragement he afforded them to engage freely in agriculture and commerce. With Serezli İsmail's backing, Alemdar Mustafa emerged as the dominant military power in Eastern Rumelia.[4] As the sultan himself confessed, Alemdar Mustafa's well-trained, well-equipped army of 30,000 men was considered the most powerful force in the empire at the time. And, unlike the other strong men of the periphery—men such as Ali Pasha of Tepelenë in Tosk-inhabited Southern Albania, İbrahim Pasha in Geg-inhabited Northern Albania, or the Bosnian notables and *kapetans* who ruled Bosnia and Herzegovina—Alemdar Mustafa could threaten the capital.

The sultan and the champions of the conservative establishment feared that Alemdar Mustafa would join the bedraggled imperial army on its return from the Danube front and seize control of the capital with his own forces. Accordingly, they ordered the army to remain in place, despite the relative tranquility at the front and the progress of peace negotiations with Russia. In response, Alemdar Mustafa halted the flow of provisions to the imperial army, whose sustenance depended entirely on his graces. Following protracted negotiations, the two armies marched together toward Istanbul. While en route, a local Rumelian notable, acting on instructions from Alemdar Mustafa, executed the Janissary leader responsible for the deposition of Selim III. Marching into the capital, Alemdar Mustafa's army paraded before the Sublime Porte. The message was clear. At his behest, many Janissaries were executed, many anti-reform leaders banished. On July 28, 1808, Alemdar Mustafa stormed the Sublime Porte, wrenched the imperial seal from the hands of the grand vizier, and declared that "the ulema, the dignitaries of the state, the notables of Rumelia, and the local dynasties of Anatolia had decided in unison to re-enthrone Selim III."[5] The reigning sultan attempted to resist by quickly ordering the execution of Selim III and the heir apparent Mahmud Efendi, who were the sole remaining male members of the royal house. Palace officials managed to slay Selim III, but they failed to murder the heir apparent, who was declared the new sultan, Mahmud II (r. 1808–39), by Alemdar Mustafa. In turn, the grateful young sultan granted Alemdar Mustafa the imperial seal. The assumption of the duties of grand vizier of the Sublime State by an uneducated Rumelian notable marked the heyday of the provincial notables of Anatolia and Rumelia.

[4] Ibid., p. 275.
[5] Ibid., p. 304.

The Deed of Agreement

Alemdar Mustafa was in a unique position to understand that only a new settlement between the notables and the center could save the empire. Accordingly, he invited all local notables and dynastic rulers to a "public consultation" in the capital. Many accepted the invitation and made their way to the capital with their private armies. In October 1808, local leaders and state officials signed the Deed of Agreement, commonly (but mistakenly) referred to as the Ottoman Magna Carta. According to this document, local leaders were to "guarantee and undertake to protect the sultan's imperial person, the sultanate's power, and state order." The local notable houses, notables, ministers, high officials, and dignitaries who participated in the agreement would also "guarantee each other's personal safety and that of their families." As for the imperial center, it would "uphold the position of the leaders of the notable houses as long as they are alive, and support their families afterward."[6]

In addition to conferring official recognition on the notables, the Deed of Agreement also recognized the dependence of the empire on their power: "If a rebellion or conspiracy led by the Janissary units in Istanbul or elsewhere should occur, all local notable houses will hasten to Istanbul; those individuals and Janissary units who dare [to act in this way] will be removed or abolished."[7] The document also charged the notables with overseeing the improvement of administrative practices in the provinces:

> Since it is essential to protect and support the poor and tax-paying subjects, it is necessary that the local notable houses and chief men in the provinces pay attention to public order in the districts under their administration, and that they be moderate in levying taxes on the poor and tax-paying subjects. Therefore, let everyone give serious attention to the continuous implementation of any decision taken by ministers and local notable houses after discussion [between them], with regard to the prevention of oppression and the adjustment of taxes, and let everyone give serious attention to preventing oppression and transgression from taking place in contravention of these decisions. Let local notable houses scrutinize each other and inform the Sublime State if one such house commits oppression and transgression in violation of orders and the sacred *sharīʿa,* and let all local notable houses work unanimously toward the prevention of such actions.[8]

[6] BOA-HH 35242 [October 1808].
[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.

The Deed amounted to recognition of the limits of central control over local notables. As such, it accurately reflected the balance of power at the time. Mahmud II signed the document half-heartedly after his advisers admitted that it "violated his sovereignty, but could not be resisted" under the circumstances.[9]

The Destruction of the Janissaries

Having reset the delicate balance between center and periphery to his satisfaction, Alemdar Mustafa restarted the reforms.[10] He reestablished the new army as an independent corps under a new name;[11] oversaw the formulation of new regulations for the Janissaries; and requested the notables to obey the orders of the central government. Before long, however, the Janissaries revolted once again, and Alemdar Mustafa, who fought bravely to the bitter end, was killed along with hundreds of rebels. Despite the stiff resistance mounted by the new troops, the Janissaries finally prevailed. They lynched many of the leading reformists and, in November 1808, compelled the sultan to abolish the new troops. The abolition of the new troops was a serious setback for the sultan. The elimination of a strong notable who had dominated the political scene, on the other hand, was more than a relief; as we will see, it paved the way for the annihilation of the notables' independent power base.

For many years, Mahmud II prudently avoided provoking the Janissaries by establishing a rival army corps. Instead, he strove to control them through the appointment of commanders loyal to him and the cooptation of others. In 1826, the sultan, riding a wave of popular admiration for the modern army of Mehmed Ali following its defeat of the Greek rebels at Missolonghi, finally felt ready to confront the Janissaries. He duly established a new army corps called the *Eşkinciyân* (Mounted Yeomen).[12] Three days after the new force began drilling, the Janissaries took their cauldrons to the *Et Meydanı* in the traditional gesture of rebellion. Turning the tables on his adversaries, who charged that the new army imitated "infidel" practices, the sultan obtained a fatwā that sanctioned the slaughter of the Janissaries. The edict invited "all Muslims to muster under the standard of the Prophet," a flag that was unfurled

[9] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 9, pp. 7–8.

[10] A[natolii] F[ilippovich] Miller, *Mustafa Pasha Bairaktar: Ottomanskaia imperiia v nachale XIX veka* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk, 1947), pp. 292ff.

[11] Mehmed ʿAtaullah, *Şânizâde* Tarihi, 1 ([Istanbul]: Süleyman Efendi Matbaası, 1290 [1873]), pp. 97–8.

[12] Mehmed Esʿad, *Üss-i Zafer* ([Istanbul]: Matbaa-i Süleyman Efendi, 1293 [1876]), pp. 22–32.

only for holy war.[13] In a bloody engagement that lasted several hours, loyal troops, joined by medrese students and other volunteers, butchered a significant number of the Janissaries, while the remainder fled in panic.

The dramatic downfall of the Janissaries proved a turning point in Ottoman military history and in the wider history of Ottoman reform. Following the "Auspicious Event," as the episode came to be called, the government abolished the Janissary corps (and several others), along with the Bektashi Ṣūfī order with which they were affiliated. The sultan ordered the demolition of major Bektashi lodges, banished leading Bektashis, and forced the remaining members of the order to renounce their beliefs and adopt the mainstream Sunnī dress code.[14] With traditional Janissary opposition to military reform a thing of the past, the government was free to form a new European-style army corps. Named the *Asâkir-i Mansure-i Muhammediye* (Victorious Troops of Muḥammad), the new army was composed of infantry and cavalry.[15] In 1834, a reserve army was established, with units in various Anatolian and Rumelian provinces.[16] In 1838, a Military Council was formed to discuss all military matters pertaining to the empire.[17] Significantly, the provincial armies that had threatened the center in the past were disbanded. As a result of these changes, the Ottoman state now possessed a single military organization under unified command. This was a major accomplishment in centralization.

The destruction of the rebellious Janissary corps and its replacement with a military order wholly subservient to the court destroyed the delicate, centuries-old balance of power within the Ottoman political system. The Janissaries had served as traditional power brokers with the capacity to make or break a sultan. Inclined to align with the ulema against the court and bureaucracy, they formed the linchpin of a front equipped with both the power and the legitimacy to oppose the ruling order and, at times, replace it. With the Janissaries gone, the ulema lost a main source of leverage over the court and the bureaucracy. Shorn of military support, the ulema were compelled to adopt a far more conciliatory stance vis-à-vis the new bureaucracy's pressure for wide-ranging reforms. The collapse of the legitimist opposition strengthened the sultan and his administration immeasurably. Henceforth, until 1908, Ottoman politics was reduced to a game played by two major actors: the bureaucracy of the Sublime Porte and the court of the sultan. In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Janissaries, it was the court that benefited most. But the ambitious reform program

[13] Ibid., pp. 73–4.

[14] *Tarih-i Cevdet*, 12, pp. 166–88.

[15] Ahmed *Lûtfî*, *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 1 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1290 [1873]), pp. 199ff; 258–9.

[16] Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, "Sultan II. Mahmud Devri Yedek Ordusu: Redîf-i Asâkir-i Mansûre," *Tarih Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 12 (1981–82), pp. 127ff.

[17] *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 5 (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1292 [1875]), p. 70.

initiated by Sultan Mahmud II required the rapid expansion of the bureaucratic machinery for its implementation. Upon his death in 1839, the burgeoning bureaucracy seized the initiative and held it, dominating the Ottoman political scene over and against the resistance of weak sultans for three crucial decades.

Centralization, Westernization, and Administrative Reform

Mahmud II attempted to place as many provinces as he could under central control. On the conclusion of the Treaty of Bucharest with Russia in 1812, the sultan turned to all-out war against rival powers within the empire. Whereas his uncle Selim III had been unable to strengthen central rule because he was preoccupied with successive diplomatic crises and military campaigns, Mahmud II exploited the relative tranquility of the period—up to the outbreak of the Greek revolt and the small-scale war of 1820–23 with Iran—to place centralization at the top of his agenda. His successes in this field were considerable.[18]

The centralization policy worked best in the Ottoman heartland, where the state pursued a three-pronged approach toward the notables, combining rewards and punishment. The rewards for notables who served loyally were very real. Their sons would be allowed to replace their fathers in their local roles on condition that they accepted stricter central control. On the death of İsmail Bey of Serez, for instance, the government permitted his son to replace him.[19] In addition, sons of loyal notables might be given appointments to important positions in the service of the state. In this manner, the state recognized sons of notables as state officials, but no longer as notables. Good examples are governors Cebbarzâde Celâleddin and Karaosmanoğlu Yakub Pashas.[20]

Simultaneously, the state began to employ threats and punishment against dissident notables. The sultan instructed all provincial administrators to suppress them, and threatened those who failed to do so.[21] The provincial administration, in turn, moved against disobedient notables and local dynasties with crushing force. Many prominent notables, such as Tekelioğlu İbrahim and Dağdevirenoğlu Mehmed, were put to death.[22]

[18] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 10, p. 87.

[19] Ibid., p. 117.

[20] Mustafa Nuri, *Netayicü'l-vuku'at,* 4 (Istanbul: Uhuvvet Matbaası, 1327 [1909]), p. 98.

[21] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 10, pp. 181–2.

[22] *Şânizâde Tarihi,* 2 ([Istanbul]: Süleyman Efendi Matbaası, 1290 [1873]), pp. 304, 349–50, 353.

To break the backbone of local power, the state resettled members of local dynasties in different regions of the empire. Commonly, the government would resettle Anatolian notable families in Rumelia, and vice versa. Thus, for example, the entire Tekelioğlu clan, once dominant in Teke and Antalya, was relocated to Salonica.[23]

By 1820, the center had asserted its control over all of Anatolia and Eastern Rumelia, although occasional clashes with lesser notables persisted for some time. Those notables who adjusted to the new reality of a strong and assertive center continued to wield economic power well into the twentieth century. Those unwilling or unable to adapt disappeared.

The state also seized every opportunity to restore central control over the peripheral regions of the empire. In 1831, it ended Mamluk rule in Baghdad;[24] in 1835, it put an end to the Karamanlı dynasty in Tripoli of Barbary. Many governors who displayed an inclination toward disloyalty and autonomy in smaller provinces were executed. Yet many local leaders continued to exercise considerable influence over decision-making at the regional level.[25] In larger provinces, the state even went to war to unseat independent-minded governors. In such cases, the outcome depended largely on three factors: the recognition accorded the governor by foreign powers, the sophistication of the local bureaucratic apparatus, and the strength of the local army. Ali Pasha of Tepelenë was weak in all but the last, and neither the geographic advantages of Albania nor the ethnic character and extent of the area under his control proved sufficient to save him.[26] Similarly, Husein Kapetan Gradaščević (known as *Zmaj od Bosne,* the Dragon of Bosnia), whose superb army won a military engagement against imperial troops in 1831–32 under the conservative green banner of the crescent and star, was nonetheless unable to exploit his victory in the absence of international support.

In order to bolster central control of the periphery, Mahmud II attempted to institutionalize the link between central and provincial administration. The first step was to amass accurate information about the population of the empire. In 1829, an initial census was carried out in the imperial capital.[27] A special new office was given the task of maintaining population records submitted by provincial authorities.[28] Although the war of 1828–29 with Russia disrupted this work, a general census carried out in 1830–31 provided the government with precise data about its subjects for the first

[23] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 10, p. 148.

[24] *Tarih-i Lûtfî,* 3 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1292 [1875]), pp. 115–18.

[25] *Tarih-i Cevdet,* 10, pp. 191ff.

[26] *Şânizâde Tarihi,* 3 ([Istanbul]: s.n. 1291 [1874]), pp. 104ff.

[27] *Tarih-i Lûtfî* 3, pp. 142–5.

[28] Ibid., pp. 145–6.

time in the modern history of the empire.[29] These census results enabled the government to devise a centralized, standardized system of taxation. Relying on accurate records of property holdings, the government could specify in advance the timing and amount of the payments it required.[30] In another move reflecting the strong desire to control the periphery, the state extended the institution of "headmen," originally introduced in the various quarters of the capital, applying it at the local level in other parts of the empire.[31]

Many other developments of this period illustrate the new emphasis on centralization. In 1831, for example, in an attempt to improve the communication of imperial policy throughout the empire, the government launched the publication of the first official Ottoman newspaper, *Takvim-i Vekayi'* (Calendar of Events). In 1838, the state began to issue passports to Ottoman subjects, who had hitherto obtained travel documents from embassies and consulates of countries of destination.[32] The Ministry of the Interior assumed responsibility for issuing internal travel permits. Another sign of the attempt to bind the empire more tightly together was the extensive reform of the Ottoman postal service—which had remained almost unchanged for centuries—starting in 1825.[33] Finally, a symbolic indication of the new stress on central control was the posting of portraits of the sultan in civil and military offices throughout the empire.[34]

The Ottoman central government also underwent a thorough structural reform that produced ministries and councils similar to those in Europe (France was the principal model). The office of the grand vizier became the prime minister's office. New ministries of the interior, foreign affairs, and finance formed the embryonic limbs of a modern bureaucracy.[35] In 1838, the existing ad hoc consultation mechanisms of the executive were institutionalized under two organizations: the Deliberative Council of the Sublime Porte and the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances.[36] The burgeoning bureaucracy was reorganized according to a new scheme of ranks and titles for civil, military, and religious personnel.[37] Strict dress codes for

[29] 1247 *Senesi'nde Memâlik-i Şâhâne'de Mevcud Nüfûs Defteri,* IUL, Turkish Mss., no. 8867.

[30] *Tarih-i Lûtfî,* 5, pp. 122–3.

