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# Ottoman Orientalism

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USSAMA MAKDISI

IN AN AGE OF WESTERN-DOMINATED MODERNITY, every nation creates its own Orient. The nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire was no exception. This article builds on several important studies that have critically analyzed how Europeans portrayed the Ottomans as a brooding non-Western despotism incapable of “progress” and how the Ottomans responded to, and resisted, these portrayals.<sup>1</sup> But these studies have only hinted at the ramifications of non-Western responses to modern imperialism for the modality, the scope, the difference, and the meaning of Orientalist discourses as they traverse historical and national boundaries. This essay, therefore, extends Edward Said’s analysis of Orientalism by looking at how Ottomans represented their own Arab periphery as an integral part of their engagement with, explicit resistance to, but also implicit acceptance of, Western representations of the indolent Ottoman East.<sup>2</sup> Such an investigation requires a complication of the simple dichotomy of Western imperialism/non-Western resistance that has characterized so much recent historiography of the Ottoman and non-Western world.

This essay begins by laying out the theoretical framework of what I call Ottoman Orientalism and explains the historical context within which I am using the term. It then describes a classical Ottoman imperial paradigm based on a hierarchical system of subordination along religious, class, and ethnic lines. It focuses primarily on Mount Lebanon to illustrate how an avowedly Muslim dynastic state emphasized

<sup>1</sup> The works of Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire 1876–1909* (London, 1998), and Zeynep Çelik, *Displaying the Orient: Architecture of Islam at Nineteenth-Century World’s Fairs* (Berkeley, Calif., 1992), are foundational in this regard. See also Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York, 1996); and M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York, 1995); Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford, 2001). See K. E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha’s Greece* (Princeton, N.J., 1999), for an example of the manipulation of Western Orientalist imagery by Ali Pasha. For the study of power in Egypt, see Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (Berkeley, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Western representations of the indolent Orient were a crucial aspect of Enlightenment thought, as is evident in Montesquieu’s *Persian Letters*, to name just one famous text. This essay assumes the reader is familiar with such representations, which have been the subject of countless books and articles. For a typical nineteenth-century attitude, see the writings of the famous British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, Stratford de Redcliffe, who insisted in an 1856 memorandum to the earl of Malmesbury that independent Ottoman modernization was impossible, and that “Europe is at hand, with its science, its labour, and its capital. The Koran, the harem, a Babel of languages, are no doubt so many obstacles to advancement in a Western sense.” David Gillard, ed., *British Documents on Foreign Affairs: Reports and Papers from the Foreign Office Confidential Print, Part 1: From the Mid-Nineteenth Century to the First World War, Series B: The Near and Middle East 1856–1914, Volume 1: The Ottoman Empire in the Balkans 1856–1875* (Frederick, Md., 1984–85), 20.

yet accommodated religious difference in a supposedly stable Ottoman imperial system. Finally, this article argues that the nineteenth century saw a fundamental shift from this earlier imperial paradigm into an imperial view suffused with nationalist modernization rooted in a discourse of progress. Ottoman modernization supplanted an established discourse of religious subordination by a notion of temporal subordination in which an advanced imperial center reformed and disciplined backward peripheries of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious empire. This led to the birth of Ottoman Orientalism.

BY OTTOMAN ORIENTALISM, I mean a complex of Ottoman attitudes produced by a nineteenth-century age of Ottoman reform that implicitly and explicitly acknowledged the West to be the home of progress and the East, writ large, to be a *present* theater of backwardness. I am using the term Ottoman Orientalism for two interrelated reasons. First, because from the outset of nineteenth-century Ottoman reform, Ottomans recognized and responded to the power of Western Orientalism by embracing the latter's underlying logic of time and progress, while resisting its political and colonialist implications. Selim Deringil's pioneering work on the late Ottoman Empire was the first to suggest that Ottoman reform should be analyzed as an engagement with, and largely inadvertent internalization of, European representations, as much as a reaction to superior European military and technology.<sup>3</sup> Taking Deringil's argument as a point of departure, I suggest that Ottoman Orientalism was not inadvertent but a pervasive and defining facet of Ottoman modernity. Just as European Orientalism was based on an opposition between the Christian West and the Islamic Orient, the Ottomans believed that there were some essential differences that distinguished them from the West—especially a notion of Islam. As Selim Deringil and Kemal Karpat have shown, the late Ottoman Empire manipulated and subsumed a discourse of Islam within the imperative of Ottoman modernization.<sup>4</sup> Ottoman reformers felt compelled to respond to what they saw as European misrepresentations of the Islamic East. Islam in this vein served to signify the empire's modern historical and cultural difference from the West in an era of otherwise rampant westernization.<sup>5</sup>

Second, through efforts to study, discipline, and improve imperial subjects, Ottoman reform created a notion of the pre-modern within the empire in a manner akin to the way European colonial administrators represented their colonial subjects. This process culminated in the articulation of a modern Ottoman *Turkish* nation that had to lead the empire's other putatively stagnant ethnic and national groups into an Ottoman modernity. Islam in this vein served to signify the empire's commonality with the Muslim majority of its subjects, but this commonality was implicitly and explicitly framed within a civilizational and temporal discourse that ultimately justified Ottoman Turkish rule over Muslim and non-Muslim subjects,

<sup>3</sup> Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 165.

<sup>4</sup> This argument is convincingly laid out by Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, who discusses what he calls a "legitimation" crisis that afflicted the late Ottoman Empire, and interprets Hamidian modernization as an attempt to overcome this crisis.

<sup>5</sup> Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 96.

over Arabs, Armenians, Kurds, Bulgarians, etc. The Orient, Islam, and the East were part of modern Ottoman self-definition in contrast to modern Western Orientalism, which, following Said, classified the Orient as inherently different from the West. But Ottoman reform distinguished between a degraded Oriental self—embodied in the unreformed pre-modern subjects and landscape of the empire—and the Muslim modernized self represented largely (but not exclusively) by an Ottoman Turkish elite who ruled the late Ottoman Empire.

To modernize the empire, and to make it “the free and progressive America of the East,” required a massive project of imperial reform that could reform state and society at all levels.<sup>6</sup> This began during the Tanzimat (1839–1876, literally the “ordering” of the empire), a period when the Ottoman state sought to redefine itself as more than an Islamic dynasty, as a modern, bureaucratic, and tolerant state—a partner of the West rather than its adversary. This impetus for modernization and official nationalism expanded during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1908) under a more explicitly Islamic discourse and culminated in the Young Turk era, which lasted until World War I. Whether coded in secular or Islamic terms, Ottoman reformers acknowledged the subject position of the empire as the “sick man of Europe” only to create administrative, anthropological, and even archaeological spaces to articulate an Ottoman modernity: a state and civilization technologically equal to and temporally coeval with the West but culturally distinct from and politically independent of it. This ambivalent relationship with the West was mirrored by an equally ambivalent relationship between Ottoman rulers and subjects. Beginning with the Tanzimat, Ottoman reformers identified with these subjects as *potential* fellow citizens with whom they should be united in a newly defined common modern Ottoman patriotism. They also saw them as fellow victims of European intrigue and imperialism. Yet at the same time, they regarded these subjects as backward and as not-yet-Ottoman, as hindrances to as well as objects of imperial reform.

Nowhere, perhaps, was this paradox of Ottoman reform—inclusivist insofar as it sought to integrate all provinces and peoples into an official nationalism of Ottomanism and yet also temporally segregated and ultimately racially differentiated—more apparent than in the Arab provinces of the empire. While the articulation of Ottoman reform was undeniably refracted through many experiences and in many disparate locales, from Anatolia and the Balkans to Yemen, from the lower-class quarters of Istanbul itself to the city center of Beirut, the Arab provinces constituted increasingly important proving grounds for Ottoman modernism, especially after the Balkan provinces broke away from Ottoman rule in 1878 and 1913. Ottoman reformers viewed their Arab provinces as places to become Ottomanized but not yet Ottoman, as places whose spatial integration into an imperial Ottomanism (connected by telegraph, monuments, rail) from Istanbul laid

<sup>6</sup> The words are those of one of the leading poets and writers of the late Ottoman Empire, Ziya Gökalp. Quoted in Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal, 1964), 332. This late Ottoman racialism was *not* akin to the fervent Anglo-Saxon racialism of the mid-nineteenth-century United States, but it did embrace a Western enlightenment discourse of progress and the *redeemability* of allegedly backward peoples, albeit under central Ottoman Turkish tutelage. See Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981).

the basis for a modernized empire. As Namik Kemal, the Young Ottoman writer and poet put it in 1872, it is from Istanbul “that the multifarious achievements of our century can be heralded to Arabia. Thus the desired future prosperity of the Islamic Caliphate will be the contribution of the Turks in the first degree but also of the Arabs in the second.”<sup>7</sup> Ottoman Orientalism reflected the tension of this process: as the provinces were brought ever closer into the reformist imperial gaze, a general discourse of modernizing imperial reform battling backwardness justified Ottoman Turkish rule over not-yet-Ottomanized Arabs. Arab elite subjects of the late Ottoman Empire, however, participated in this elaboration of Ottoman modernity. They absorbed, replicated, and hence validated the new temporal hierarchy of Ottoman Orientalism. They also complicated Ottoman Orientalism, especially in the closing years of the empire, by proposing themselves as autonomous active subjects—interpreters and shapers—of this Ottoman modernity.

At the heart of Ottoman Orientalism was a notion of time. Ottoman reformers’ acute awareness of the decline of their empire galvanized them into overhauling their empire in the nineteenth century. Istanbul was not only conceived of as the modern political center of the empire but also as the temporally highest point from which it could look down and back in time at the provinces of the empire. In short, spatial integration was justified by and consolidated temporal segregation. The development of Ottoman Orientalism can only be understood as a fundamental break with previous notions of time and imperial organization that marked the pre-reform Ottoman Empire, when imperial rule was based on an assumption of religious and ethnic differentiation but temporal integration. The Ottoman Empire in its classical age reproduced and justified itself as an orthodox Islamic dynasty superior to all other empires.<sup>8</sup> Its theoretical imperative was to maintain an Islamic order and to preserve and uphold a status that had supposedly already been secured. The theoretical imperative of the modern Ottoman state, however, was to achieve modernity and to arrive at a position that was not yet occupied by the empire as a whole. Before the nineteenth century, the dynamic of rule was to conserve (but also to overlook) what were held to be immutable religious and ethnic differences among subjects, and to maintain an imperial distance between center and the tribute-paying peripheries of the empire, whose pre-Ottoman administration often persisted under *pax ottomanica*. After the nineteenth century, Ottoman reformers sought to nationalize (Ottomanize) the empire and ultimately to absorb the margins into a cohesive and uniform Ottoman modernity.

In thinking through the problem of Ottoman Orientalism, I have been guided by Johannes Fabian’s notion of time as one of the “ideologically constructed instruments of power” and his observation that “the relations between the West and its Other . . . were conceived not only as difference, but as distance in space and

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought: A Study in the Modernization of Turkish Political Ideas* (Princeton, N.J., 1962), 332.

<sup>8</sup> See Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley, Calif., 1995), for an analysis on how this historical and historiographical construction of the Ottoman dynasty as an Islamic state proceeded. See also Abdul Karim Rafeq, “Relations between the Syrian ‘Ulama and the Ottoman State in the Eighteenth Century,” *Oriente moderno* 18 (1999): 67–95.

Time.”<sup>9</sup> Fabian considered this “denial of co-evalness” between colonizers and colonized to be at the heart of nineteenth-century Western colonialism. It marked all cultures and peoples at different locations along a continuous evolutionary stream of time—the ostensible justification for modern colonialism was to overcome this difference by ruling and reforming less advanced people. The Ottoman context complicates Fabian’s thesis (as it does Said’s), for it reveals a dialectic between European Orientalism’s insistence on a stagnant Orient that had to be colonized by Europe and Ottoman Orientalism’s riposte that the empire was not stagnant but independently moving—and dragging all Ottoman subjects—toward modernity. As such, Ottoman modernization, from which emerged a discourse of Ottoman Orientalism, was as much a project of power within the empire as it was an act of resistance to Western imperialism.

For this reason, Ottoman Orientalism must be distinguished from what has been characterized by some scholars as “Occidentalism.”<sup>10</sup> While it underscores the undeniable reification of the West in the minds of most nineteenth-century non-Western reformers, Occidentalism as a theory posits only a “reverse” Orientalism—“stylized images of the West” rather than of the East.<sup>11</sup> In the case of Ottoman studies, it misses not only the relationship between power and knowledge at the heart of Said’s interpretation of Orientalism but also the layers of adaptation, emulation, and resistance—in short, the Ottoman engagement with and internalization of an entrenched European discourse of Orientalism.<sup>12</sup> Rather than Occidentalism, Milica Bakić-Hayden’s theory of “nesting orientalisms” is far more compelling, because it recognizes that the “gradation of ‘Orients’ . . . is a pattern of reproduction of the original dichotomy upon which Orientalism is premised. In this pattern, Asia is more ‘East’ or ‘other’ than eastern Europe; within eastern Europe itself this gradation is reproduced with the Balkans perceived as most ‘eastern.’”<sup>13</sup> But even this concept of “nesting orientalisms” does not capture the more complicated temporal implications of Ottoman Orientalism. The notion of “balkanism” proposed by Maria Todorova as a wavering form, as no longer Oriental yet not European, better evokes the ambiguity inherent in Ottoman Orientalism. It posited an empire in “decline” yet capable of an independent renaissance, westernized but not Western, leader of a reinvigorated Orient yet no longer of the “Orient” represented by the West, nor that embodied in its unreformed subjects.<sup>14</sup> Ottoman Orientalism accommodated both strictly secularist and explicitly Islamist

<sup>9</sup> Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983), 144–47.

<sup>10</sup> See Carter Vaughn Findley, “An Ottoman Occidental in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gülnar, 1889,” *AHR* 103 (February 1998): 15–49. Findley, following Xiaomei Chen, suggests that “Occidentalism” is a “counter-discourse” to Orientalism. This reading misses Said’s central point about the profound and extensive linkage between the representation of the Orient and a European/American will to dominate the Orient. See also Xiaomei Chen, *Occidentalism: A Theory of Counter-Discourse in Post-Mao China* (New York, 1995), 5. For Chen, “Occidentalism” constitutes the “essentialization” of the West, which was used by Chinese themselves in a variety of ways.