[31] Musa Çadırcı, "Türkiye'de Muhtarlık Teşkilâtının Kurulması Üzerine Bir İnceleme," *Belleten* 34/135 (1970), p. 411.

[32] *Tarih-i Lûtfî,* 5, pp. 116–17.

[33] Nesimî Yazıcı, "II. Mahmud Döneminde Menzilhaneler: 'Ref'-i Menzil Bedeli'," *Sultan II. Mahmud ve Reformları Semineri* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1990), pp. 157–91.

[34] *Tarih-i Lûtfî,* 5, pp. 50–52.

[35] Ibid., pp. 113–14, 147, 104–5, respectively.

[36] Ibid., pp. 106–7.

[37] Ibid., pp. 26, 102.

state officials distinguished them from the public at large. And new privileges were granted to officialdom, including state protection from confiscation (although the sultan was the first to disregard this assurance).

Mahmud II's administration established new schools or revitalized old ones, such as the Royal Medical Academy, the School for Surgeons, the School for Military Sciences, and the Military School for Engineering. These were designed not to provide college education to the populace but to furnish the administration with educated officials for state service. During Mahmud II's reign, the state also began to send small groups of students to Europe for education, specifically in the military sciences. To limit the dangerous influence of French culture on impressionable young minds, those in charge of the program were instructed to avoid teaching the French language, to enforce the exclusive use of Turkish and Arabic, and to select accommodation outside of Paris. It was emphasized that students were to learn only "sciences," and were then to return to the country without being "unduly influenced by the detrimental values of a foreign culture."[38] But expectations were high. As the Ottoman minister of war instructed those departing: "You belong to a nation long thought incapable of partaking of the science of Europe, and of the advantages that result from them . . . . The sultan, reformer of a system the foundation of which has become decayed, labors incessantly to introduce into his empire the knowledge that may ameliorate the condition of the Ottoman people . . . [O]n your return, it will be your duty to show what civilized Europe can do for our happiness and for our advancement."[39] Clearly, the state aimed to benefit from European scientific knowledge insofar as this could be done without transplanting European culture into the empire.

The institutionalization of Westernization under Mahmud II differed considerably from previous attempts to confront European ideas. For the first time, Westernization appeared as a formal policy linked to extensive bureaucratic reform and implemented with brutal force. The new schools provided the necessary manpower, while for the first time a government newspaper supported the effort with appropriate propaganda. These important changes had a lasting effect on the new generation that came of age under Mahmud II, and provided the foundation for the cadres of the later Tanzimat movement. But their effect on mature contemporaries was limited. In 1839/1255, the year in which Mahmud II died after a reign of more than three decades, among the records of hundreds of books in possession of Ottoman officials of approximately the sultan's age group, only one foreign work appears—a map of Europe.[40] Similar holdings of a decade later,

[38] Undated instructions in TSA E. 1518/1.

[39] "Turkish Reform," *Niles' Weekly Register* 7/12 (November 17, 1832), p. 187.

[40] See the estate record of the Director of Finance, Esseyyid İsmail Ferruh Efendi ibn Süleyman, dated June 8, 1839, in İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS 1461, f. 54a.

FIGURE 5. Sultan Mahmut II in traditional garb before the destruction of the Janissaries in 1826. *Tanzimat I* (Istanbul: Maarif Vekâleti, 1940), pp. 16–17.

however, contain thousands of books in European languages as well as numerous translations,[41] demonstrating the generational gap in the response to Westernization.

[41] See infra, footnotes 252–55.

Figure 6. Sultan Mahmut II in his new uniform after the destruction of the Janissaries. *Tanzimat I* (Istanbul: Maarif Vekâleti, 1940), pp. 16–17.

The Challenge of Mehmed Ali

Mehmed Ali of Egypt presented imperial rule with a domestic challenge of unprecedented magnitude. He not only resisted imperial encroachment with success; he nearly conquered the empire itself. Egypt under the rule of Mehmed Ali produced the most powerful army in the Near East; his efficient bureaucracy outmatched its imperial counterpart; and his negotiations with

the French yielded recognition by a great power, though this fell somewhat short of an alliance. Mehmed Ali's suppression of the Wahhābī revolt in Arabia (1812–18) and his decisive intervention on behalf of the sultan in the Greek rebellion (1824–27) indicated that he would prevail in a full-scale conflict with his August Sovereign. Indeed, when war broke out between them in 1832, Mehmed Ali's armies won a series of victories that brought them from Acre on the shores of the southern Mediterranean to Konia in heartland Anatolia. The way to Istanbul lay open.

By this point, however, the empire as a whole, and the Straits connecting the Black Sea with the Mediterranean in particular, had begun to figure prominently in European calculations of the balance of power. Therefore, the Sublime Porte could assume that one of the rival powers, Russia or Great Britain, would come to its rescue to prevent the dangerous blow to the status quo that would result from the conquest of the imperial heartland by an ally of France. Surprisingly, the British Cabinet turned down the desperate Ottoman call for help—Palmerston later wrote "that no British Cabinet at any period of the history of England ever made so great a mistake in regard to foreign affairs."[42] The sultan, reportedly remarking that "a drowning man will clutch at a serpent," then invited the traditional adversary of the empire, Russia, to come to its defense. In late January 1833, the Egyptian army under the command of İbrahim Pasha reached Kütahya, only 223 miles from the capital. But within weeks a Russian fleet anchored before Büyükdere on the Bosporus; in May, Russian troops disembarked on the shores of Asia as allies of the empire. Public opinion at the time swallowed this bitter pill with difficulty; many years later, following the Ottoman entry into the First World War against Russia, the despised stone obelisk erected to commemorate this event was torn down. But the danger to the state was too great for a desperate Sultan Mahmud II to take popular sensibilities into account. To secure Russian intervention, he made an offer that no Russian government could easily decline: a secret article regulating the closure of the Dardanelles to "any foreign vessels of war" in the event of armed conflict. Protecting Russia against attack from the south, the Hünkâr İskelesi Treaty of August 1833 represented the peak of Russian diplomatic achievements vis-à-vis the Ottoman Empire up to that point. The accomplishment, however, was short-lived, as British pressure compelled Russia to abandon its privileges at the London Straits Convention in 1841.

In the meantime, Russian intervention obliged Mehmed Ali to negotiate a settlement with the Sublime Porte, which was duly concluded in May 1833. All the same, his gains were considerable: the agreement recognized Mehmed Ali and his sons as the rulers of a small empire covering Egypt,

[42] Charles Webster, *The Foreign Policy of Palmerston, 1830–1841: Britain, the Liberal Movement and the Eastern Question*, 1 (London: G. Bell, 1951), p. 284.

Syria, Jeddah, Crete, Adana, and the Sudan—this last a vast land that Mehmed Ali had conquered, ostensibly on behalf of his suzerain, in 1820–21. Both parties seemed dissatisfied with the terms reached, and each was eager to modify them in its own favor. In June 1839, Mehmed Ali's troops once again defeated the imperial army and found themselves in a position to march on to the capital. This time, however, it was Great Britain—which had secured considerable economic privileges from the Ottomans in 1838 and feared the prospect of a new Russian intervention or the aggrandizement of a French ally—which intervened to avert the fall of Istanbul. Sultan Mahmud II's opportune death spared him from hearing of the embarrassing defeat of his armies at the hands of his rebellious governor or of the subsequent surrender of his fleet at Alexandria. Mehmed Ali, reinforced by French support, rejected the terms offered by the other European powers. This resulted in a short war between the Egyptians and a joint task force composed of Ottoman, British, and Austrian naval contingents. In November 1840, Mehmed Ali accepted the reduction of his powers to hereditary rule over Egypt. For the Ottomans, who had entertained the illusion that they might reestablish central control over Egypt, the victory was bittersweet. The deal later forced on Mehmed Ali by the Great Powers served as the basis for contracts subsequently negotiated with local leaders such as Imām Yaḥyā Ḥamīd al-Dīn and ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz ibn Saʿūd in the Arabian Peninsula.

In the 1840s, Mehmed Ali resumed his challenge to the imperial center in Africa. In 1846, the Sublime Porte responded to his attempts to annex the remnants of the old Ottoman province of Ethopia (roughly coastal parts of modern Eritrea) with an offer of the Eritrean customs dues (fixed at 625,000 French francs per year) for life. Upon the death of Mehmed Ali in 1849, the Ottoman administration sought to wrench Eritrea away from Egyptian control by returning the rump province to the authority of the Province of Jeddah. But in 1865, Ismaʿīl Pasha managed to restore Egypt's rights to Eritrean tax revenues. Finally, in 1866, the Ottoman government all but ceded Eritrea to Egypt in return for an annual payment.[43] Though the Ottomans thereby lost access to two strategic ports, they retained formal sovereignty over them and, for the time being, thwarted their takeover by a hostile European power.

European Threats to the Integrity of the Empire

In the early nineteenth century, Ottoman efforts to re-assert control over the periphery began to encounter a new form of resistance. Although the illegitimacy of Muslim rule over Christians was a common theme in

[43] Rauf Ahmed and Ragıb Raif, *Mısır Mes'elesi* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1334 [1918]), pp. 8, 35–7.

FIGURE 7. Ottoman provinces and autonomous principalities in Europe in 1833.

premodern Europe, European governments in the modern age had generally considered Ottoman rule over its Christian subjects an internal affair of the Ottoman state. When, for instance, Russia had supported the Serbian rebels during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1807–12, European policy makers and public opinion refrained from making a moral issue of the "Serbian Question." Russian demands for protective rights over the Orthodox subjects of the

Ottoman Empire, however, had revitalized this issue. The Greek rebellion may be considered a watershed event in this regard. In fact, it was largely because of international support for the insurgents that the Ottomans failed to put down the Greek revolt, as they had done with countless other uprisings in the past. To be sure, European sympathy with the Greeks was a somewhat special case; still, from this point onward, European public opinion began to express sympathy for other anti-Ottoman uprisings launched by Christians. These sympathies tended to override strategic concerns or interstate rivalries. The Greek rebellion, and the independent Greek kingdom that arose in its wake, represented glaring violations of the conservative spirit of the Vienna Congress of 1815 (an event in which the Ottoman administration did not participate). Yet European concern for the status quo was never fully extended to the Ottoman domains. The Greeks set a precedent for the other Christian peoples of the empire, who observed that internationalization of local grievances provided an effective new lever for the dilution or termination of Ottoman rule.

The internal threat posed by separatism paralleled an increase in the threat of partition from without. Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798 had demonstrated that a European power could conquer a major Ottoman territory—and one overwhelmingly inhabited by Muslims—with impunity. Previous Ottoman losses in the East and West had been limited to areas inhabited by Christian majorities which were lost to Russia and Austria. But the French and British occupations of Perim, a strategic island situated at the mouth of the Red Sea, in 1738 and 1799, respectively, displayed the severity of the danger to the Ottoman periphery.[44] This threat was underscored by the French occupation of Algeria in 1830, against which the Ottoman administration could do no more than lodge an official protest.

Economic Reform

The trend toward centralization also extended to Ottoman economic policies. The financial institutions of the empire became more centralized, especially after 1826. In 1813, the central government decided to grant local tax farms only to local administrators. In theory, the measure would prevent tax farmers from overtaxing the people; it would also place more assets at the disposal of local administrators, who had lost their traditional sources of revenue. Although on paper the new practice seemed to help the local administrators, in reality it turned them into salaried officials who remitted local revenues to the center.[45] Furthermore, in 1838 the state allocated cash

[44] BOA-HR.SYS. 102/3 [1799].

[45] Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi: XVIII. yy dan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih* (Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), pp. 242–3.

salaries to all officials; henceforth, all other sources of income, including the collection of transaction fees, were shut down.[46] This was a major step toward creating a centralized, monetary economy; it also bolstered the status and image of officialdom. The state further introduced new, standard gold and silver coins at fixed value and banned the circulation of foreign coins, which were to be surrendered to the mint office at prices set by the state. Like other attempts to regulate the economy by decree, however, this effort proved ineffective in the long run.[47]

In a transparent bid to emulate Mehmed Ali's successful policies, the state increased the number of agricultural products, such as opium, silk, and cotton, that were purchased, sold, and exported through monopolies. As a result, however, production sharply decreased, while smuggling increased. Annual production of opium, for example, fell from 75 million pounds before the introduction of the monopolies to 35 million pounds shortly afterward.[48] The Ottoman authorities also underestimated the losses they would incur from reductions in tariffs on foreign goods. According to Ottoman practice at the time, goods derived their taxable status from the nationality of the merchant, not from the place of production. Thus, imported Russian grain was charged a third of the duty imposed on Ottoman domestic grain; American tobacco could be purchased at a better price in Alexandria; and Swiss silk was cheapest in Lebanon.[49] Such concerns induced the Ottoman government to sign the Anglo-Ottoman commercial treaty of 1838, which resulted in greatly lowered tariffs and also the abolition of the monopolies and other restrictions on trade. According to the treaty, British merchants could purchase all goods and products produced in the Ottoman Empire; they would pay a customs tariff equal to that paid by domestic merchants; and the Ottoman administration would lift all prohibitions on exports. In practice, a 3 percent tariff was levied on British goods entering the Ottoman market, whereas Ottoman exports were taxed at a rate of 60 percent.[50] The Ottoman authorities hoped that the benefits of increased trade and production would compensate for the losses stemming from the abolition of the monopolies and the lower tariffs. However, just as in Egypt, which had paid a heavy price for abolishing her monopolies, this treaty and its gradual extension to other powers had a negative impact on Ottoman manufacturing and on the economy as a whole.

[46] *Tarih-i Lûtfî,* 5, pp. 132, 180–81.

[47] *Şânizâde Tarihi,* 2, pp. 160–61.

[48] Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisâdî Münâsebetleri,* 1 (1580–1838) (Ankara: TKAE Yayınları, 1974), p. 87.

[49] David Urquhart, *How Russia Tries to Get into Her Hands the Supply of Corn of the Whole Europe: The English Turkish Treaty of 1838* (London: R. Hardwicke, 1859), pp. 358–9.

[50] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadî Münâsebetleri,* 1, pp. 109–10.

Three decades after the heyday of the provincial notables, the imperial administration had managed to transform the empire into a relatively centralized state. In fact, despite major territorial losses, such as Greece and Algeria, and the grant of extensive autonomy to Serbia, Egypt, and the island of Samos (Sisam), the state actually expanded the area under its direct administration. The apparatus of government acquired more information on its subjects, became more visible, and penetrated more deeply into the fabric of daily life throughout the empire. But the strengthening of the state rested mostly on expanding recruitment for the army and collecting more taxes. Neither measure decreased social discontent.

4

The Tanzimat Era

On november 3, 1839, Foreign Minister Mustafa Reşid Pasha read an imperial decree before Sultan Abdülmecid and an assembled audience of state dignitaries, religious leaders, prominent bureaucrats, foreign diplomats, and nobles, including Prince de Joinville, the third son of King Louis Philippe. Although it conformed in form and tone to the long tradition of edicts promising administrative fairness in the name of the sultan,[1] this proclamation, soon to gain fame as the Rose Chamber Edict, was like nothing seen before in Ottoman history. At the ceremonial level, the singular importance attached to the edict was underscored by a solemn oath taken by the sultan, witnessed by the assembled ulema and invited dignitaries, including foreign ambassadors, in the palace chamber in which the Prophet Muḥammad's mantle was preserved. But the real novelty of the decree lay in its content. Following a preamble citing neglect of the Qur'ān and the sharīʿa as the causes of Ottoman troubles over the last century and a half, the edict promised new laws guaranteeing life and property rights, prohibiting bribery, and regulating the levying of taxes and the conscription and tenure of soldiers. It promised the enactment of legislation that would outlaw execution without trial, confiscation of property, and violations of personal chastity and honor. In addition, it heralded the abolition of the odious system of tax farming and the establishment of an equitable draft system. Like the prospective penal code under consideration at the time, these laws were to be drafted by the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances and the Military Council.[2] Most significantly, they would apply to all Ottoman subjects, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

The declaratory value of the Rose Chamber Edict clearly outweighed its legal significance. Although it did not constitute a piece of legislation, the edict was an important statement of Ottoman intentions. Its intended

[1] Halil İnalcık, "Sened-i İttifak ve Gülhane Hatt-i Hümâyûnu," *Belleten* 28/112 (1964), p. 611.

[2] Ahmed Lûtfî, *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 6 (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1302 [1885]), pp. 61–4.

audience has been a matter of some debate. To an extent, the edict was directed at European ears. Its architect, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, was well known to be the foremost proponent of Ottoman accession to the European concert.[3] In a sense, the document served as an assurance to the Great Powers that demanded domestic reforms in return for future recognition of the Ottoman Empire as a member of the concert of Europe. Thus, for instance, many issues and formulations were clear allusions to the 6th, 7th, 13th, and 17th articles of the French *Déclaration des Droits de l'homme et du Citoyen*. At the same time, the striking similarities between the section discussing the responsibilities of the government and the Virginia Bill of Rights of 1776[4] indicate that the appeasement of European powers was not the only reason behind the incorporation of foreign ideas into the proclamation. Indeed, it seems clear that those Ottoman bureaucrats who drafted the document sincerely believed in the modernization of the Ottoman conception of government based in part on concepts borrowed from abroad. Thus, the edict was directed both inward and outward, at once a serious commitment to reform out of self-interest and an appeasing gesture directed at Europe. The religious trappings of the edict itself and the ceremony surrounding its proclamation are misleading; an early draft of the decree contained far fewer references to Islamic concepts than the final version, indicating that Islamic citations in the final text were cosmetic changes added as a sop to the ulema in order to shield the government from the criticism that it was imitating infidel practice.[5]

The role of the Ottoman bureaucracy in drafting, codifying, and implementing the administrative reform was unprecedented, and it signaled a decisive shift in the internal balance of power within the empire. Above all, the reform was associated with three men: Mustafa Reşid Pasha, Mehmed Emin Âlî Pasha, and Keçecizâde Mehmed Fu'ad Pasha. These prominent statesmen adopted Metternich as their role model and his oppressive bureaucracy as their source of inspiration for top-down conservative reform. These leaders of the Sublime Porte—which under Mahmud II came to refer to a central bureaucratic institution, not merely the residence of the grand vizier—took charge of the next three and a half decades of reform, generally referred to as the Tanzimat era. Under their firm leadership, the bureaucratic cadres of the Sublime Porte oversaw the entire administration of the state, ruling the empire until 1871 with only trivial interference from the imperial palace or the ulema.

The edict noted the universal applicability of the new laws. This not only revealed the wish to establish a single legal system for all subjects; it indicated

[3] Ibid., p. 59.

[4] Yavuz Abadan, "Tanzimat Fermanının Tahlili," *Tanzimat I* (Istanbul: Maarif Vekâleti, 1940), p. 52.

[5] Ibid., pp. 48ff.

a change in the official ideology of the state. Not long before, Mahmud II had hinted at such a change when he stated: "From now on I do not wish to recognize Muslims outside the mosque, Christians outside the church, or Jews outside the synagogue."[6] The formulation of this vision of an imperial administration based on universal laws in the context of the imperial edict was a significant first step toward the transformation of hitherto Muslim, Christian, and Jewish subjects into *Ottomans*.

Indeed, one effect of the reform movement as a whole was to undermine the traditional Ottoman legal categories of Muslim, dhimmī, and non-Muslim foreigner. The reforms introduced a new category of *ecnebî* (foreigner), which referred to all foreign nationals regardless of religious affiliation (although the phrase occasionally referred more specifically to non-Muslim foreigners). A second new legal term, that of "Ottoman," replaced the old distinction between Muslims and dhimmīs. Finally, the important designation of dhimmī was replaced by "non-Muslim Ottoman." The Ottoman Law of Nationality of 1869 formalized these concepts.[7]

The reconciliation of this new, nondenominational ideological basis of the state with Islam's traditional centrality in the legitimizing framework of the empire remained the most delicate and challenging issue for the administration until the end of the Ottoman era. In this regard, the Tanzimat epoch exemplified a general inclination toward a more secular conception of the state. But this was not always sustained. For instance, the new penal codes of 1840 and 1851 explicitly invoked the sharīʿa and attempted to reconcile it with the principles laid out in the Rose Chamber Edict and with modern European concepts of law. And although the third penal code of 1858 was firmly based on the French penal code of 1810, pushing Islamic principles into the background, the sharīʿa courts were not dismantled until after the collapse of the empire (although they steadily lost ground to the civil court system).

Finally, the *Majalla*—a comprehensive compendium of Ḥanafī fiqh to be administered in the new civil (*Nizamiye*) courts—prevailed over an adaptation of the French civil code of 1804. The Majalla was a monumental work that has since served as the civil code in a number of successor states (e.g., in Iraq until 1951, and in Jordan until 1952), and as a major source for the composition of a civil code in others (e.g., by the renowned jurist ʿAbd al-Razzāq Aḥmad al-Sanhūrī in Egypt in 1949, in Syria in 1949, and in Iraq in 1951, as well as in Israel, where several of its statutes are still in effect). It has even inspired the civil codes of several nonsuccessor states, such as Afghanistan and Malaysia. The French civil code, despite its roots in Justinian's *Institutes*, was favored by many Tanzimat statesmen, who thought it a eulogy to "common sense" better suited to the goal of unifying the

[6] Éd[ouard] Engelhardt, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat; ou Histoire des réformes dans l'Empire ottoman depuis 1826 jusqu'à nos jours*, 1 (Paris: A. Cotillon, 1882), p. 33.

[7] *Düstûr*, I/1 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1289 [1872]) pp. 16–18.

empire's subjects, but their view failed to carry the day.[8] The secular tendencies of the official ideology of the state became more pronounced in the later decades of the Tanzimat era, but never to the point of removing Islam as a pillar of the empire-caliphate.

The ulema were not the only religious figures threatened by the ascendance of the new ideology; non-Muslim clerics likewise viewed the new policies as a threat to their positions in the established order. The reform edict of 1856, which granted equality to non Muslims in all aspects of life, provided a more solid legal basis for the promotion of the new official ideology—much to the dismay of conservative Muslims, who reacted to its promulgation with anguish: "For Muslims this is a day to weep and mourn."[9] The edict also weakened the privileged status of the Greek Patriarchate vis-à-vis the other non-Muslim religious institutions. A typical Greek reaction to the reform edict was: "the state has made us equal with the Jews. We were satisfied with Muslim superiority."[10] Particularly revealing was the insistence of *all* Ottoman religious communities that the relationship between each community and the center remain a bilateral one; *millet* leaders insisted that any new privileges must be conferred upon them as a distinct community, not as Ottomans. Thus, far from encouraging the dissolution of barriers between the various communities, millet representatives fought for their preservation. This pattern persisted in later years, as national groups began to draw on the model of Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy to voice comparable demands. In 1870, the Bulgarians petitioned the sultan to "strengthen forever the ties that attach us Bulgarians to your throne, by proclaiming our religious and political autonomy, based on a free Constitution, and by adding the title 'Tsar of the Bulgarians' to your [present] title 'Sultan of the Ottomans'."[11] Later certain Greek intellectuals entertained similar ideas,[12] just as Arab visionaries would later dream of a Turco-Arabian Empire on the same model.[13]

In the course of the Tanzimat era, the official boundaries between religion and ethnicity became increasingly blurred. On the one hand, religion still served as the principal organizational and ideological focus of the millets, and was so treated by the authorities. As late as 1870 the Bulgarians appealed

[8] Ebül'ulâ Mardin, *Medenî Ḥukuk Cephesinden Ahmet Cevdet Paşa* (Istanbul: Hukuk Fakültesi Yayınları, 1946), pp. 63ff.

[9] Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir*, 1, ed. Cavid Baysun (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1953), p. 68.

[10] Ibid.

[11] *Khristomatiia po istoriia na Bŭlgariia*, 2, eds. Khristo A. Khristov and Nikolai Genchev (Sofia: Nauka i izkustvo, 1969), pp. 324–32.

[12] A. J. Panayotopoulos, "The 'Great Idea' and the Vision of Eastern Federation: A Propos of Views of I. Dragoumis and A. Souliotis-Nicolaïdis," *Balkan Studies* 21/2 (1980), pp. 331ff.

[13] [Ahmed Cemal], *Cemal Paşa Hâtıratı, 1913–1922* (Istanbul: Ahmed İhsan ve Şürekâsı, 1339 [1922]), p. 48.

to the state for recognition not as ethnic Bulgars, but as a distinct religious community in the traditional mode, to be headed by an ethnarch in Istanbul. The state, in turn, continued to recognize the religious foundation of the millets, drafting organic laws governing the self-administration of the three major non-Muslim communities: the Greek Orthodox (1862), the Armenians of the Apostolic Church (1863), and the Jews (1865).[14] Yet at the same time, certain reforms launched by the state tended to subvert the religious nature of the millets. The state came to stand for Ottomanism, an inherently secular ideology. It began to appoint non-Muslims to important bureaucratic positions. Likewise, it undermined the traditionally dominant position of the clergy within the various communities by organizing representative assemblies to manage community affairs; in these a new balance between laymen and clergy was established.

By increasing the representation of all communities as Ottomans in the state bureaucracy, courts, and local assemblies, the state signaled its commitment to Ottomanism and simultaneously bolstered support for the new doctrine within the establishment. Mixed commercial courts permitted non-Muslim representation as early as 1847. The Law for Provincial Administration of 1864, which established provincial executive councils, stipulated that two Muslim and two non-Muslim representatives, chosen from the local populace, would serve on each of these bodies alongside state bureaucrats.[15] It should be noted that representation, as conceived by the statesmen of the Tanzimat, had little to do with democracy. Rather, it was a policy designed to co-opt different ethno-religious groups into the administration by soliciting advice and intelligence from their loyal and respected leaders without actually allowing them to participate in political decision-making. Such, for instance, was the purpose behind the government's invitation, in 1845, to two Muslim notables and two non-Muslim headmen from each province to the capital to provide information on local problems and propose additional reforms.[16] The leaders of the Tanzimat feared, with good reason, that their polyethnic, multi-faith empire would not survive the introduction of a truly representative system of government.[17]

Diplomacy, War, and Reform

The Tanzimat leaders were undoubtedly sincere in their desire to reinvigorate the empire through reform. But the reforms served another principal

[14] *Düstûr*, I/2 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1289 [1872]), pp. 902–75.

[15] Article 13, *Düstûr*, I/1 (Istanbul, 1289 [1872]), p. 610.

[16] *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 8 (Istanbul: Sabah Matbaası, 1328 [1910]), pp. 15–17.

[17] Un Impartial [Mehmed Emin Âlî], *Réponse à son altesse Moustapha Fazil Pacha au sujet de sa lettre au Sultan* ([Paris]: Imprimerie Jouaust, 1867), pp. 24ff.

goal for them: acquiring the international respectability required for membership in the European concert. The dual purpose of the reforms was especially evident in those innovations aimed at achieving equality before the law: advancing such equality promoted the cohesiveness of a fractious multinational empire, and at the same time it placated European public opinion, which was increasingly sensitive to the inequality of the empire's Christians. When, in 1848, failed revolutionaries fled from Poland and Hungary to seek safe haven in the Ottoman Empire, the Sublime Porte rejected Austrian and Russian demands that it surrender the fugitives, thereby bolstering the image of the empire as progressive and reformist in liberal circles in Europe. Winning over public opinion in Europe was not merely a question of popularity; it was crucial for the defense of the empire. When, in 1853, Russia attempted once more to intervene in Ottoman politics on behalf of the Orthodox subjects of the empire, it faced strong British and French opposition. To be sure, strategic considerations were paramount in the Anglo-French resistance to the Russian attempt to reinterpret its vague protective rights over the Orthodox population of the empire. But for the first time, considerations of interest were reinforced by the pro-Ottoman pressure of public opinion. In this sense, the Crimean War (see below), ostensibly fought over a dispute regarding the Holy Places in Jerusalem, was a great victory for Ottoman public diplomacy.

The cornerstone of Tanzimat foreign policy was the informal alliance with Great Britain.[18] This alliance rested on a set of shared interests and above all on the existence of a common enemy: Russia. Fu'ad Pasha's political testament, written shortly before his death in 1869 in the form of advice to the sultan, offers perhaps the best explanation of the basic precepts of Ottoman foreign policy during this period. No one, he wrote, should be surprised by Russian expansionism. "Had I been a Russian statesman," he confessed, "I too would have turned the world upside down to capture Istanbul."[19] The inevitability of Russian hostility meant that the Ottoman government was duty-bound to strengthen the defense of the empire against this perennial threat and guarantee its integrity by means of formal alliances. To gain internal strength and external legitimacy (in the eyes of France, symbol of progress), the empire must modernize itself. To acquire allies, it must turn to the British. As he put it, "the English people . . . will always be the first to have our alliance and we will hold fast to that alliance to the last." Fu'ad Pasha considered the importance of British support against Russia so vital that it "appeared preferable that . . . we should relinquish

[18] Mustafa Reşid Pasha had attempted to forge an Anglo-Ottoman alliance even before the Tanzimat. See Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1954), pp. 148–51.

[19] Mehmed Galib, "Tarihden Bir Sahife: Âlî ve Fu'ad Paşaların Vasiyetnâmeleri," *Tarih-i Osmanî Encümeni Mecmuası* 1/2 [June 14, 1910], p. 79.

several of our provinces rather than see England abandon us."[20] As for Austria, its decline made it a less valuable ally, although it retained a vested interest in sustaining Ottoman rule in the Balkans. With regard to France, the Ottoman government should take care to maintain cordial relations with this powerful nation, not in the illusory hope of receiving its protection, but in order to prevent it from joining a hostile coalition.[21]

The Ottoman preference for a British alliance derived from several factors, including the Russophobia that prevailed in the British press from the 1830s onward, the Anglo-Russian "Cold War" in Europe and across the great plains of Central Asia, the rise in British economic and strategic interest in the Levant, and Britain's naval supremacy. As seen from London, the Russian threat to the Ottoman Empire, and particularly Russia's designs on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles in pursuit of its long-standing goal of acquiring warm-water access for the Russian navy, threatened British naval supremacy and the balance of power in Europe. Accordingly, preservation of the Ottoman Empire as a bulwark against Russian expansion (and, more generally, denying the empire's strategic assets to any hostile power) became a British defense priority from the 1830s until the 1880s.