<sup>11</sup> James G. Carrier, *Occidentalism: Images of the West* (Oxford, 1995), 6.

<sup>12</sup> Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 157–58. Fleming’s work on Ali Pasha is also an exception, but her work is concerned with how Ali Pasha manipulated and participated in but did not fundamentally alter Orientalist imagery.

<sup>13</sup> Milica Bakić-Hayden, “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia,” *Slavic Review* 54 (1995): 918.

<sup>14</sup> Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York, 1997), 17. I acknowledge, of course, that

interpretations of modern Ottoman identity. It discredited Western representations of Ottoman indolence by contrasting Ottoman modernity with the unreformed and stagnant landscape of the empire. In effect, it de-Orientalized the empire by Orientalizing it.

IN ITS CLASSICAL AGE, THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE was legitimized by Islamic symbolism, particularly through the facilitation and protection of the annual Hajj but also by a notion of imperial benevolence that safeguarded the lives and property of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects.<sup>15</sup> The Ottomans accepted the presence of Armenian, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish communities as an integral, if subordinate, part of the empire.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, however, the Ottoman sultans described themselves as inheritors of a *ghazi* tradition that was constantly expanding the frontiers of Islam against the infidel kingdoms; and, after the conquest of Damascus and Arabia in 1516 and Cairo in 1517, they also posited themselves as guardians of Mecca and Medina. Religion and ethnicity were crucial markers of difference in the Ottoman system—they helped define what it meant to be an Ottoman: a member of the ruling elite, urban, above all aware of multiple ethnicities, a Muslim in the service of the sultan who from Istanbul ruled over a vast polyglot empire composed of Muslims, Christians, and Jews, of Turks, Arabs, Armenians, Albanians, and Kurds, Bosnians, Greeks, and a host of other populations.

The seventeenth-century *Seyahatname*, or *Book of Travels*, of the famous Ottoman chronicler Evliya Çelebi expresses this fusion of privilege, urbanity, class, patronage, and Sunni Islam that defined being Ottoman. If Istanbul was the “abode of felicity,” the frontiers of the empire were its antithesis: regions where heresy flourished, locales of strange and often comical stories, and arenas where Ottomans “proved” their Islamic identity and yet reconciled themselves to the fact of a multi-religious and ethnic empire.<sup>17</sup> The *Seyahatname* reveals just how deep the religious and ethnic consciousness of Ottomans ran in the late seventeenth century. For example, Çelebi’s description of his patron Melek Ahmed Pasha’s punishment of the “dog worshippers, worse than infidels, a band of rebels and brigands and perverts, resembling ghouls of the desert, hairy heretic Yezidi Kurds” near Diyarbekir in Anatolia reflects one of the central tenets of the Ottoman imperial system: not simply the existence of a profound difference between Ottoman rulers and many of the subjects they ruled but the unbridgeable nature of this difference. Melek Ahmed Pasha sent seventy regiments of soldiers in addition to his retinue of “Abkhazian and Circassian and Georgian braves—who shamed one another in

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Todorova’s argument about “Balkanism” was precisely that it is not a variant of Orientalism but its own construct.

<sup>15</sup> Karl K. Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus, 1708–1758* (Princeton, N.J., 1980), 108–09.

<sup>16</sup> See Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, “Problems in the Ottoman Administration in Syria during the 16th and 17th Centuries: The Case of the Sanjak of Sidon-Beirut,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 24 (1992): 665–75.

<sup>17</sup> See in this regard Robert Dankoff’s translation of selections of Evliya Çelebi’s *Book of Travels* under the title *The Intimate Life of an Ottoman Statesman, Melek Ahmed Pasha* (Albany, N.Y., 1991), 249–50. See also Viorel Panaite, *The Ottoman Law on War and Peace: The Ottoman Empire and Tribute Payers* (Boulder, Colo., 2000), 79.

battle, and never held back their reins, and who knew what Muhammedan honor meant." The result was, according to Çelebi, a very bloody battle in which the Yezidis were literally smoked out of their caves. They preferred collective suicide to surrender. "When the army of Islam saw this spectacle," Çelebi relates, "they too expended the utmost of their powers and smote with their swords. Blood of the Yezidis flowed down the mountainside. God willing, vengeance was exacted at the hand of Melek Ahmed Pasha for the blood of the martyrs of Kerbala. In short, such a mighty battle raged for ten days and nights that even Küçük Ahmed Pasha's battle on Jabal Druze with Ma'n-oglu was not so fierce."<sup>18</sup>

To be Ottoman was to monopolize the metaphors of Islam and to maintain an imperial distance and difference between sultan and subjects. This difference was configured in religious, ethnic, and spatial terms, and its maintenance was an essential aspect of the projection of Ottoman imperial identity in a multi-religious and ethnic empire.<sup>19</sup> Christians as a whole were routinely described as infidels, yet they were tolerated; others such as Yezidi Kurds and Druzes were often described as heretics, but their heresy was often overlooked.<sup>20</sup> Arabs were respected because of their association with Islam, but, outside of Mecca and Medina, Arabia was a distant, foreign land inhabited by unruly Bedouins. Ottomans, however, did not identify themselves as "Turks" even if they recognized the Turkish nature of the Ottoman dynasty and spoke Ottoman Turkish. As Çelebi put it in his travels in Bitlis, the empire was plagued by "all sorts of Kurdish rabble and vermin and unclean Turks."<sup>21</sup> The powerful association between state and Islam—and the concomitant discourse of Christian as infidel—exposed what Bruce Masters has called the "limits of Ottoman tolerance": Christian and other non-Muslim subjects were tolerated but never considered as equals.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the case of the Spanish empire in the New World, which was predicated on the relentless conversion and Christianization of the entire indigenous population, the Ottoman state sought to manipulate and regulate rather than to overcome the multi-religious nature of the empire.<sup>23</sup>

The region of Mount Lebanon, conquered by the Ottomans in 1516, is an excellent example of the rhythm of classical imperial politics in which a discourse of irreconcilable religious difference coexisted with a discourse of obedience that tacitly included and legitimized those who were otherwise defined as heretics, infidels, and idolaters. Because of its mountainous terrain and heterodox popula-

<sup>18</sup> Dankoff, *Intimate Life*, 172.

<sup>19</sup> See Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds*, 140–42, for an account of how the fluidity and syncretization of early Ottoman identity was transformed by the sedentization of the sultanate and the development of an imperial mode of intellectual and administrative life.

<sup>20</sup> To wit, while Çelebi condemns the Yezidis as "heretics" and "dog worshippers," he makes it clear that the reason for the Ottoman assault was because the Yezidis had begun plundering the villages of Mardin and had refused "to pay [the Ottoman governor] the respect of even a token gift"—the implication being, of course, that had they not plundered Mardin and had they offered the governor a gift, these erstwhile heretics would have been tolerated. See Dankoff, *Intimate Life*, 167.

<sup>21</sup> Robert Dankoff, ed. *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis: The Relevant Section of the Seyahatname Edited with a Translation, Commentary, and Introduction* (Leiden, 1990), 295.

<sup>22</sup> Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge, 2001), 26–40.

<sup>23</sup> Selim Deringil, "'There Is No Compulsion in Religion': On Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1839–1856," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 42 (2000): 547–75.

tion, which was composed mostly of Druzes and Maronites, Mount Lebanon, or *cebel-i düruz* ("Mountain of the Druzes"), as it was often referred to by the Ottomans, remained on the margins of the Sunni Ottoman Empire until the middle of the nineteenth century. The first century of Ottoman rule in Mount Lebanon was turbulent, and it witnessed frequent local rebellions and equally frequent Ottoman expeditions to subdue the local inhabitants. This initial period of uneasy Ottoman domination culminated in the rebellion of Mount Lebanon's most famous ruler, the late sixteenth and early seventeenth-century Druze emir Fakhr al-Din al-Ma'ni (or Maan Oğlu, as the Ottomans called him). His ambitions led him into an ill-fated alliance with Tuscany. Eventually, he was hunted down, smoked out of a cave in 1633, and led in chains to Istanbul by an Ottoman Pasha called Küçük Ahmed.<sup>24</sup>

Not surprisingly, Ottoman chronicles and records regarding Mount Lebanon expressed a language of political domination in which the imperial center was constantly disciplining a heterodox periphery. The submission of Fakhr al-Din became a foundational act that defined Ottoman hegemony in Mount Lebanon: the triumph and inscription of imperial knowledge and true religion on a land that purportedly knew neither.<sup>25</sup> The word Druze in Ottoman Turkish was derogatory, connoting a heretic and a scoundrel.<sup>26</sup> As early as the Ottoman expedition against the Shuf region of Mount Lebanon in 1523, Druze manuscripts were confiscated (along with four camel loads of Druze heads) and sent to Istanbul in order to underscore the heretical nature of the Druze faith.<sup>27</sup> The seventeenth-century Ottoman historian Naima, in turn, reiterated an Ottoman conviction concerning the allegedly heretical Druzes. He gloated at how the "abominable" Druze Fakhr al-Din and his followers were, "like field mice," smoked out of a cave in which they had taken refuge by the foresight and determination of the Ottoman Küçük Ahmed Pasha.<sup>28</sup> The trope of Druze as heretic rebel was so well established that the late eighteenth-century Ottoman statesmen and historian Ahmed Vasıf Efendi described the Druzes as the "rebellious sect," and was very proud of the manner in which Cezzar Ahmed Pasha disciplined them and other "vermin which must be destroyed."<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The campaign against Fakhr al-Din culminated in a series of attempts to subdue the Druzes of *cebel-i düruz*. See Abdul-Rahim Abu Husayn, "The Ottoman Invasion of the Shuf in 1585: A Reconsideration," *Al-Abhath* 33 (1985): 13–23. Fakhr al-Din followed in the footsteps of the great *celali* rebel Canbuladoglu Ali, who had contemplated creating an independent state in Aleppo with Tuscan aid. His ambitions were cut short by the Ottomans in 1609. For more information, see William J. Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion* (Berlin, 1983), 153.

<sup>25</sup> Dankoff, *Evliya Çelebi in Bitlis*, 117. Çelebi recounts a feast that his patron and he enjoyed with the khan of Bitlis in eastern Anatolia, whose retinue descended on the food and "began to eat as though they were just released from Ma'anoghli's prison, or as though they were infected with canine hunger." Dankoff writes that the word "Ma'anoghli" became proverbial for imprisonment.

<sup>26</sup> This is according to the Redhouse dictionary, which reflected nineteenth-century usage. As Metin Kunt has noted, similar prejudice against Albanians, Circassians, and Abazas took root in the Ottoman language. See Metin I. Kunt, "Ethnic-Regional (*Cins*) Solidarity in the Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Establishment," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 5 (1974): 238. It should be noted that prejudice against the Druzes predates the Ottomans.

<sup>27</sup> This according to Abu-Husayn, "Ottoman Invasion of the Shuf in 1585," 17.

<sup>28</sup> Mustafa Naima, *Tarih-i Naima*, 6 vols. (Istanbul, 1283), 3: 176–79.

<sup>29</sup> Ahmed Vasıf Efendi, *Mehasinü'l-Asar ve Hakaikü'l-Ahbar* (1804; Istanbul, 1978), 161. Virginia Aksan points out that although Druzes were conscripted into imperial armies, they were seen by Ottoman commanders as lazy, dishonorable, and vile. See Aksan, *An Ottoman Statesman in War and Peace: Ahmed Resmi Efendi, 1700–1783* (Leiden, 1995), 191.

Ottoman officials, however, depended on Druze and Maronite elites to maintain a theoretically rigid social order within, and a flow of revenue from, Mount Lebanon. It is important to recognize that the formulaic metaphors of power alternatively unmasked and accommodated erstwhile heretics and infidels within a supposedly everlasting Ottoman domain of obedience.<sup>30</sup> An Ottoman decree from 1810 investing Bashir Shihab (the local ruler of Mount Lebanon who practiced a studied religious ambiguity, born a Christian but never publicly proclaiming his Christianity, swearing on both the Bible and the Quran, eventually buried in the Armenian Catholic cemetery in Istanbul) with authority in Mount Lebanon captures the ambivalence of Ottoman imperial rhetoric. It commands “the pride of noble emirs, the most grand authority, the possessor of esteem and respect, man of glory and decency, our son” Bashir Shihab and the Druze and Maronite elites to preserve order, to protect the common people, to extirpate all those who “exceed their limits,” to pay taxes, to avoid oppression, and to ensure supplications from “high and low for the persistence and permanence of the sultanate of our lord the sultan of sultans, the sovereign of sovereigns, extirpator of the infidels and idolaters, he who has unfurled the banners of justice and religion, the Solomon of all times, and the Alexander of all ages, the shadow of God and his successor throughout the cycles of time.”<sup>31</sup> Yet when he seemed to waver in his allegiance to the Ottoman state, this same Bashir Shihab was denounced by the Ottomans for being a *hain gâvur*—a treacherous infidel—who was exhibiting “his infidelity.”<sup>32</sup> This alternation between recognizing/suppressing and tolerating/overlooking difference was more than a simple tactical maneuver on the part of Ottoman rulers. It revealed an imperial Ottoman identity premised on the fiction of an *already* achieved Islamic order. So long as the locals did not disturb this fiction, heterodoxy was tolerated; it was repressed as soon as locals revealed the contradictions inherent in the elaborate Ottoman imperial system through rebellion, tax evasion, or dissent in any form.<sup>33</sup>

Although instances of outright rebellion were rare in Mount Lebanon—the example of Fakhr al-Din being the most memorable in Ottoman and local memory alike—the history of Ottoman rule in the region was rife with moments of disobedience. However, each act of local defiance was part of an implicit political performance, whose basic unwritten narrative was recognized by both Ottoman officials and Lebanese elites. This narrative invariably demanded in the vast

<sup>30</sup> In urban areas such as Damascus or Aleppo, the differentiation between Muslim and non-Muslim was more pronounced. Yet even in these cities, it was at particular historical episodes that the dress codes that distinguished Muslim from non-Muslim were enforced. See, for example, W. M. Thackston, Jr., ed. and trans., *Murder, Mayhem, Pillage and Plunder* (Albany, N.Y., 1988), 62–63.