But British commitment to the defense of the Ottoman Empire was inherently limited. As Palmerston noted of the Crimean crisis, the primary British aim was "to curb the aggressive ambition of Russia. We went to war not so much to keep the Sultan and his Mussulmans in Turkey as to keep the Russians out of Turkey."[22] The British sought one thing only: to check the expansion of Russia. Their commitment did not extend beyond defense against Russian encroachments. Nor did they have an interest in building up the Ottoman Empire as a major actor on the international scene, or in supporting Ottoman policy in a broad sense. Thus, not unlike U.S. support for Turkey during the Cold War, the cooperation between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire rested above all on the persistence of Anglo-Russian rivalry. Accordingly, any signs of a reduction in the British preoccupation with the Russian threat, whether in Europe or in Asia, were greeted with alarm in Istanbul.[23]

The international crisis over the Holy Places, which erupted in May 1850, put British commitment to the test. The crisis began with a French demand for Roman Catholic guardianship over Christian sites in the Holy Land. Based on a liberal reinterpretation of the 13th article of the Ottoman-French Treaty of 1740, the French asked that the Ottomans revoke the row of privileges since granted by successive Ottoman sultans to the Greek Orthodox

[20] Ibid., p. 78.

[21] Ibid., p. 79.

[22] W. E. Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System, 1855–71: The Story of a Peace Settlement* (London: MacMillan, 1963), p. 1.

[23] Mehmed Galib, "Tarihden Bir Sahife: Âlî ve Fu'ad Paşaların Vasiyetnâmeleri," p. 80.

and Armenian Apostolic churches. The Ottoman government responded to this explosive demand with an attempt to appease all relevant parties. The overthrow of the French republic in December 1851 provided a short breathing space. But when Louis Napoleon renewed French pressure with extraordinary vigor in the course of 1852, the Ottoman government felt compelled to work out a solution favoring the Roman Catholic Church.

Not surprisingly, Russia, self-anointed protector of Orthodox Christianity, reacted strongly. The Russians were also uneasy about the rapprochement between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain and France, and were especially irked by the Ottoman refusal to return Polish and Hungarian political refugees who had fled to Ottoman territory in the aftermath of the 1848 revolutions. When the Ottoman governor of Bosnia occupied Montenegro and revoked its autonomous status in the fall of 1852, Tsar Nicholas I seized on the opportunity to rally British and Austrian support for Russia's claim to rights of protection over the Ottoman Empire's Orthodox subjects. In doing so, he miscalculated the position of all relevant parties.

Apparently sensing that the time was right to strike a deal with Great Britain over the future of the Ottoman Empire, the Tsar broached the delicate subject of partition. In conversation with Sir Hamilton Seymour, the British ambassador to St. Petersburg, on January 9, 1853, he famously characterized the empire as the "Sick man of Europe," and indicated that Russia and Great Britain should prepare for its peaceful partition in the near future. But the British, ever wary of Russian intentions, declined to discuss the matter further, even when the Russians sweetened their proposal with the offer to award Egypt and Crete to Great Britain, and thereby secure the sea route to India.

Still more grievous was the Russians' misreading of the Austrian and Ottoman positions: failing to understand that Austria much preferred the Ottoman-supported status quo to Russian domination of the Balkans, they overestimated the extent of Austrian support; misjudging the extent of Ottoman opposition to the grant of any rights of protection over Ottoman subjects to a foreign power, they underestimated Ottoman resistance. When, in February 1853, the Ottoman government made a timely concession to Austria, restoring the status quo ante in Montenegro, Austrian support for Russia's position evaporated. Having effectively split the dangerous liaison between Austria and Russia, Ottoman statesmen were in a much better position to deal with the demands of the Tsar's extraordinary envoy, Kniaz Admiral Alexander Sergeyevich Menshikov, who arrived in Istanbul aboard a Russian man-of-war in late February 1853.

On March 22, 1853, Kniaz Menshikov presented his bold demands to the Ottoman government. He asked for a treaty that would redefine Russia's hitherto vague protective rights over the Orthodox Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire (as stipulated in the 7th, 8th, 14th, and 16th articles of the Küçük Kaynarca Treaty) and went so far as to submit a draft for approval

by the sultan. Although it was presented as a purely religious matter, this was in fact a political demand with potentially far-reaching consequences. The Russians requested that the Greek Orthodox Patriarchs of Istanbul, Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem receive life-term appointments from the Ottoman government. But the emergence of patriarchs independent of Istanbul and beholden to St. Petersburg would significantly reduce Ottoman control over the Greek Orthodox population of the empire, which encompassed millions of Albanians, Arabs, Bulgarians, Macedonians, and Vlachs, as well as ethnic Greeks.[24] Moreover, the Russians sought rights of legal and political intervention for Russian diplomats, in cooperation with the Orthodox clerical establishment, on behalf of Greek Orthodox subjects throughout the empire. Implementation of the treaty would have resulted in a significant measure of Russian control over one-third of the Ottoman population.[25] Clearly this was a request to which no Ottoman government could accede.

The Ottoman government responded with delaying tactics designed to gain time for the acquisition of British and French support. The British Ambassador Stratford Canning returned to the Ottoman capital at the height of the crisis and, overstepping his instructions from London, urged his Ottoman friends to resist Russia's demands or face the destruction of their empire.[26] Policy makers back in London, however, were more cautious; they decided not to dispatch the Royal Navy despite the formal request of their chargé d'affaires in Istanbul. Catholic France, enraged by the latest challenge from Orthodoxy, adopted the dubious role of protector of the Ottomans. Charles-Louis Napoleon (now Emperor Napoleon III), in a combative mood, ordered the fleet to set sail for the Aegean on March 25. Their resolve stiffened by the appearance of new allies, the Ottoman government turned down Russia's request for a treaty on May 10.

Menshikov, who had expected the Ottoman government to yield quickly to the brutality of his approach, and who had already committed his country's prestige beyond the point of no return, now began to lower the bar for an agreement. He employed a series of threatening ultimata attached to strict deadlines, but to no avail. The Ottoman government turned them all down, including the last, which abandoned the reference to the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca as well as the demand for a new convention or treaty**,** and merely requested a diplomatic note assuring Russia that the Greek Orthodox Church would enjoy all the privileges previously granted it by the Ottoman authorities or guaranteed by existing treaties between the Ottoman government and Russia**.** Though this last approach was much more

[24] Ali Fuat Türkgeldi, *Mesâil-i Mühimme-i Siyâsiyye*, 1, ed. Bekir Sıtkı Baykal (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 1960), pp. 253–4.

[25] Ibid., p. 255.

[26] Harold Temperley, *England and the Near East: The Crimea* (London: Longmans [1936]), p. 318.

conciliatory both in form and substance than the previous Russian ultimata, the Ottomans felt that to issue a binding document to a foreign power concerning its own subjects was an undesirable risk. Accordingly, they rejected the demand, supported by the diplomatic community in Istanbul, who believed that Ottoman acquiescence would entail an unacceptable disruption of the status quo in Russia's favor. Having failed utterly in his mission, Menshikov sailed away on May 21, accompanied by the entire Russian diplomatic staff. On June 4, the Ottomans similarly rejected a subsequent Russian ultimatum issued by Count Karl Robert Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister. This final snub prompted the Russians to invade and occupy Wallachia and Moldavia on July 3, 1853.

The failure of diplomacy over the following three months resulted in the Ottoman declaration of war on October 4. Diplomatic efforts to contain the war and reestablish the status quo ante continued until the Russian destruction of the Ottoman fleet at the Black Sea harbor of Sinop on November 24. The growing threat to the balance of power represented by Russian expansion eventually trumped Anglo-French concerns about the transformation of a local conflict into a major European war. On January 3, 1854, the French and British fleets entered the Black Sea to protect Ottoman transports. On February 27, the British and the French delivered an ultimatum to the Russian Empire, requesting the withdrawal of Russian troops from Wallachia and Moldavia. St. Petersburg rejected the ultimatum, and Britain and France declared war on Russia on May 28. What for eight months had been almost purely a Russo-Ottoman confrontation now turned into a major European struggle—the first since Russia and Great Britain had joined forces at the beginning of the century to destroy the Napoleonic threat.

In the ensuing war, which lasted a little more than a year and a half, the British and French led the hostilities against Russia in the Black Sea basin and the Baltic Sea, while the Ottoman armies fought in supporting roles on land. Although the Russian army had occupied Wallachia and Moldavia, the major theater of war was in the Crimea. The projection of Russian power in the Black Sea basin rested on the fort and naval base of Sevastopol. The British admiralty felt that without its destruction, Istanbul would never be secure. In October 1854, British, French, and Ottoman expeditionary forces lay siege to the key port city, which fell in September 1855. In a desperate attempt to prevent Austria from entering the war, Russia evacuated Wallachia and Moldavia in the summer of 1854, allowing the Austrians to occupy them until the termination of hostilities. But in 1856, with Austria threatening to enter the war on the side of the emerging victors, the Tsar yielded to the superior power of the front arrayed against him. Russia accepted preliminary peace terms in early February 1856.

Although the military victory over Russia was a major achievement, it was clearly inconceivable without Austrian neutrality and Anglo-French

support. When on the defensive, Ottoman troops performed well, especially against Russian attacks in Wallachia during the early days of the war; but they played only a secondary role in the major offensives of the war and their contribution to the ultimate victory was marginal. Thus, the greatest Ottoman achievement in the Crimean War was a diplomatic one of strategic magnitude. The Ottoman statesmen had managed to maneuver successfully between the two nonliberal powers of Europe who threatened her borders, astutely manipulating the differences between Austria and Russia and sundering the alliance between them. They had then succeeded in aligning the Ottoman Empire with the principal liberal powers of Europe and orchestrating the formation of the first coalition in which the Ottoman army fought shoulder-to-shoulder with European armies. The balance of forces engineered by the diplomats at the outset of the war all but guaranteed victory on the battlefield. Finally, the Ottomans had succeeded in gaining admission, however qualified, to the European club of powers. The Paris Treaty of 1856, which provided an unprecedented guarantee of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman state, made the empire, in effect, a member of the European concert. From the Ottoman perspective, this was a more important result than the Russian surrender of southern Bessarabia or even the neutralization of the Black Sea, which the British, Austrians, and French all viewed as the major achievement of the war and a vital check against the expansion of Russian power.

But the very success of Ottoman diplomacy in the Crimean War undermined its long-term viability, for the victory over Russia brought about a reduction in the British perception of Russia as a threat. Despite a temporary revival of Russophobia in 1871, when Russia denounced the Black Sea clauses of the Paris Treaty of 1856, it never again reached the peak of 1853. Once fear of Russia diminished, anti-Ottoman attitudes—long buried under sentiments of unity against a common foe—gradually resurfaced. As George Villiers (4th Earl of Clarendon), one of the architects of the Crimean system, noted in 1866, the British public drastically changed its mind about the Ottomans in the aftermath of the war, "as people [came to] know more about the united ignorance and stupidity of the Mahomedans who squat in some of the fairest regions of the world in order to prevent their being productive."[27] Such sentiments reflected the popular aversion in Great Britain to fighting another war ostensibly to protect the Ottomans from the Russians. Often expressed in the form of stronger public pressure for privileges for British trade or reforms favoring Ottoman Christians, they complicated continued strategic cooperation between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire.

Strategic cooperation with Great Britain was not undermined only by the perceived diminution of the Russian threat to British interests; it also

[27] Mosse, *The Rise and Fall of the Crimean System,* p. 3.

went against the reality of increasing competition between the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain in the Arabian Peninsula. The Ottoman effort to reconquer portions of Yemen and reestablish suzerainty along the perimeter of the Persian Gulf during the last years of the Tanzimat constituted a direct challenge to British hegemony in the region and thus fundamentally altered the nature of Anglo-Ottoman relations. Active rivalry between the two powers and their clients over Arabia replaced the uneasy status quo and continued up until the eve of the Great War.

However, as Ottoman diplomats were to discover time and again until the collapse of the empire, there was no reliable substitute for British friendship. Ottoman diplomacy leaned toward France after 1856, but France was both unwilling and unable to provide a comparable measure of security against Russian advances. Nor were the Ottomans alone in this predicament: Austria too paid a heavy price for her support of the liberal powers during the Crimean War, and was reduced to second-tier status in Europe. There was no getting around the fact that Great Britain was the only power capable of holding the Russians at bay. This contradiction between the impossibility of replacing British protection and the diminishing basis for strategic cooperation with Great Britain continued to plague Ottoman decision makers until the Great War, though Ottoman-German rapprochement was to provide a temporary remedy in the post-Bismarckian era.

One new and remarkable feature of Ottoman diplomacy during the Tanzimat was the extraordinary power wielded by foreign ambassadors in the Ottoman capital. As the strategic importance of the empire rose in European estimates, the scene of the Great Power struggle for influence over its policies and dominions shifted to Istanbul. But the battle was not restricted to the foreign diplomatic community; it penetrated the Ottoman bureaucracy itself, fueling rivalry between domestic factions associated with particular foreign powers. The principal axis of rivalry, naturally, lay between the pro-British and pro-Russian factions in the Palace and Sublime Porte, who exploited the conflict between the two powers to bolster their own positions within the Ottoman political system. The Crimean War brought the French into play as well, setting the stage for a bitter three-way contest between Russia, Great Britain, and France, and between the Ottoman parties supporting them.

The pro-British faction generally held the upper hand, thanks to Britain's status as protector of the Ottoman Empire and the extraordinary character of her ambassador, Viscount Stratford Canning. Nicknamed "Little Sultan" by Ottoman statesmen and the Ottoman public, Canning (who represented Great Britain in Istanbul for almost twenty years, intermittently, between 1810 and 1858) came to dominate the Ottoman political scene, eventually acquiring more influence than the grand viziers and foreign ministers with whom he dealt. In fact, he could have them hired or

fired almost at will. Canning was also in a position to influence crucial Christian clerical appointments, including that of the Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church. Fu'ad Pasha is said to have remarked on the appointment of Tanzimat architect Mustafa Reşid Pasha's son, Ali Galib Pasha, as foreign minister on Canning's recommendation in 1856: "We too have the Holy Trinity. Reşid Pasha is the Father, Ali Galib Pasha is the Son, and Lord Stratford [Canning] is the Holy Ghost."[28] In November 1856, Canning intervened more bluntly, appealing to the sultan to replace Grand Vizier Âlî Pasha and Foreign Minister Fu'ad Pasha (because of their alleged inclination to a pro-French policy) with "personalities who would not be affected by French policies and would lean toward Great Britain."[29] The sultan duly dismissed the cabinet and appointed Mustafa Reşid Pasha Grand Vizier.

By contrast, the pro-Russian faction was crippled by the patent weakness of its case; after all, the fundamental aim of Russian policy was territorial aggrandizement at the expense of the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, the Russians and their Ottoman supporters fought an uphill battle for influence, succeeding only at moments when the uncertainty of British support coincided with flagging Ottoman spirits in the face of Russian threats. The heyday of the pro-Russian party came in 1871 and 1875, at times when the leading pro-Russian statesman, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, briefly became grand vizier. Nicknamed "Nedimov" by the Muslim population, who viewed him as a tool in the hands of the Pan-Slavist Russian ambassador, Count Nikolai Pavlovich Ignatiev, he did not survive long in power.

The domestic dimensions of the factional struggle occasionally caused Ottoman politicians to change sides in opportunistic fashion. Thus, Mustafa Reşid Pasha, leader of the pro-British faction, availed himself of Russian support on the eve of the Crimean War to become foreign minister in May 1853. However, he soon returned to his traditional support of the British line in a timely switch that earned him the grand viziership in November 1854.[30]

It should be remembered that, to a certain extent, the Tanzimat reforms owed much of their existence to the encouragement of liberal Europe, and especially Great Britain. But in the eyes of the Ottomans support for gradual reform was one thing; pressure for immediate change was another entirely. British statesmen found the Ottoman pace slow. They never fully comprehended the dilemma confronted by the Ottoman reformers, caught between liberal public opinion abroad and stubborn resistance by the Muslim masses at home. As their frustration grew, and the tide of public

[28] İbnülemin Mahmud Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrıazamlar*, 2 (Istanbul: Millî Eğitim Basımevi, 1940), p. 188.