<sup>31</sup> See Haydar Ahmad al-Shihabi, *Lubnan fi ‘ahd al-umara’ al-Shihabiyyin*, 3 vols., Asad Rustum and Fouad E. Boustany, eds. (Beirut, 1984), 3: 552–53.

<sup>32</sup> Başbakanlık Archives, Istanbul (hereafter, BBA), Hatt-i Hümayun, 191898-A, 19 N 1247.

<sup>33</sup> When the social hierarchy was “corrupted”—when revenues diminished or when local elites challenged imperial authority—Ottoman rulers “remembered” Fakhr al-Din’s heresy and reminded their heterodox subjects of their tenuous existence on the margins of the empire. For example, in 1799, a revolt against the authority of Bashir Shihab, who was backed by the Ottoman government, occasioned a stern warning from an Ottoman governor to the inhabitants of Mount Lebanon to “abandon sedition and remember what happened to your mountain in past times, how women were taken into captivity, and children killed when Emir Fakhr al-Din al-Ma’ni defied the state at the time of Küçük Ahmed, and so armies will be sent against you like overflowing seas if you do not return obediently to our son [Emir Bashir].” Shihabi, *Lubnan fi ‘ahd al-umara’*, 1: 199.

majority of cases of disobedience in Mount Lebanon a return to the status quo and a reinscription of the putative domain of obedience. The exact nature of this reversion depended on circumstances, especially on the strategies deployed by those seeking pardon and those who had the power to grant it.<sup>34</sup> Politics had a cyclical element in the sense that the granting of clemency immediately “returned” things to what they had been; the phrase constantly used to describe the forgiveness of a ruler was that he had cleared or unclouded his mind from the memory of sedition. Thus when Bashir Shihab defied an Ottoman governor’s demands to remit taxes in 1820, he fled Mount Lebanon, writing to the governor that he has “left his country and family . . . to await the unclouding of the [governor’s] mind” toward him.<sup>35</sup> And when Bashir Shihab, after his short spell of self-imposed exile, prostrated himself before the same Ottoman governor, he was chided by the latter in the following terms: “We never for a moment removed you from our good graces; it was you who allowed doubts and anxieties to enter your mind which distanced you from our service. It is evident that if a servant won’t serve his master, the master will find another who will.”<sup>36</sup> The act of a formerly recalcitrant notable kissing the hem of the provincial Ottoman governor’s robe or his hand—both of which were staples of Ottoman political practice in Mount Lebanon—played on the knowledge that almost every disgrace and punishment implicitly carried within it a provision for pardon and rehabilitation, and every invocation of heresy was muted by the countless proclamations that transformed erstwhile heretical Druze and infidel Maronite notables into loyal Ottoman functionaries in Mount Lebanon.

The notion of coexistence in the same temporal moment, of politics without progress, was essential to the maintenance of a dynamic imperial relationship between sultan and his subjects in Mount Lebanon and other parts of the empire.<sup>37</sup> It provided a shared political vocabulary in an unequal imperial system that alternatively accommodated and suppressed religious difference. The mutual recognition by rulers and ruled of how politics functioned, its ambivalence (for one could at one moment be an esteemed notable and at another moment a heretic or infidel) and its temporality, as well as the closed Ottoman stage on which it was enacted, stabilized a dynamic political environment. Relations between Ottomans and the locals were, to put it differently, shaped by a politics of ambiguity defined at either end of the imperial spectrum (such as in Istanbul and in Mount Lebanon) by unbridgeable and immutable difference. Although sultans died and subjects rebelled, there was always the domain of obedience under the eternal rule of House of Osman to which they could theoretically return. To be sure, there was always change—for example, in the evolution of harem politics and in military and fiscal organization—that rendered the early eighteenth-century empire radically different

<sup>34</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge, 1977), 7.

<sup>35</sup> Shihabi, *Lubnan fi `ahd al-umara`*, 3: 660.

<sup>36</sup> Shihabi, *Lubnan fi `ahd al-umara`*, 3: 666–67.

<sup>37</sup> The case of Mount Lebanon was not unique in the Ottoman Empire. In her study of Ottoman policy toward Anatolian heretics (the Kızılbaş), Suraiya Faroqhi notes how after 1600 wholesale eradication shifted toward “grudging accommodation.” See Faroqhi, *Coping with the State: Political Conflict and Crime in the Ottoman Empire 1550–1720* (Istanbul, 1995), 115.

from that of the early fifteenth century, but there was also a sense that the past was not entirely irrevocable.<sup>38</sup>

Seemingly invincible and immortal, the Ottoman Empire found itself, by the latter part of the eighteenth century, plagued by military defeats. First, Crimea was lost as a result of a defeat at the hands of Russia in 1774. Then Napoleon arrived in Egypt in 1798—and, despite Sultan Selim III's efforts to depict him as an infidel tyrant, the obvious lesson was learned in the aftermath of an overwhelming French victory. Finally, the Greek war of independence erupted in the 1820s. The empire, in response to these and other military crises, plunged itself into an era of rapid modernization that redefined the imperial relationship between Ottoman rulers and subjects. More to the point, it found itself in an era of European time and confronted by a European discourse of progress that paved the way for an Ottoman Orientalism.

SULTAN MAHMUD II'S CONCERTED EFFORTS AT REFORM began with the abolition of the Janissaries in 1826 but quickly spread to sartorial and administrative domains and culminated in an era of wholesale modernization known as the Tanzimat.<sup>39</sup> The centerpiece of the Tanzimat reforms was the Gülhane decree issued by Mahmud II's successor, Abdülmecid, in 1839, at a time when the Ottoman Empire lay on the brink of total collapse because of Muhammad Ali of Egypt's own imperial ambitions. Its main provisions concerned direct taxation, but it also indicated that Muslim and non-Muslim subjects were equal before the law. This process culminated in the 1869 Ottoman law of nationality, which produced for the first time a juridical definition of the Ottoman citizen without an overt or implied reference to religion. Like the suppression of the Janissaries, the new measures of the Tanzimat, which represented a clear break with the past, were couched in Islamic metaphors that suggested a reversion to tradition.<sup>40</sup>

Although the discourse of reform in the Ottoman Empire was not itself new, nineteenth-century reform was part of a wider culture of modernity.<sup>41</sup> In this culture, the Ottoman Empire sought to define itself as an equal player (especially after the 1856 Treaty of Paris, which formally added the Ottoman Empire as a member of the European state system) on a world stage of civilization.<sup>42</sup> Equally

<sup>38</sup> For an excellent recent study of the eighteenth-century transformation of tax farming and urban politics in the case of Ottoman Mosul, see Dina Rizk Khoury, *State and Provincial Society in the Ottoman Empire: Mosul, 1540–1834* (Cambridge, 1997). For changes in dynastic politics, see Leslie P. Peirce, *The Imperial Harem: Women and Sovereignty in the Ottoman Empire* (New York, 1993), 275; for changes in fiscal administration, see Linda T. Darling, *Revenue-Raising and Legitimacy: Tax Collection and Finance Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560–1660* (Leiden, 1996). For changes in the military, see Virginia Aksan, "Mutiny and the Eighteenth Century Ottoman Army," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 22 (1998): 116–25.

<sup>39</sup> See Donald Quataert, "Clothing Laws, State, and Society in the Ottoman Empire, 1720–1829," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29 (1997): 403–25.

<sup>40</sup> Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World*, 134–35.

<sup>41</sup> Virginia Aksan, "Ottoman Political Writing, 1768–1808," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25 (1993): 53–69. For an example of pre-Tanzimat reform, see Cezzar Ahmed Pasha's *Nizamname-i Mısır*, transl. by Stanford J. Shaw under the title *Ottoman Egypt in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

<sup>42</sup> It should be added that there was considerable resistance to the reform program even within

important, it heralded the birth of an official nationalism that sought to assert much stricter political and administrative control over the periphery of the empire by promoting a unifying notion of *Osmanlılık*, or Ottomanism. In Istanbul, intellectual, architectural, and political and social westernization created what Fatma Müge Göçek has called a “new vision of Ottoman society.”<sup>43</sup> And in the provinces, as Eugene Rogan has argued in the case of Ottoman Transjordan, the Ottoman state re-“opened” the Ottoman frontier in an effort to finally incorporate it by means of reformed administration, schools, and railways.<sup>44</sup> The official nationalism launched in the wake of the Tanzimat was a project of modernization that strove to cohere different ethnic groups, different religious communities, different regions, and, above all, different stages of progress within a unified Ottoman modernity.

As part of this project of imperial nationalism that placed the empire on a par with other “civilized” states, Ottoman modernization generated its discursive opposite, the pre-modern within the empire, whether in the Danubian principalities, the sands of Arabia, the cities of Syria, or Mount Lebanon.<sup>45</sup> To the Sublime Porte, Europe constituted a metaphor for modernity; it represented the summit of civilization and the highest point on the “stream of time.” The Tanzimat, in turn, “remade” Istanbul as the most modern westernized center of the empire, as Zeynep Çelik has illustrated.<sup>46</sup> And what began in Istanbul was imposed on and emulated in the provinces, beginning in the Balkans (where the European threat and Slavic nationalism were perceived to be greatest) and spreading to the Anatolian and Arab provinces. The model Danube province was created in 1864, and this experiment in provincial reform was quickly replicated in other regions and cities of the empire, such as Baghdad and Beirut.<sup>47</sup> Urban reform was also imposed on rural hinterlands such as Mount Lebanon, and from there it sought out the most pre-modern of the empire, the desert “tribes” of Arabia.<sup>48</sup> Ottoman modernization

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certain circles in Istanbul. This is a central aspect to Bernard Lewis’s classic narrative of positive westernizing reformers opposed by fanatical traditionalists in his *Emergence of Modern Turkey* (1961). See also Cavid Baysun, ed., *Cevdet Paşa Tezâkir*, 3 vols. (Ankara, 1991), 1: 68, for Cevdet’s recollection of the reading of the 1856 Hatt-i Hümayun and the negative reactions it produced, not just among what he calls “many of the ehl-i islam” but also among the Greek Orthodox elites.

<sup>43</sup> Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire*, 119.

<sup>44</sup> Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge, 1999), 60–66.

<sup>45</sup> For a classic overview of Ottoman reform, see Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856–1876* (Princeton, N.J., 1963).

<sup>46</sup> Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, Calif., 1986), 31–48.

<sup>47</sup> For Balkan reform, see Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 151–58; and Stanford J. Shaw and Ezel Kural Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Vol. 2: *Reform, Revolution, and Republic: The Rise of Modern Turkey, 1808–1975* (Cambridge, 1977), 161–62. For Beirut, see Jens Hanssen, “‘Your Beirut Is on My Desk’: Ottomanizing Beirut under Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876–1909),” in *Projecting Beirut: Episodes in the Construction and Reconstruction of a Modern City*, Peter G. Rowe and Hashim Sarkis, eds. (Munich, 1998), 41–67. See also Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City between East and West*, for a study of urban transformation in Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>48</sup> Engin Akarli’s work on post-1860 Mount Lebanon has shown how Ottoman statesmen took the lead in reforming local administration; as the Ottoman *salnames* (yearbooks) about Mount Lebanon illustrate, Mount Lebanon, its hinterlands, and the adjacent coastal cities were studied, mapped, reformed, and administered as never before. Engin Akarli, *The Long Peace* (Berkeley, Calif., 1993). See

perceived a temporal gap that separated modern Istanbul from the rest of the empire. The closure of this gap became the ostensible goal of Ottoman reform.<sup>49</sup>

The longstanding imperial attitude that had presupposed an inviolable difference between center and periphery, between Muslim and non-Muslim, between an Ottoman elite and the tax-paying subjects, was abandoned. Against a backdrop of increasing European encroachment on Ottoman domains, the temporality of traditional politics was effectively broken by the urgency of Ottoman modernization. The defining political discourse was no longer one of religion and heresy (which had to be alternatively accommodated or suppressed) but of backwardness and modernization. As such, the logic of imperial Ottoman nationalism was not to perform politics within the parameters of a foundational moment but to surpass it, to move away urgently from it, and to rise above it. Politics was no longer simply about bargaining with subjects within a supposedly self-contained and everlasting Ottoman domain of obedience, as much as it was civilizing subjects on the world stage of modernization.

NOWHERE WAS THIS TRANSITION MADE CLEARER than in the Ottoman reaction to the outbreak of sectarian clashes that occurred in Mount Lebanon and Damascus in the summer of 1860.<sup>50</sup> For numerous complicated reasons, ranging from Eastern Question politics to local interpretations of Ottoman reform, violence erupted between Druzes and Maronites in Mount Lebanon in late May and June of 1860. The upshot of it all was that the Maronites were defeated, and several major Maronite towns were pillaged, their Christian populations massacred. For different reasons, in July, much to the embarrassment of Ottoman reformers in Istanbul, Muslims rioted in Damascus and massacred several hundred Christians.<sup>51</sup> What interests us here are not the details of these sectarian episodes but how Ottoman reformers took advantage of the restoration of order in Mount Lebanon and Damascus to construct their vision of an Ottoman modernity in contrast to an alleged local barbarism. The foreign minister of the Ottoman Empire, Fuad Pasha, embodied many of the ideals of the Tanzimat. He was educated in reformed schools, was fluent in French, and had served as an Ottoman ambassador to Russia. He went personally to Syria to ensure that *modern* Ottoman law and order was properly imposed. His immediate objective, however, was to stem European

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also Ibrahim Bek Aswad, *Dalil Lubnan* (Ba'bda, 1906); and Cevdet Pasha, *Tarih-i Cevdet* [tertib cedid] (Istanbul, 1884), 249–56.

<sup>49</sup> See Saree Makdisi, *Romantic Imperialism: Universal Empire and the Culture of Modernity* (Cambridge, 1998), 111–15, for a discussion of British modernization in the context of colonial India.

<sup>50</sup> The events of 1860 themselves interrupted an Ottoman commission studying reform in the Balkans. See Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire*, 105–06.