[29] Ibid., 1, pp. 15, 159.

[30] Temperley, *The Crimea*, pp. 324ff.

opinion behind them shifted, the British role in the Ottoman reform program began to take on the negative form of pressure, and was accordingly resented by ever-larger portions of the Ottoman elite.

The linkage between the need for international recognition and domestic reform was most evident at the conclusion of the Crimean War. It is no coincidence that the Reform Edict of February 1856 was issued scarcely one month before the conclusion of the Paris treaty, which made the Ottoman Empire a member of European concert and placed its territorial integrity under the collective guarantee of the Great Powers of Europe. The postwar settlement of 1856 was a landmark in the history of Ottoman-European relations. To be sure, it had many shortcomings—the most important being the differences of interpretation to which it gave rise, particularly with regard to the territorial integrity of the empire. In contemporary terms, one could portray the difference of opinion on this issue as similar to that between Ṣaddām Ḥusayn and the U.S. government, when each referred to the "territorial integrity of Iraq" following the First Gulf War. The Great Powers of Europe envisioned an Ottoman entity made up of many autonomous provinces, governed by representative assemblies that embodied self-rule for non-Muslims. Such a vision, epigrammatically described by a leading Tanzimat statesman as the *États Désunis de Turquie*, was particularly undesirable from the perspective of the Ottoman leadership.[31] They wished to see a strong, unified state, secured from without by a collective guarantee of territorial integrity and from within by a centralized, efficient administration guided by enlightened laws applicable to all. However, Muslim resentment made the immediate and full implementation of the Reform Edict of 1856 impossible. To cite just one revealing example, Christian demands for permission to ring metal church bells in place of the dull wooden ones traditionally allowed were denied in many places to avoid provoking public disorder.[32]

After 1856, the quest for centralization clashed with the reality of progressive dissolution. Several regions, provinces, and principalities remained nominally within the Ottoman world, but increasingly loosened their ties to the center. Serbia and Montenegro were now Ottoman in name only. Ottoman influence over Wallachia and Moldavia diminished sharply after 1858, when new organic regulations came into effect there; the unification of the two principalities, followed by Ottoman recognition of the fait accompli in 1861, reduced Ottoman leverage to nil. In Mount Lebanon, massacres and counter-massacres between the Druzes and Maronites, followed by attacks on Christians in Damascus, triggered foreign intervention.

[31] Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–76* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 235. Keçecizâde Mehmed Fu'ad Pasha made this sarcastic comment.

[32] Grand vizier to the Ministry of Justice [September 10, 1891], BOA-Ayniyat 1406.

The Beyoğlu protocol of 1861 granted Mount Lebanon an organic law.[33] In Crete, a revolt of the local Christians resulted in the conferral of a special administrative status on the island in 1868.[34]

Provincial Government

Having achieved a reasonable degree of centralization in the heart lands of the empire, the Tanzimat statesmen set their sights on reforming provincial government beginning in 1853. Their major project was the preparation of new regulations that would make local administration uniform throughout the empire. Although this standardization of provincial government carried the centralization project one step further, and thus could be expected to engender further resistance from the periphery, it was balanced by an attempt to broaden participation in local governance. Thus, while on the one hand stripping the provinces of their special privileges and exemptions, the central government held out the prospect of participatory rule through representative councils on the other. A key provision of the new regulations was the establishment of municipalities, inspired by the French system of the *Préfecture de la ville*, and modelled on the municipal organization of Istanbul as it had been since 1854.[35] To test the new Regulations for Provinces, the government decided in the first instance to apply their major principles in a single province, the newly created Province of Danube, in 1864. Ahmed Şefik Midhat Pasha, one of the reform movement's most brilliant practitioners, led the implementation of the necessary reforms in this province under special authority. In 1865, similar regulations were issued for Bosnia.[36] By 1867, all provinces had been placed under the new regime.[37] In 1871, the government issued a new set of provincial regulations[38] which enhanced the powers of the governor, as representative of the central government, and applied equally to all the provinces of the empire, with the exception of Danube and Bosnia.

A central theme of the Tanzimat era was the attempt to enhance control over those parts of the Muslim periphery which resisted the reforms. In areas heavily populated by Albanians and Kurds the state crushed any

[33] *Düstûr*, I/4 (Istanbul, 1295 [1880]), pp. 695–701.

[34] *Düstûr*, I/1, pp. 652–87.

[35] İlber Ortaylı, *Tanzimattan Sonra Mahalli İdareler, 1840–1878* (Ankara: TODAİE, 1974), pp. 116ff.

[36] Ibid., p. 40.

[37] *Düstûr*, I/1, pp. 608–24.

[38] Ibid., pp. 625–51.

resistance. Elsewhere, it was generally more lenient. In some regions, once it had stamped out local opposition, the state asserted its authority by carving out new provinces;[39] in others, it retained existing administrative units but exiled their chieftains and notables, replacing them with new ones who owed their privileged status solely to the state.[40] In the Arabian Peninsula, the state tended to recognize local leaders as Ottoman officials and furnish them allowances. For instance, in 1870 Sheikh ʿAbd Allāh Āl-Ṣabāḥ accepted a contract as district-director of Kuwait in Basra Province, with assurances of self-rule and exemption from taxes. In return for such tangible benefits, the state always insisted on maintaining the symbolic trappings of Ottoman rule. A typical demand was that local sailboats traversing the Red Sea sail only under the Ottoman flag.[41] In the Persian Gulf, as a result of the agreement with Istanbul, more than two thousand Kuwaiti vessels which had hitherto sailed under British and Dutch colors began to fly the Ottoman flag.[42] But when such symbolic arrangements proved unsatisfactory, the Ottoman government did not hesitate to intervene directly. For example, a succession struggle between two members of the House of Saʿūd served as a pretext for the dispatch of Ottoman troops to al-Ḥasā in 1870.[43] Ottoman expeditionary forces reconquered Yemen and ʿAsīr, which were fused into a new province in 1871.[44] Although Ottoman rule was generally limited to the coastal plains of Yemen, and local dynasts never ceased to challenge Ottoman authority,[45] the center did establish nominal control over much of the country.

The resistance to the centralization of power and the standardization of law was naturally shared by the empire's nomadic populations. Classical Ottoman high culture sang the praises of *temeddün* (from the Arabic *tamaddun*—to become civilized, leave nomadic life, and settle in towns).[46] In the pre-reform era, the state had launched extensive settlement programs designed to encourage the process.[47] Despite the indignant interpretations of later Turkish nationalists, derogatory references by members of the Ottoman

[39] *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 8, p. 175.

[40] Ibid., 7 (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1306 [1889]), p. 89, and 8, pp. 142–4.

[41] Grand vizier to the governors of Yemen and the Ḥijāz [April 18, 1875], BOA-Ayniyat, 876.

[42] *Midhat Paşa: Hayat-ı Siyasiyesi, Hidemâtı, Menfa Hayatı*, 1: *Tabsıra-i İbret*, ed. Ali Haydar Midhat (Istanbul: Hilâl Matbaası, 1325 [1909]), pp. 102–104.

[43] BOA-İrade-Dahiliye, no. 44930 [1870].

[44] BOA-İrade-Meclis-i Mahsus, no. 1705 [1871].

[45] BOA-Y.Mtv. 8/52 [1882].

[46] See, for example, *Risâle der Beyân-ı Lüzûm-i Temeddün ve İctimaʿ-i Beni Âdem,* Süleymaniye Library, Halet Efendi Mss., no. 765/13 [1815–16], especially pp. 1–3.

[47] Cengiz Orhonlu, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda Aşiretleri İskân Teşebbüsü, 1691–1696* (Istanbul: Edebiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1963), passim.

ruling class to unsettled Turks in the pre-reform era were not insults directed at a specific ethnic group. Similar attitudes toward nomads and tribesmen in general—persisted in the reform era. Thus, post-reform descriptions of Druzes or Maronites in Mount Lebanon, of Kurds in Mosul province, of Albanian highlanders, or of Arab Bedouins as warlike savages, did not reflect nationalist stereotypes or "Orientalist" attitudes in Ottoman official circles. Rather, they were primarily manifestations of Ottoman frustration at these groups' stubborn refusal to abandon local practices and accept central administration and the standardization of law. For instance, the insistence of the Albanians on preserving the *Kanuni i Lëke Dukagjini*,—*a* northern Albanian code of customary law dating from the fifteenth century—in defiance of the new penal code[48] made them appear refractory to the reform-minded center, which in the pre-reform era had not just tolerated but encouraged the preservation of local traditions in a variety of codifications. Similarly, while the state viewed the typical Damascene as a member of the *kavm-i necîb-i Arab* (the noble Arab people), it regarded a Syrian Bedouin or a highland Arab of Mount Lebanon as a *vahşi* (savage). *Arab* (Arab) and *Urban* (Bedouin) were used in antithesis.

Resistance to the reforms took on different characteristics in the Christian periphery. For instance, uprisings in Nish and Vidin in 1841 and 1849–50, respectively, revealed the stiff resistance of Christian leaders to the economic reforms proposed by the Tanzimat leaders;[49] these were not so heavily opposed by the Muslim inhabitants of those areas. They also exposed the readiness of Austria and Russia to intervene in response to radical changes affecting the Christian population of the empire.[50] A fundamental factor in areas heavily populated by Christians was the attempt of Christian leaders, particularly in the Balkans, to portray the reforms as a broad assault on the nationalist cause. In order to widen the base of the opposition, they too cast their arguments against reform in economic terms, hoping that shared opposition to the oppressive Muslim landlords would unite bourgeoisie, intellectuals, and peasantry against the government.[51] Muslim landlords, in turn, united to oppose the new tax collection methods on economic grounds, forcing the government to rescind them two years later.[52] The tax collectors were replaced by provincial governors, leading to the gradual reinstatement of tax farming in the provinces.

[48] "Suret-i Fermân-ı Âlî," *Ruznâme-i Ceride-i Havâdis* [March 16, 1874].

[49] H[alil] İnalcık, "Application of the Tanzimat and Its Social Effects," *Archivum Ottomanum* 5 (1973), pp. 115ff.

[50] Ahmet Uzun, *Tanzimat ve Sosyal Direnişler: Niş İsyanı Üzerine Ayrıntılı Bir İnceleme* (Istanbul: Eren, 2002), pp. 87–94.

[51] İnalcık, "Application of the Tanzimat and Its Social Effects," p. 127.

[52] *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 7, pp. 34–6.

The Economy

The Tanzimat heralded substantial changes in the economic realm. The Rose Chamber Edict expressed the desire to reestablish economic relations on a more equitable basis. Subsequent legislation sought to realize this vision, with mixed results. One of the most ambitious reforms aimed to redefine the relationship between landowners and peasants through the abolition of the exploitative *corvée*—a widespread phenomenon on arable farms throughout the empire. But despite changes to the law, the practice persisted in various forms.

Regulation of taxation was another major area of reform. Several months after the promulgation of the Rose Chamber Edict, the government issued a decree announcing the appointment of state tax collectors who, with the help of local councils, would assume sole authority over direct tax collection throughout the empire.[53] The practice of farming customs revenues had already been discontinued when the decree was announced, but the complete abandonment of the old tax system constituted a revolution. The new collectors were given the task of surveying property values and revenue potentials and determining fair tax rates in the regions under their control. They were forbidden to collect any additional fees alongside state taxes.[54] The move to a rational system of taxation based on individual capital and actual income was not only more equitable than the old system of collecting excise taxes based on landholding; it was progressive as well, since in principle it benefited the lower classes at the expense of landowners, and rural people at the expense of city dwellers. But the reality was often more complicated. The standardization of taxes on agricultural production affords a good example. Prior to the reforms, Ottoman farmers paid "tithes" ranging from one-tenth to one-half of their crop, depending on the region. New regulations fixed a universal rate of one-tenth.[55] Although fair in theory, the reform actually created significant inequalities, because it ignored the varying productivity of land.[56] By contrast, the introduction of modern cadastral surveys conducted by engineers was an unqualified success. Such a survey was first carried out in Bursa in 1859, providing a fair basis for taxation while increasing state revenues.[57]

[53] Abdurrahman Vefik, *Tekâlif Kavâidi*, 2 (Istanbul: Kanaat Kütübhanesi, 1330 [1912]), pp. 7–38.

[54] *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 6, pp. 154–5.

[55] Abdurrahman Vefik, *Tekâlif Kavâidi*, 2, pp. 45–7.

[56] Ömer Lûtfi Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku Tarihinde Tanzimat ve 1274 (1858) Tarihli Arazi Kanunnamesi," *Tanzimat I*, p. 357.

[57] Abdurrahman Vefik, *Tekâlif Kavâidi*, 2, pp. 72ff.

But attempts to rationalize the tax system met with vigorous resistance from the propertied class, who opposed the invasive surveys aimed at uncovering hidden assets and revenue sources. As a result, overall tax revenues actually declined, forcing the government to abandon the new system and reinstate tax farming in 1841–42. Despite repeated initiatives to reintroduce the reforms during the Tanzimat and Hamidian eras, tax farming remained the principal method of taxation employed in the empire.[58] Tax reform exemplified a more general pattern of Tanzimat-era economic reform: ambitious attempts to abolish the old system, regardless of any intrinsic merits it might possess, followed by varying degrees of failure and retreat.

Other tax reforms, while simplifying the complex assortment of dues traditionally collected from non-Muslims, stopped short of abolishing religiously based tax discrimination. The state replaced a number of customary taxes owed by non-Muslims with a single tax, collected and remitted to the treasury by religious leaders.[59] The poll tax (*jizya*) remained, but was transformed in 1856 into a payment for exemption from military service.[60] Despite the fact that non-Muslims continued to pay the same amount under a different name, that a Muslim administration should replace the Islamic basis of taxation with a secular one was unprecedented and symbolically significant.[61]

In an attempt to further monetarize the economy, the state declared in 1840 that payments of tax in kind would no longer be acceptable; all tax payments were to be in cash.[62] Furthermore, all state officials, including the sultan and members of the royal house, began to receive monthly salaries directly from the imperial treasury. These changes, taken together, signified the removal of the last remaining vestiges of the archaic timar system. This was formalized in a series of regulations and finally in the Land Law of 1858, which reorganized land ownership, inheritance law, and the issuance of deeds. Henceforth, private ownership of property acquired de jure status.[63]

A number of new measures addressed the fiscal and monetary aspects of centralization. In 1840, the state abolished its multiple treasuries and announced a return to the principle of "one budget and one treasury."[64] Beginning in 1841–42, the treasury prepared detailed budgets listing all

[58] See, for instance, *Düstûr*, I/1, p. 244; I/2, pp. 4–5; 29; 42–6; 49; and I/3 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1289 [1872]), p. 242.

[59] Abdurrahman Vefik, *Tekâlif Kavâidi*, 2, pp. 20–21.

[60] Ibid., pp. 197–9.

[61] Ibid., p. 194. An excepion was the abolition of jizya in the Mughal Indian Empire between 1562 and 1679.

[62] Abdurrahman Vefik, *Tekâlif Kavâidi*, pp. 49–50.

[63] Barkan, "Türk Toprak Hukuku," pp. 351ff.

[64] Yavuz Cezar, *Osmanlı Maliyesinde Bunalım ve Değişim Dönemi: XVIII. yy dan Tanzimat'a Mali Tarih* (Istanbul: Alan Yayıncılık, 1986), p. 290.

state income and expenditure.[65] To increase state control and further monetarize the Ottoman economy, the government promoted the establishment of banks to replace traditional money lenders. In 1845–46, the government and two local bankers established the short-lived Banque de Constantinople, the first Ottoman bank. In 1856, the Ottoman Bank was established in London, with British capital, to fund commerce with the Ottoman Empire. In November 1862, French shareholders joined the British founders of the bank, turning it into an international syndicate, named Banque Impériale Ottomane, which was subsequently recognized by the sultan as the most important financial institution of the empire. By 1875, the bank played such a central role in Ottoman debt management that the sultan granted it the right to control the budget and expenditures of the state, thus in effect making a foreign syndicate treasurer of the empire.[66] By the end of the Tanzimat period, the bank had branches throughout the empire, including Alexandria, Damascus, Beirut, Isparta, İzmir, Larnaca, Port-Said, Ruse, and Salonica, as well as in London and Paris. Other foreign-owned banks, such as the Société Générale de l'Empire Ottomane (1864) and the Banque Austro-Ottomane (1872), likewise assisted government efforts to revitalize the economy. The Constantinople Stock Exchange was founded in 1873, and dealt mainly with the exchange of treasury bonds, private equity, and foreign currency; its volume of trade, however, was negligible when compared to its European counterparts.[67] The first state-backed agricultural credit union was established in Ruscuk (Ruse) in 1864 to provide low-interest credit to agricultural producers, hitherto forced to borrow money from usurers at exorbitant interest rates. Many similar credit unions soon emerged throughout the empire, and their conduct was regulated by a series of government regulations in 1867.[68]

In 1840, the government tried to introduce paper money in the form of treasury bonds bearing 8 percent interest. A decade later, the state issued zero-interest banknotes resembling European currency. But paper money never caught on as an acceptable financial medium outside the major cities. A rash of counterfeiting followed by a market crash on December 13, 1861, eroded consumer confidence,[69] forcing the treasury to withdraw the notes

[65] *Düstûr,* I/2, pp. 70–73.

[66] Adrien Biliotti, *La Banque Impériale Ottomane* (Paris: Henri Jouve, 1909), pp. 12ff; *Düstûr,* I/2, pp. 976–83. The *Banque Impériale Ottomane* served as the state bank of the empire and subsequently of the Turkish Republic until the establishment of the Turkish Central Bank in 1931. See André Autheman, *La Banque impériale ottomane* (Paris: Ministère de l'économie et des finances, 1996), pp. 266–7.

[67] *Düstûr*, I/3, pp. 484–97.

[68] *Düstûr*, I/2, pp. 387–98.

[69] Süleyman Sûdî, *Usûl-i Meskûkât-ı Osmaniye ve Ecnebiye* (Istanbul: A. Asadoryan, 1311 [1893]), pp. 119ff.

in 1862.[70] The treasury had resorted to debasement of the Ottoman coinage in 1840 and 1844. Subsequently, it sought to fix the values and types of coins.[71] On the one hand, this represented a significant step toward establishing a monetary economy under central control; at the same time, it increased pressure on the government to borrow money. Soaring budget deficits compounded the problem. They rose from 4,163,000 gurushes in 1841–42, representing a mere 0.7 percent of total revenues, to 172,223,384 gurushes in 1861–62, constituting 14.1 percent of total revenues.[72] Consequently, the internal debt continued to grow, and in 1854 the Ottoman Empire began to borrow from European governments and banks by means of long-term bonds. By 1874, the state had borrowed a total of Lt (Lire turque/Ottoman lira) 238,773,272, but had received less than 127,120,220 in revenue, after the deduction of commissions.[73] Out of this amount, the government invested a mere 17 percent in infrastructure, such as irrigation projects, and spent the rest on budget deficits and projects of dubious benefit, such as the construction of imperial palaces.[74]

In October 1875, the desperate Ottoman government decided to default unilaterally on interest payments on its foreign debt. This decision provoked an outcry on European stock markets and tarnished the Ottoman image abroad. A contemporary observer remarked that European creditors had no problem with imperfect government in Istanbul "when it paid them seven percent, but discovered all its iniquities when the rate [was] reduced to three."[75] More ominously, the Ottoman default raised doubts about the future viability of the empire and reduced British commitment to its integrity. Shareholders insulted Ottoman ambassadors; articles in the British and French press accused the Ottoman government of foolishly squandering European investments; and some even questioned the desirability of "continued Ottoman existence in Europe"—a backdrop of negative public opinion that severely constricted the freedom of action of Ottoman diplomats during the major international crisis over the Balkans then beginning to unfold.[76]

[70] Hasan Ferid, *Nakd ve İ'tibar-ı Malî,* 2: *Evrak-ı Nakdiye* (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Âmire, 1334 [1918]), p. 245.

[71] Ibid., p. 211.

[72] Tevfik Güran, "Tanzimat Dönemi'nde Osmanlı Maliyesi: Bütçeler ve Hazine Hesapları, 1841–1861," *Belgeler* 13/17 (1988), pp. 213ff.

[73] İ. Hakkı Yeniay, *Yeni Osmanlı Borçları Tarihi* (Istanbul: İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1964), p. 51.

[74] Refii-Şükrü Suvla, "Tanzimat Devrinde İstikrazlar," *Tanzimat I*, p. 287.

[75] Donald C. Blaisdell, *European Financial Control in the Ottoman Empire: A Study of the Establishment, Activities, and Significance of the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), p. 81.

[76] İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrıazamlar*, 2, p. 207.

Another important field of Tanzimat economic activity was industrialization. Much of the early investment in industry went to projects begun under Selim III and Mahmud II. But the scale of production was larger than ever before. An industrial park was established on the outskirts of Istanbul, the Grande Fabrique in Zeytinburnu, where new factories produced garments, ammunition, paper, shoes, and silk. British engineers and skilled laborers (as well as a handful of Germans) operated expensive machinery imported mainly from Great Britain, producing penknives, razors, calicoes, cotton stockings, cannon, ploughshares, iron railings, iron pipes, castings, swords, and padlocks. Their motto was: "Everything must be done at home, *sur la place*!"[77] A small factory complex in Makriköy (modern-day Bakırköy in Istanbul) contained a calico manufacturing facility, a small steamship assembly line, several tanneries, an iron and copper foundry, and a workshop for the production of coarse woollen cloth.[78] Clearly, encouraging local industry on the one hand, while lowering customs tariffs and opening the domestic market to European goods on the other, amounted to an incoherent economic policy. Without long-term state protection, the new industries stood little chance of withstanding the competition from Europe; in fact, relatively few survived and prospered, and only with the help of heavy subsidies. The Ottoman authorities eventually took steps to protect local industry, increasing customs tariffs to 8 percent in 1861[79] and granting the new factories a fifteen-year customs exemption on imported capital goods in 1873.[80] Although these measures proved insufficient, they marked a significant transition during the last decade of the Tanzimat from a policy of laissez-faire to one of protectionism, which, by and large, became the standard approach to trade and the economy until the collapse of the empire. As a consequence of these new economic policies and other international factors, such as the shift in Europe from the production of consumer goods to capital equipment, a minor Ottoman industrial revival began in the 1870s.[81] It did not, however, lead to a major economic transformation. The overall contribution of manufacturing to the Ottoman economy remained at a level far below that of the world's industrialized economies.

[77] Charles MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny: The Result of Journeys Made in 1847 and 1848 to Examine into the State of That Country*, 2 (London: John Murray, 1850), pp. 603–11.

[78] Clark, "The Ottoman Industrial Revolution," *IJMES*, pp. 67–9.

[79] Süleyman Sûdî, *Defter-i Muktesid*, 3 (Istanbul: Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1307 [1889]), pp. 83ff.

[80] *Düstûr*, I/3, p. 398.

[81] Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 167ff.

Cultural and Intellectual Changes

The Tanzimat era of reform marks a watershed in Ottoman intellectual and cultural life, and one in which the Young Ottomans played a vital role. Until the Tanzimat, the Ottoman press, such as it was, published only the official state gazette, first in Turkish and French, and later in various Ottoman languages. The press was merely a one-way communication channel between government and subjects for the express purpose of disseminating information and positive commentary on official policies. The Tanzimat witnessed the birth of provincial gazettes, published by governors for the same purpose. Nonofficial journals in languages other than Turkish had existed long before the Tanzimat, but these had always been community papers of limited reach; even the French press of the pre-Tanzimat era focused on issues of concern to foreigners and Levantines.[82] During the reform era, new newspapers, such as *Ceride-i Havâdis* (1840), and especially *Tercüman-ı Ahvâl* (1860) and *Tasvir-i Efkâr* (1862), appeared. These fostered debate on hitherto unheard of subjects, such as the rights of man, regime types, and economic problems. They also provided information concerning developments abroad. Between 1862 and 1867, the journal of the Ottoman Scientific Society *Mecmua-i Fünûn*, introduced popularized European scientism to the empire. In its persistent focus on the superiority of modern science, it always took care to disguise criticism of religion as an assault on superstition.[83]

Journals such as *Diyojen* and *Hayâl* satirized political and social issues in cartoons. Such satirical publications were immensely influential and contributed greatly to the remolding of Ottoman public opinion, hitherto shaped in coffeehouses, salons, and unofficial ulema discussion groups at both popular and elite levels.[84] The circulation figures for some newspapers—as much as 20,000 for *Tasvir-i Efkâr*[85]—were amazingly high, given the low rate of literacy in the empire. The number of people they reached was higher still, since such newspapers were often read aloud in coffeehouses to the illiterate. The lively debate in the press also stimulated the evolution of Ottoman Turkish from a flowery language of poets and a stilted idiom of bureaucrats to a dynamic medium for the exchange of new ideas among a wider public.[86]

[82] G[érard] Groc, "La presse en français à l'époque ottomane," *La presse française de Turquie de 1795 à nos jours: Histoire et catalogue*, eds. G. Groc and İ. Çağlar (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 1985), pp. 5ff.

[83] See, for instance, Münif, "Muvâzene-i İlm ü Cehl," *Mecmua-i Fünûn*, no. 1 [June–July 1862], pp. 29–30.

[84] *Tarih-i Lûtfî*, 1, pp. 168–9.

[85] V[ladimir] A[leksandrovich] Gordlevskii, *Izbrannye sochineniia*, 2 (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Vostochnoi Literaturi, 1961), p. 354.

[86] [Mehmed] Sa'id, *Gazeteci Lisanı* (Istanbul: Sabah Matbaası, 1327 [1909]), pp. 5ff.

The demand for printed news underscored the importance of public opinion, which journalists presumed to represent.[87] This stance placed the press on a collision course with the Tanzimat administration, which did not aspire to see the press leveling criticism at the government on behalf of the public. As a result, in 1864 the government issued a series of statutes to regulate journalistic activity and setup the means to punish "dangerous" publications.[88] As one Tanzimat leader put it, "conveying the shortcomings of the state to the nation could not be considered patriotism."[89] A more restrictive decree of 1867 intensified government scrutiny of the press.

The growing fascination of the bureaucratic elite with Western culture marked a sea-change in the intellectual climate of the empire. One of the manifestations of this transformation was the new status of European languages in Ottoman officialdom. When Mahmud Raif Efendi had written his *Tableau des nouveaux règlements de l'Empire ottoman* in 1798, it was the first serious essay written by a Muslim Ottoman bureaucrat in a Western language; even in 1821, when the government decided to replace Greek Phanariot dragomans with Muslim translators, it managed to locate only a single convert to perform translation services.[90] But by the second half of the century, the Ottoman Foreign Ministry was corresponding with its own representatives abroad in French, knowledge of which had become essential for advancement in government service.[91] When, in 1864, *Mecmua-i Fünûn* invited its readers to contribute books toward the establishment of a new library, many high-ranking statesmen rose to the occasion. Among the 126 volumes donated—including works of Bacon, La Fontaine, Helvétius, Montesquieu, and Adam Smith—only two were non-European: a volume of the Ottoman legal code and the *Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldūn.[92]

Such examples provide interesting insights into the Westernizing proclivities of the Ottoman elite. They do not, of course, reflect any parallel tendency at the popular level. Still, beginning in the third decade of the Tanzimat, translations of European works began to reach less educated audiences as well. Yusuf Kâmil Pasha's Turkish rendition of Fénelon's *Aventures de Télémaque*, published in 1862, marked the first translation of a European literary work in modern times. It contained a subtle criticism of absolutist rule. His work was followed by translations of Defoe, Hugo,

[87] "Efkâr-ı Umumiye," *İbret*, no. 40 [October 28, 1872].

[88] *Düstûr* I/2, pp. 220–27.

[89] Server İskit, *Türkiyede Matbuat İdareleri ve Politikaları* (Istanbul: Başvekâlet Basın Yayın Umum Müdürlüğü, 1943), p. 24.

[90] BOA-HH 21304 [1825].

[91] Bernard Lewis, *The Muslim Discovery of Europe* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1982), p. 88.

[92] "Bazı Zevât Tarafından Cemiyete Verilen Hedaya," *Mecmua-i Fünûn*, no. 22 [March–April 1864], pp. 432–6.

Lesage, Molière, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Anne Radcliffe, and others.[93] İbrahim Şinasi's *Terceme-i Manzûme* (Translations of Poetry), published in 1859 in prose form alongside the original French, was the first publication of European poetry in Turkish. It included translations from La Fontaine, Gilbert, and Racine.[94]

The records of books owned by members of the Ottoman ruling class in the mid-nineteenth century demonstrate that low-ranking officials continued to read classical catechisms, such as the *Vasiyyet-i Birgivî*, major popular books of Ḥanafī jurisprudence, such as the *Multaqā al-abḥur*, and Ṣūfī prayer books, such as the *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*—all texts that had been equally popular a century beforehand. In the libraries of higher-ranking officials, however, books about Europe began to appear. For instance, the library of an Ottoman governor (*mir-i mirân*) included a three-volume set entitled *İtalya ve Katerina ve Diğer Nizâma Dâir Risâle* (A Treatise on Italy and Catherine and Other Regimes).[95] Officials began to record books in "Frankish letters,"[96] "books in French," and "illustrated books in French."[97] In 1852, the clerk who registered Marshal Mehmed Emin Pasha's 339 volumes in English and 468 volumes in French knew both these languages well enough to describe the books in detail, using constructions uncommon in Ottoman Turkish, such as "Book about Administration and Rights of the People in French."[98]

As these examples illustrate, Westernization remained primarily a class-oriented phenomenon even into the late nineteenth century. But as the nineteenth century wore on, European manners and ideas became more widespread. Accordingly, the taste for things European began to be associated with generational attributes and urban living, rather than strictly with class orientation. By the end of the century, young ladies in upper-class mansions and houses could be found leafing through *Hanımlara Mahsus Gazete* (Ladies' Gazette), while their male counterparts perused the illustrated literary journal *Servet-i Fünûn* (Wealth of Sciences); their elders, meanwhile, read "old books printed on yellow paper that nobody [else] could read."[99]

[93] Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, *19 uncu Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi* (Istanbul: Çağlayan Kitabevi, 1982), pp. 285–6.

[94] [İbrahim] Şinasi, *Fransız Lisanından Nazmen Tercüme Eylediğim Bâzı Eṣ'ar* (Istanbul: Press d'Orient, 1859), passim.

[95] See the record of Governor Mehmed Haydar Pasha ibn Abdullah's estate, made on September 12, 1849. *İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi, ŞS* 1642, f. 121a.