<sup>51</sup> The reasons for the Damascus massacre (as well as the Lebanese war) were complex, but most historians agree that an economic recession among traditional artisanal sectors precipitated by European textile imports played a significant role in fueling Muslim resentment against wealthy Christians who dominated trade with Europe. See Leila Fawaz, *An Occasion for War* (Berkeley, Calif., 1994), for a narrative of the war in Mount Lebanon, the Damascus massacre, and the European responses to them.

influence, for in the aftermath of the massacres the French had sent an army to Syria to “aid” the Ottomans in reestablishing peace.<sup>52</sup>

From the outset of his mission, before he had actually completed any investigations, Fuad Pasha alleged that the sectarian violence between Druzes and Maronites in Mount Lebanon was a reflection of an “age-old” (*kadim ül-cereyan*) tribal struggle, whereas the outburst in Damascus was the work of unthinking and ignorant Muslims.<sup>53</sup> In report after report, Fuad Pasha contrasted the punishment inflicted by his modern army—whose outfits and organization represented the new face of the empire—with the supposed tribal savagery of local inhabitants. In Damascus, because of the scale of violence and because of the city’s symbolic importance to the Ottomans’ reconception of their Islamic heritage, scores of “ignorant” Muslims who allegedly took part in the riots were arrested. They were executed after hasty trials because they had “violated” the precepts of the *shari’a* and the will of the sultan—both of which Fuad Pasha maintained upheld the equality of Muslim and non-Muslim subjects. He concluded that Ottoman culpability was limited to a neglect of duty at the local level, which resulted in a “stain” on the honor of a modernizing state.<sup>54</sup>

The point here is to understand the implications of Fuad Pasha’s convictions rather than their veracity. The descriptions of the conflicts as age-old, in the case of Mount Lebanon, or as the work of ignorant rioters, in the case of Damascus, conveniently located sectarianism in a pre-modern world dominated by fanaticism, ignorance, and tribalism. The Ottoman punishment was, by contrast, understood by Fuad Pasha to be modern. It followed supposedly impartial investigations, as well as the reformed and allegedly unambiguous penal codes, and it was carried out by a Tanzimat army in the presence of European representatives. Fuad Pasha wanted to prove that the Ottoman Empire was impartial and tolerant and therefore could be modern. The local setting—be it the city of Damascus or Mount Lebanon—provided the stage on which an Ottoman commitment to modernity had to be demonstrated. “Because the Sublime State never accepts that the slightest harm or aggression should befall any of the classes of imperial subjects who take shelter under its protection,” Fuad decreed to the inhabitants of Syria soon after his arrival, “and because the events [that transpired in Syria in 1860, that is, the massacres] were contrary to the principle of civilization current in the world and beyond the pale in every manner, the Sublime State, in accordance with its duty to ensure justice, has decided to punish those involved in the events.”<sup>55</sup> The Ottoman state, Fuad Pasha insisted, had always been tolerant, and therefore like any other European state, in fact more than any other European state, could rightfully claim to be a modern and civilized power. In this, he echoed a common Tanzimat refrain that the Ottomans were avatars of tolerance, for they had a long history of religious toleration, unlike the Europeans, who had only recently embraced it.<sup>56</sup> Yet Fuad Pasha’s notion of being modern meant reconfiguring the Ottoman present and past

<sup>52</sup> For details on the French expedition, see Fawaz, *Occasion for War*, 110–31.

<sup>53</sup> BBA, BEO A.MKT.UM, 415/56, 1 M 1277 [July 20, 1860]; BBA, BEO A.MKT.UM, 480/28, 11 Z 1277 [June 20, 1861]; and BBA, IRADE H 9861, 16 Ra 1277 [October 2, 1860].

<sup>54</sup> See BBA, IRADE MM 851/4, Leff.4, 16 M 1277 [July 16, 1860].

<sup>55</sup> BBA, IRADE D 31753, Leff.3, n.d.

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, Ali Pasha’s memorandum on reform in Archives du Ministère des Affaires

along Enlightenment terms of tolerance and equality. It meant subordinating the nuances and specificities of past Ottoman accommodation of religious difference within an Enlightenment narrative of progress, which itself ironically had consistently used the Ottoman Orient to define fanaticism, depravity, indolence, and stagnation.<sup>57</sup> But it also meant insisting that toleration was the heritage of the imperial center. The Ottoman state would have to impose modernity on a recalcitrant periphery recognized by the Tanzimat officials to be inhabited by “two sects [that] are full of sedition and abominable wickedness.”<sup>58</sup>

Underlying this notion of a modern stage was a redefinition of the traditional relationship between rulers and ruled in the Ottoman Empire. Fuad Pasha deployed the language of the old regime (brigandage, sedition, and the *shari‘a*) in his reports, but he was acutely aware of the world stage on which local order had to be restored.<sup>59</sup> The ideology of progress allowed Fuad Pasha to deploy classical Ottoman ruling discourses to equate the modern Ottoman subject with the tolerant, obedient, and quietist subject. Fuad Pasha reminded his soldiers that although they were in Syria “to bring peace and security to this area and to punish the sins of the [Ottoman subjects] because of their cruel acts,” they were also there to “show everybody what the worth and value of a soldier is and let all our compatriots (*vatandaşlarımız*) know our Padişah’s justice.”<sup>60</sup> On the one hand, therefore, the soldiers acted on behalf of their theoretical compatriots in Damascus and Mount Lebanon, who lived (at least in the case of Mount Lebanon) in a presumably savage tribal landscape. The imperial soldiers constituted the vanguard of Ottoman modernity, rationality, and nationalism. They were to lead by example, for in addition to being commanded to obey the person of the sultan, the soldiers and their Ottoman compatriots were exhorted to be loyal to an abstract Ottoman nation. They were meant to embody a concept of national allegiance, which like loyalty to the House of Osman of the old regime, flowed up the social order, from periphery to center. Fuad Pasha envisioned an Ottoman modernity that included a modern subjecthood composed of fellow citizens, or *vatandaşlar*, who listened, followed, and obeyed rather than actively participated in the governance of the empire.

By casting the Ottoman Empire as the progenitor of the Enlightenment ideal (and therefore its natural inheritor), capable of its own renaissance, Ottoman reformers also articulated a notion of the “Ottoman man’s burden” toward its subject populations, who would have to be disciplined and reformed before the Ottoman Empire could firmly establish itself as a civilized power. To do this, two things had to occur: the first was to project an image of an Ottoman Empire that in

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Etrangères de France: Mémoires et Documents, Turquie, Vol. 51, no. 9, “Mémoire transmis à Londres et à Paris par Aali Pacha,” May 1855.

<sup>57</sup> Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (1960; Oxford, 1993), 309–12.

<sup>58</sup> BBA, IMM 1129, Leff.14, 7 B 1258 [August 14, 1842].

<sup>59</sup> Even in the pre-Tanzimat regime, banditry was deployed as an imperial discourse of centralization, as Karen Barkey has argued. See *Bandits and Bureaucrats* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1994), 176–77, for an analysis of what she describes as an Ottoman manufacturing of a discourse of banditry after cycles of conscription and demobilization of peasants in Anatolia during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

<sup>60</sup> BBA, IRADE MM 851/3, Leff.4, n.d. Also quoted in Baysun, *Cevdet Paşa Tezakir*, 13–20: 110.