[96] See, for instance, the record of the estate of Esseyyid Mehmed Muhyiddin Nüzhet Efendi ibn Mehmed, a clerk at the Imperial Mint, made on May 2, 1851, ibid., ŞS 1658, f. 46b.

[97] See, for instance, the record of Kazasker Esseyyid Mehmed ʿAtaullah ibn Esseyyid Mehmed Raşid's estate made on April 21, 1852, ibid., ŞS 1664, f. 35a.

[98] See the record of the estate dated March 23, 1852, ibid., ŞS 1664, f. 50a ff.

[99] Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar, *Boğaziçi Yalıları, Geçmiş Zaman Köşkleri* (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayınları, 1997), p. 43.

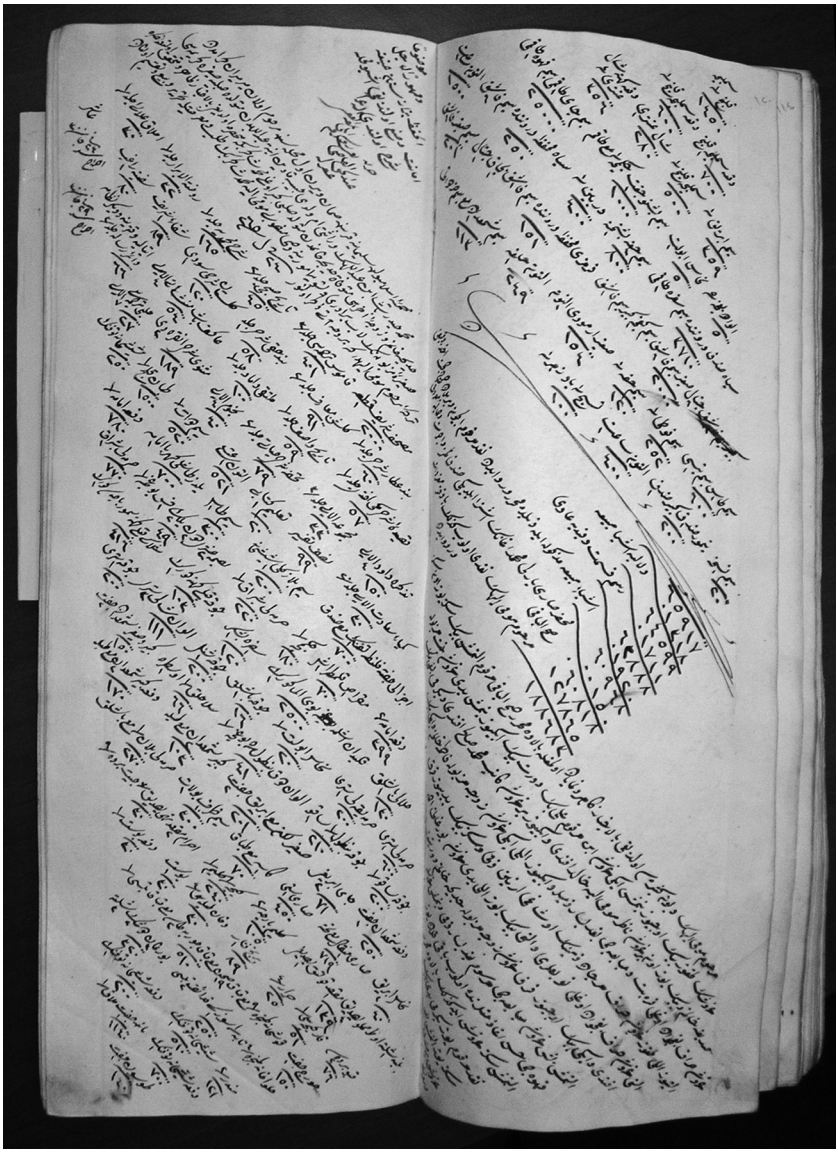

Figure 8. The record of Governor Mehmed Haydar Pasha ibn Abdullah's estate (1849) marshaling his books including *İtalya ve Katerina ve Diğer Nizâma Dâir Risâle* (A Treatise on Italy and Catherine and Other Regimes, at the end of the third row of titles) and other possessions. İstanbul Müftülük Arşivi ŞS. no. 1642, p. 121a.

The writing and conception of history also underwent major changes. Ahmed Cevdet Pasha's monumental history of the Ottoman Empire, begun in 1854 and completed in 1884, marks the watershed between classical historiography and post-Tanzimat writing of history. When the Academy of Sciences, a product of the reform era, decided to commission a new work of history to complete Joseph von Hammer's *Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches*, and cover the crucial period between 1774 and 1826, it bestowed the honor upon this medrese-educated pasha, one of the most prominent conservative statesman-scholars of the age. The selection itself speaks volumes about the change in Ottoman conceptions of history. There existed histories of the period by distinguished historians, such as Ahmed Âsım, Ahmed Vâsıf, Çeşmizâde Mustafa Reşid, Halil Nuri, Şânizâde Mehmed ʿAtaullah, and Trabzonî Sadullah Enverî. But clearly the Academy sought a history that would contextualize documents, historicize developments, and analyze events in the mode of von Hammer. Ahmed Cevdet Pasha must have studied the works of Buckle, von Hammer, Macaulay, and Taine.[100] The resulting work—with its historiosophical introduction, its situation of Ottoman history in the context of European and world history, its attempts to fashion analytical frameworks for developments that transcended mere chronology, and its overall critical approach—leaves no doubt that Ahmed Cevdet Pasha was a historian in an entirely new mode, however much the form of his work might resemble those of his predecessors.

During the Tanzimat era, Ottoman authors also started to write in European literary genres, such as the novel or play. The first Ottoman novels appeared in Turkish written in Armenian script, since both authors and readers were Armenians. Yovsep Vardanean's *Akabi Hikâyesi* (The Story of Akabi/Agape), published in 1851, was the first example of this new genre. It was an Armenian *Romeo and Juliet*, depicting a love affair between two Armenians of different denominations—Armenian Apostolic and Catholic—and touching upon the sensitive question of sectarianism in the Armenian community.[101] In the same year, Yovhannēs Hisarean authored the first novel in modern Western Armenian, *Ḥosrov ew Makʿruhi*. In Istanbul a decade later, in 1861, Vasil Drumev wrote the first Bulgarian novelette, *Neshtastna familiia* (The Unfortunate Family). In the 1870s, Ottoman Greeks, inspired by their brethren in Greece and abroad, began to write literature in Karamanlı, a central Anatolian Turkish dialect written in Greek script. In 1872, Evangelinos Missailidis published his *Temaşa-i Dünya ve Cefakâr ü Cefakeş* (Observing the World and the Tormentor and Sufferer), the first novel in Karamanlı, which was adapted from an earlier Greek novel published in Athens. In Arabic literature, classical

[100] Tanpınar, *19 uncu Asır Türk Edebiyatı Tarihi*, p. 172.

[101] Vartan Paşa [Yovsep Vardanean], *Akabi Hikyayesi: İlk Türkçe Roman (1851)*, ed. A. Tietze (Istanbul: Eren, 1991).

forms persisted into the twentieth century, although Arab authors were not immune to the general trend toward analysis and criticism of society.[102] For instance, Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq's *al-Sāq ʿalā al-sāq fīmā huwa al-Fāryāq* (Leg over Leg Concerning "Faryāq," a play on the author's name), published in Paris in 1855, was a four-part treatise, modeled on the *maqāmah* tradition in Arabic literature, in which the hero of the story takes the narrator on a trip around the Mediterranean Sea and Europe. The book contains criticism of Christian clergy, an analysis of British and French customs and social conditions, and discussion of philosophical, linguistic, and literary matters. The first novel ever penned by a Muslim Ottoman, *Taaşşuk-ı Talât ve Fitnat* (The Romance of Talât and Fitnat), written by Şemseddin Sami Frashëri in 1875, was an open and provocative treatment of gender issues in the Muslim community. It represented an enormous leap from pre-Tanzimat works such as *Muhayyelât-ı Aziz Efendi* (Imaginations of Aziz Efendi, 1769), composed in the form of the *Thousand and One Nights* and designed purely for entertainment.

The novel was a powerful new tool for highlighting social problems, popular primarily because it was easy to understand. The Ottoman novel remained deeply rooted in realism, a proclivity reinforced by the surging popularity of naturalism and materialism in intellectual circles. This approach to the novel peaked in 1885 with the radical proposal of Beşir Fu'ad, the first Ottoman naturalist and a disciple of Ludwig Büchner, that Ottoman authors abandon all literary activity save the production of novels in the mode established by Émile Zola in the mid-1880s.[103] A similar trend may be observed in several of the Ottoman communities: Grigor Zōhrab published the first realist Armenian novel, *Anhetatsatz serund mĕ* (A Vanished Generation), in 1887; the Egyptian author Muḥammad Luṭfī Jumʿah defended realistic fiction in *Fī buyūt al-nās* (In People's Houses, 1904); and Aleks Stavre Drenova (the future author of the Albanian national anthem) in the early twentieth century composed Albanian poetry which reflected a shift from romanticism to realism. All three were influenced by Zola.

One of the more important effects of the Tanzimat on literature was the increase in literary exchanges between the various Ottoman communities. This was due in large part to the increasing acceptance of Ottoman Turkish as a spoken medium, to the ideological bond formed by the new official ideology of Ottomanism, and to the emergence of French as a new literary language of the elites. Figures such as Ahmed Midhat Efendi, Şemseddin Sami Frashëri, Naim Frashëri, Vaso Pasha, Yovsep Vardanean, Theodor Kasab, Nikolaki Soullides, Louis Ṣābūnjī, and Aḥmad Fāris al-Shidyāq

[102] Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal's *Zaynab,* published in Egypt in 1913, is generally considered the first Arabic novel.

[103] See Beşir Fu'ad, *Victor Hugo* (Istanbul: Ceb Kütübhanesi, 1302 [1885]), pp. 181ff.

served as key agents of literary exchange. Beginning in this period, Ottoman communities began to read works of authors from other communities on an unprecedented scale. They also began to read major Turkish journals.[104]

Drama too flourished under the Tanzimat. In 1839, there were four theater buildings in the capital—two of which hosted foreign circus shows. Thereafter, local theaters proliferated throughout the empire. Early theater produced mainly translations of European plays. İbrahim Şinasi's play, *Şair Evlenmesi* (The Marriage of the Poet), written in 1859 as a criticism of the match-making tradition, was the first original play in Turkish. During the early years, Armenian actors, and especially actresses, dominated the Ottoman theatrical scene. For a Muslim woman to become an actress was out of the question during the Tanzimat era. But the audiences of the time were microcosms of the Ottoman elite, representing the high society of the empire in all its ethnic and religious diversity.

The key concept of "*Alla Franca*" was closely linked to the notion of progress. It was a catchword of the Tanzimat era, and one that symbolized European supremacy. Originally a term used by the elite of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries to refer to European objects such as toilets or furniture, during the Tanzimat it began to denote a way of life associated with a particular type of Westernized individual. As such it had a negative connotation until roughly mid-century when, in accordance with the changing intellectual climate, it came to connote superiority, the natural marker of progress in the eyes of the upper classes. The term gradually became a household word.[105] It carried prodigious power, and could confer instant worth or legitimacy on an object or habit. As such, it was often the target of ridicule by sophisticates: "Oh! It is *Alla Franca*! Who can still disapprove of it?" exclaimed the sarcastic Ahmed Midhat Efendi, the most popular Ottoman author of the late nineteenth century. He wrote the first book on European good manners to show his compatriots that it was wrong to accept "all scandalous things [just] because they [were] *Alla Franca*."[106] A cartoon in a satirical journal of 1874 featured an *Alla Franca* lady rebuking an *Alla Turca* lady who dared to question her dress: "You are the one who should be ashamed of her dress in this century of progress!"[107] As late as 1910, the founders of a new satirical journal went so far as to name it "*Alla Franca*," because the phrase signified "observing good manners and excessive efforts toward being elegant."[108]

[104] Johann Strauss, "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th–20th Centuries)?" *Arabic Middle Eastern Literatures* 6/1 (2003), pp. 53ff.

[105] Ahmed Midhat, *Avrupa Âdâb-ı Muaşereti yahud Alafranga* (Istanbul: İkdam Matbaası, 1312 [1894]), passim.

[106] Ibid., pp. 2, 11.

[107] *Hayâl*, no. 157 [June 17, 1875], p. 4.

[108] "Arz-ı Maksad," *Alafranga*, no. 1 [December 13, 1910], p. 1.

FIGURE 9. An Ottoman cartoon depicting a conversation between a traditional and a modern lady.

A related, and crucially important, cultural development of the Tanzimat era was the wide audience given to European materialist ideas in Ottoman intellectual circles. Foreign visitors were often stunned by the extent to which works of nineteenth-century French materialism, such as d'Holbach's *Système de la Nature*, held sway over the Ottoman educated class. One observed that every graduate of the new imperial schools seemed to emerge "a materialist, and generally a libertine and a rogue."[109] The rise of an educated class reared on popular materialist ideas created the conditions for an explosion of Ottoman materialist activity in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, which in turn would to exert a profound influence over both the intellectual progenitors of the Young Turk Revolution and the founders of modern Turkey.

[109] See MacFarlane, *Turkey and Its Destiny*, 2, p. 271.

Education

The Ottoman educational system underwent significant change during the Tanzimat era. First, the reformers attempted to centralize and standardize the system of education. In 1845, a Council of Education was founded, followed by a Ministry of Education in 1857. In 1869, the administration issued detailed regulations standardizing education.[110] The new Regulations for Education, issued under the inspiration of Jean-Victor Duruy's secular reform program in France, laid out a blueprint for a new educational system featuring preparatory, middle and high schools, as well as colleges with modern curricula, including European languages. They also instituted a chain of military schools at middle school, high school, and college levels. In addition, the law permitted communities and individuals to establish their own schools. Having revised the schooling system, the reformers sought to use it to inculcate the new state ideology. They made elementary education compulsory and enrolled students from different ethnic and religious groups in the new schools as Ottomans. They failed in this due to low enrollment numbers, a dearth of competent educators, and the privileges that had been granted to foreign and community schools. The Tanzimat reformers also invigorated the educational system for training civil servants. The establishment of the School of Administration in 1859 was a major step toward creating an educated bureaucratic elite.[111] Unlike their predecessors, who still clung to the illusion that the medreses could be transformed into modern institutions of learning, the Tanzimat statesmen founded scientific societies and a university. In 1851, the sultan attended the opening ceremonies of the Academy of Science with twenty-two Muslim and eleven non-Muslim permanent members. However, this institution, modeled on the Académie Française, did not live up to the great expectations of the Tanzimat statesmen.[112] The Dârülfünûn (University), which opened in 1870 and accepted students the following year, fared no better; it was closed in 1871, due to a combination of financial difficulties and controversy sparked by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī's comments on the art of prophecy at a university lecture.[113] In education as in all other fields, the grand ideals could not be fully realized at once; at the same time, the success

[110] *Düstûr*, I/2, pp. 184–219.

[111] Mücellidoğlu Ali Çankaya, *Son Asır Türk Tarihinin Önemli Olayları ile Birlikde Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler*, 1: *Mülkiye Tarihi, 1859–1968* (Ankara: Mars Matbaası, 1968–1969), pp. 51–3.

[112] Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, "Cemiyet-i İlmiye-i Osmaniye'nin Kuruluş ve Faaliyetleri," *Osmanlı İlmî ve Meslekî Cemiyetleri* (Istanbul: IRCICA, 1987), pp. 198–200.

[113] Osman Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, 2: *Tanzimat Devri Mektepleri* (Istanbul: Osmanbey Matbaası, 1940), pp. 453–68.

of the Tanzimat in equipping the new elites with a modern education cannot be overemphasized.

The Young Ottomans

The most resonant political voice of opposition to the Tanzimat policies was that of the Young Ottomans. This was a loose coalition of intellectuals and former bureaucrats who coalesced around a shared hostility toward the reforms and their exponents. They formed a secret society in 1865, and began to express dissent within the limits of official censorship in Istanbul. Young Ottoman publications in the Ottoman press caused a stir in public opinion, provoking an official backlash that ended in the closure of their newspapers and the banishment of their leading figures to remote corners of the realm. After 1867, the Young Ottomans in exile articulated their opposition with greater freedom. They acted under the financial sponsorship of Mustafa Fâzıl (Muṣṭafā Fāḍil) Pasha, the former Egyptian heir apparent who had lost his status to his brother, the Khedive Ismāʿīl, in a deal brokered by Fu'ad Pasha. Abroad, the Young Ottomans published the first uncensored Ottoman opposition journals in London, Geneva, Paris, Lyon, and Marseille. All but one of the most eminent Young Ottomans returned to the empire following the general amnesty declared after Âlî Pasha's death in 1871.

Although they shared many ideas and a common cause, the Young Ottomans were hardly monolithic. While some marginal Young Ottoman journals promoted revolutionary ideas,[114] the radical line was rejected by mainstream figures. Young Ottoman leaders strongly criticized the Tanzimat as a capitulation to European dictates.[115] The adoption of European laws at the expense of the sharīʿa, they contended, had resulted in "tyranny."[116] As to the economic reforms of the Tanzimat, they were ruinous acts of irresponsibility which could lead only to the destruction of Ottoman industry[117] and the debilitating accumulation of debt.[118] While their benefactor Mustafa Fâzıl Pasha appealed to the sultan in an open letter (authored in fact by a Polish intellectual) calling for the institution of liberal secular

[114] M. Kaya Bilgegil, *Yakın Çağ Türk Kültür ve Edebiyatı Üzerinde Araştırmalar*, 1: *Yeni Osmanlılar* (Ankara: Atatürk Üniversitesi Yayınları, 1976), pp. 138ff.

[115] [Namık Kemal], "Tanzimat," *İbret*, no. 46 [November 17, 1872], p. 1.

[116] "Mülâhazat," *Hürriyet*, no. 23 (November 30, 1868), p. 4.

[117] "Yeni Osmanlılardan Bir Zât Tarafından Matbaamıza Gönderilüb Gazetemize Derc Edilmekde Olan Hâtıraların Mabaʿdıdır," *Hürriyet*, no. 42 (April 12, 1869), p. 8.

[118] "İstikraz-ı Cedîde Üzerine Yeni Osmanlılar Cemiyeti'nin Mütalâʿatı," *Hürriyet*, no. 22 (November 23, 1868), pp. 1–2.

administration and representative government,[119] the Young Ottomans espoused a form of constitutionalism based on such Islamic notions as *al-amr bi'l maʿrūf wa'l nahy ʿan al-munkar* (commanding right and forbidding wrong)[120] and *mashwarah* (consultation).[121] Such principles, they believed, ought to replace the "enlightened" absolutism of Âlî and Fu'ad Pashas. The Young Ottomans attempted to reconcile Islamic concepts of government with the ideas of Montesquieu, Danton, Rousseau, and contemporary European scholars and statesmen, such as Constantin-François de Chassebœuf Volney and Félix Esquirou de Parieu.[122] Confessing that "[the Ottoman] position in comparison to France is like that of an uneducated child beside an accomplished scholar," they nevertheless insisted that Ottoman importation from Europe be limited to "scientific and industrial progress,"[123] and that Ottoman constitutionalism be based on Muslim fiqh, even as it mimicked the representative institutions of Europe.

Although Abdülhamid II found little of use in the Islamic constitutionalism of the Young Ottomans, as will be seen their ideas dominated Ottoman intellectual life for decades. Theirs was an original response to the challenges of Western modernity that was to inspire future Muslim constitutional movements, such as that of Iran. But subsequent generations of the secular intelligentsia tended to ignore the Islamic content of Young Ottoman thought, choosing to focus instead on the patriotic Ottomanism of Namık Kemal—who coined Turkish versions of key terms like "freedom" and "fatherland"—and on the courage and nascent Turkist sentiments of Ali Suâvî.

The Ambiguous Legacy of Reform

The challenge of modernization coupled with the urge to preserve Ottoman and Islamic traditions reinforced a tense dualism evident in every field touched by the Tanzimat. The ideal of an overarching Ottoman identity clashed with the increasing autonomy of religious communities within the empire; bureaucratic centralization conflicted with political fragmentation;

[119] "Lettre adressé à sa Majesté le Sultan par S.A. Le Prince Moustapha-Fazil Pacha," *La Liberté*, March 24, 1867.

[120] "Şahsiyyat," *Muhbir*, no. 28 (March 23, 1868), pp. 1–2.

[121] Namık Kemal, "Wa-shāwirhum fī'l-amr," *Hürriyet*, no. 4 [July 20, 1868], pp. 1–4; "Usûl-i Meşveret," *Muhbir*, no. 27 [March 14, 1868], p. 1.

[122] Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), pp. 315–26; [Ali Suavi], "Demokrasi: Hükûmet-i Halk, Müsâvat," *Ulûm Gazetesi*, no. 18 (May 17, 1870), pp. 1093–4.

[123] Reşad, "Frenklerde Bir Telaş," *İbret*, no. 10 [June 26, 1872], p. 1.

the ideal of participation came up against the principle of top-down reform; the conservative spirit that gave rise to the Majalla contradicted the progressive drive to emulate the French penal code; new civil courts coexisted uneasily side by side with the traditional sharīʿa courts; a modern university with old medreses; an academy of modern sciences with the ulema gatherings of the past; European theater with the time-honored shadow puppet show; and the novel with Divan poetry. Although the old persisted alongside the new, the Tanzimat backed the "new" in almost every field.

The major blind spot of the reformers consisted in their assumption that the "old," being unable to compete with the "new," would gradually disappear from the scene. But Tanzimat culture (as opposed to the more structural aspects of reform) did not penetrate very deeply. The differential pace of modernization broadened the gap between elite and mass cultures immeasurably. Mutual alienation was the inevitable result. While European music stars such as Parish Alvars, Leopold de Meyer, and Franz Liszt might perform to enthusiastic applause in Istanbul (and find appreciation in the European quarters of such cosmopolitan towns as Beirut or Salonica), the Ottoman masses, on the whole, not only disliked Western music but despised it. The people similarly tended to loathe the Tanzimat elite's bizarre taste for the European avant-garde—exemplified in an extreme fashion by Ottoman diplomat Halil Şerif Pasha's commissioning of an extraordinary work of nudism, the infamous *L'origine du Monde*, from Gustave Courbet in 1868.

The greatest impact of the Tanzimat was on the city. The foremost Ottoman historian of the late nineteenth century, for example, comments that in the capital "women-lovers proliferated while boy-lovers disappeared, as if the people of Sodom and Gomorrah had perished all over again."[124] Apparently, this factor was partly responsible for a shift in sexual behavior among men of the elite, from the traditional preoccupation with boys to an increasing interest in women. The new visibility of women led to new forms of flirtation; one method employed by Istanbul's pedestrians was to try to grab the attention of women in passing coaches by waving or passing notes to them.[125] Another important factor in this regard was the intrusion of European sexual mores into Ottoman society, and the consequent stigmatization of homosexuality. The same historian recounts: "Renowned upper-class boy-lovers, such as Kâmil and Âlî Pashas, vanished along with their entourages. In fact, Âlî Pasha tried to conceal his interest in boys out of fear of the criticism of foreigners."[126] Material culture changed along with behavior. In living and dining rooms, for instance, chairs replaced

[124] Ahmed Cevdet, *Maʿrûzât*, ed. Yusuf Halaçoğlu (Istanbul: Çağrı Yayınları, 1980), p. 9.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

cushions, couches substituted for divans, and tables took the place of the cloths hitherto spread on the floor for meals.[127] The estates left by members of the askerî class attest to the vast change in the material culture of the empire. Items such as large sofas, tables, chairs, *konsols* (from the French console, which became a generic term for all kinds of cupboards, chests, drawers, and chifonniers), heavy curtains, large mirrors, elaborate china sets, and enormous European-style mats became popular among the urban upper and middle classes. Suggestive of the social breadth of this cultural transformation is the fact that such objects are found not only in the estates of bureaucrats and palace officials who had regular contact with the West, but in those of many ulema as well.[128] Askerî estates also attest a considerable increase in the number of personal effects in the possession of members of the lower-middle to upper-middle classes, and point to a decisive break with the utilitarian attitudes that had characterized the same classes in the pre-Tanzimat era. European products and their domestic imitations, such as English-style (*İngilizkârî*)[129] or French-style (*Fransızkârî*)[130] dress accessories, now flooded upper- and middle-class households, as did new gadgets such as field glasses.[131]

The supranational ideology of Ottomanism, perhaps the Tanzimat's most significant contribution to the empire presupposed a rapid embrace of rational ideas and the abandonment of religious obscurantism. The Tanzimat statesmen failed to understand that the major rivals of the Ottomanist orientation were no longer religious identities, but nationalist ones.

[127] Ibid., p. 10.

[128] For interesting examples, see the estates of the chief tent maker of the sultan, Esseyyid Mehmed Sa'di Efendi ibn Esseyyid İbrahim (dated January 24, 1851), İstanbul Müftülük *Arşivi, ŞS* 1657, f. 57bff; a valet of the sultan, Mehmed Sabit ibn Mustafa (dated January 31, 1855), ibid., ŞS 1706 f. 53aff; the under-secretary of the Ottoman Foreign Office Esseyyid Mustafa Nureddin Bey ibn Hasan (dated January 20, 1859), ibid., ŞS 1735, f. 53bff; a control officer at the Tobacco Customs, Elhac Mehmed Emin Efendi ibn Osman (dated July 31, 1870), ibid., ŞS 1819, f. 79aff; a religious scholar, Esseyyid Mehmed Faiz Efendi ibn İbrahim (dated August 8, 1870), ibid., ŞS 1819 f. 18aff; and a musician, Elhac Mustafa Haydar Ağa ibn Elhac Abdullah (dated January 17, 1871), ibid., ŞS 1819, f. 95aff.

[129] See, for instance, the estate of a merchant, Elhac Mehmed Ağa ibn Yahya, dated August 12, 1859, ibid., ŞS 1743, f. 46b.

[130] See, for example, the estate of Mustafa Şakir Efendi ibn Elhac Mehmed, a clerk at the Pious Foundations Directorate, dated January 1, 1840, ibid., ŞS 1478, f. 1b.

[131] Some of these field glasses were "English-style" (see the estate of a medrese professor, Esseyyid Mehmed Âşir Efendi ibn Halil Fevzi Efendi [dated December 26, 1854, ibid., ŞS 1706, f. 50b]), while many others were of unspecified designs. See, for example, the estates of Ahmed Ra'if Bey ibn Esseyyid Mehmed Şakir (dated June 3, 1853, ibid., ŞS 1677, f. 34b), the merchant Ömer Efendi ibn Hüseyin Ağa (dated May 2, 1854, ibid., ŞS 1698, f. 85b), and the former chief coffeemaker of the sultan, Elhac Mehmed Ağa ibn Abdullah (dated September 19, 1863, ibid., ŞS 1785 f. 20b).

The new-fangled official ideology fared well in social strata already benefiting from the Pax Ottomana. Greek Phanariots, members of the Armenian Amira class, Bulgarian merchants who imported garments from Manchester and sold them in Aleppo—these were the typical enthusiastic consumers of an ideology that promised to remove the social disabilities afflicting non-Muslims. Wider swaths of the Ottoman population, such as Bulgarian peasants who continued to chafe under their *Gospodars,* or Christian Bosnian and Herzegovinian peasants serving Muslim landowners, derived little benefit from the new ideology. This helps to explain why nationalist movements during and after the Tanzimat often carried strong socialist undertones, the best examples being the Bulgarian, Macedonian, and Armenian nationalist movements. The lack of a centralized primary school system that could socialize young children as Ottomans, the high rates of illiteracy which limited the effects of the trumpeting of the new ideology in the press, and finally the view from the periphery which saw Ottomanism and centralization as policies of Turkification[132]—all these resulted in the very partial success of reform.

Paradoxically, the very reforms designed to create a more coherent society unified by a common ideology, and a more centralized polity founded on universal, standardized laws, had the effect of exposing and deepening the fissures within the Ottoman state and society. Local resistance to the center's determined attempts to penetrate the periphery accentuated the fragmentation of identity throughout the empire. The unprecedented attempt to unify multiple religious, ethnic, and regional groups only served to strengthen their splintered identities in defiance of central policies. The ambition to universalize law and practice necessarily trampled on local traditions everywhere, thereby raising the consciousness of difference and instilling a group-based sense of grievance. Any innovation was bound to be seen by someone in the empire as offensive. Such was the dilemma of the reformer. Whereas in Istanbul (and in many of the Anatolian and European provinces) religious scholars piously presided over elaborate new ceremonies in which the sultan's portrait was mounted in government offices, the same practice provoked a passionate outcry from ulema in the Arab provinces, who considered it an idolatrous, un-Islamic innovation.[133] When, in 1855, the government decided to ban slavery in order to appease liberal public opinion in Europe (in reality the practice persisted in different forms until 1909),[134] it faced no opposition from ulema or from the general public in the capital and central provinces. In Najd and the Ḥijāz, however, the measure prompted uprisings, while in the Caucasus many

[132] [Ismail Qemali], *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey,* ed. Sommerville Story (London: Constable, 1920), pp. 11–12.

[133] *Tarih-i Lûtfî,* 5, pp. 51–2.

[134] *Düstûr,* II/1 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Osmaniye, 1329 [1911]), pp. 831–2.

tribes that made a living from the slave trade severed their ties with Istanbul.[135] Thus it was that the abandonment of the old order—with all its irrational nuances, messy compromises, and respect for local practice—in favor of a more modern, unitary system, ended up abetting the very process of fragmentation that the reforms were designed to reverse.

The Rose Chamber Edict and the Tanzimat era that followed it reflected the visions of the reforming statesmen for the future. Their ideal resembled a Rechtsstaat as later described by Rudolph von Gneist, which is why they placed a premium on legal reform. The reformers sincerely wished to promote both fiscal justice and equality before the law. Undoubtedly, they underestimated both the complications of implementation and the scale of opposition from social classes who stood to lose ground because of the reforms. In many areas, new laws remained valid on paper while old practices continued. Still, the codification of new thinking created a body of law that could no longer be ignored. In June 1908, a maltreated dissident was able to challenge the authorities in court on the grounds that "non-legal administrative decisions and torture had been prohibited by the Rose Chamber Edict, which [was] a document safeguarding the existence and well-being of the state."[136] As late as 1917, the Ministry of the Interior was reminding all prison authorities that "cruel treatment of inmates and torturing them" had been banned by the Rose Chamber Edict.[137]

[135] Cevdet Paşa, *Tezâkir,* 1, pp. 101–52.
[136] BOA-BEO/ file 249177 [June 4, 1908].
[137] DH. MB. HPS, 58/48 [March 1, 1917].