Deringil's words illustrated it as a "leader of the Islamic world yet a modern member of the civilized community of nations."<sup>61</sup> The second was to uplift and civilize those peoples who were considered stagnant. The Arab provinces provided an ideal (if not exclusive) laboratory for this elaboration of an Ottoman vision of modernity.

IN THE WAKE OF 1860, as Ottoman officials studied, mapped, and reformed Mount Lebanon as never before, the famous Roman temples of Baalbek were rediscovered by now "civilized" Ottomans. They reclaimed the ruins from a European colonial discourse that had hitherto interpreted the edifice as a metaphor for Ottoman decline, and insisted, to the contrary of European Orientalism, that Baalbek represented the empire's own rich and dynamic heritage.<sup>62</sup> To reach Baalbek, travelers generally began their trip in Beirut, passing over Mount Lebanon on the Beirut-Damascus road, a relatively arduous two-day trip until a carriage way was opened soon after the 1860 war. Access to the ruins was regularized, and admission was set at one silver *meçdiye* coin for both foreigners and Ottoman subjects.

Ottoman archaeological interest in the pre-Islamic Phoenician and Hellenistic past was one more step in the self-incorporation of the Ottoman Empire into a European-dominated modernity.<sup>63</sup> An Imperial Museum (*Müze-i Hümayun*) had already been founded in Istanbul in 1869, and although the first directors were European, in 1881 the French-educated Osman Hamdi Bey was appointed as head of the museum. Under Hamdi Bey's guidance, various excavations of Phoenician and Hellenistic sites were conducted throughout the empire; he was instrumental in creating an awareness of the cultural (and hence political) importance of these sites and prompted the Ottoman government to pass a law in 1884 (*Asar-i Atika Nizamnamesi*) that prohibited the export of antiquities from the empire. The passage of the 1884 law created an exclusive Ottoman legal and cultural claim to antiquities in the empire.<sup>64</sup> The Ottoman state directed important finds, among which was the 1887 discovery by Hamdi Bey of the Royal Necropolis of Sidon, including the alleged sarcophagus of Alexander the Great, to go to the recently rebuilt Imperial Museum.<sup>65</sup> Although the museum he directed and the conservation law he oversaw were, in large measure, a reaction to European "pilfering" of (what was now seen) as Ottoman antiquities, Hamdi Bey was nevertheless acutely aware

<sup>61</sup> Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 154.

<sup>62</sup> Ussama Makdisi, "The 'Rediscovery' of Baalbek: A Metaphor for Empire in the Nineteenth Century," in *Baalbek: Image and Monument, 1898–1998*, Hélène Sader, Thomas Scheffler, and Angelika Neuwirth, eds. (Beirut, 1998), 137–56.

<sup>63</sup> The following discussion of Hamdi Bey is reproduced from Ussama Makdisi, "Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence, and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform," presented at a workshop in Beirut, which will appear in Thomas Philipp, Jens Hanssen, and Stefan Weber, eds., *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Beirut, forthcoming).

<sup>64</sup> The first law on antiquities promulgated in 1874 had mandated only that antiquities discovered in archaeological digs were to be divided equally between the excavator, the owner of the land on which the excavation was made, and the state. See Mustafa Cezar, *Müzeci ve Ressam Osman Hamdi Bey* (Istanbul, 1987), 21.

<sup>65</sup> See Jens Hanssen, "Imperial Discourses and an Ottoman Excavation in Lebanon," in Sader, *Baalbek: Image and Monument*, 165–72, for more information about the excavations of the Royal Necropolis in Sayda.

of his debt to the science of Europe—archaeology and philology—and he solicited the French philologist and Orientalist Ernest Renan’s help in deciphering some of the Phoenician inscriptions he found at Sidon.<sup>66</sup> For Hamdi Bey, the ruins of Baalbek and the Necropolis of Sidon constituted Ottoman “national” treasures in addition to those Islamic monuments that dotted the sultan’s domains. Hamdi Bey was extremely proud of the success of the excavations of the Necropolis at Sidon—the first Ottoman archaeological expedition.<sup>67</sup> The Necropolis was housed as the major display in the new museum building in Istanbul, whose neo-classical façade, as Jens Hanssen has written, suggested an empire able both to reach into the past to set the stage for its own teleological evolution into modernity and at the same time to translate East for West, and, of course, West for East.<sup>68</sup>

Ottoman modernization reinforced an imperial relationship that explicitly separated a modernizing center from the rest of the empire—through the flow of antiquities from Sidon and Baalbek to the Imperial Museum in Istanbul—at the same time that it increased actual control and authority over the provinces through administrative and urban reform. The irony, of course, is that while Osman Hamdi Bey reacted to and decried European “theft” of Ottoman antiquities, he unilaterally removed local antiquities to Istanbul. On the one hand, the Ottomans wanted to present their modernization by saving and displaying antiquities in a new museum; they wanted to emulate Europe and thereby close the metaphorical gap of progress that separated Ottomans from Europeans. On the other hand, the relocation of antiquities was premised on a distinction between the discerning and cultivated modern center and the ignorant provincial pre-modern periphery. The Ottomans, in other words, used Baalbek as one of many sites from which to elaborate their own sense of modernity—in the face of constant European military pressure and in contrast to the presumed lawlessness of the Arab Bedouins and “the perpetually warring” Lebanese tribes.<sup>69</sup> For example, a plaque erected by Sultan Abdülhamid II to commemorate the visit to Baalbek of the German emperor Kaiser Wilhelm II in 1898 was placed inside the Temple of Bacchus to remind visitors of a civilized Ottoman sovereignty over the ruins. It also intimated the desire of the empire to be treated as an equal by its “friendly” European allies. Significantly, the plaque was inscribed in Ottoman and German but not Arabic. The vast majority of the local inhabitants were apparently not deemed worthy (or capable, perhaps) of reading or understanding the significance of the imperial visit and its reflection of the elevation of the Ottoman Empire on the world stage. Moreover, entrance tickets were written in three languages, Ottoman Turkish, Arabic, and French, the first being of course the official language of the empire (and a source of increasing tension in the Arabic-speaking provinces, especially after the Young Turk Revolution of 1908), the second being the language of the local population, and the third the lingua

<sup>66</sup> Cezar, *Müzeci ve Ressam Osman Hamdi Bey*, 20. Renan had already traveled to Baalbek and other regions in Syria to study Phoenician inscriptions and ruins in the wake of the French occupation of Syria in 1860. His work is titled *Mission de Phénicie*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1864).

<sup>67</sup> Osman Hamdi Bey and Theodore Reinach, *Une nécropole royale à Sidon: Fouilles de Hamdy Bey* (Paris, 1892), 117.

<sup>68</sup> Hamdi Bey and Reinach, *Une nécropole royale*, 169. See Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 12–13, for a similar point.

<sup>69</sup> Ahmed Rifat, *Lugat-ı Tarihiye ve Coğrafiye*, 7 vols. (Istanbul, 1881–83), 3–4: 240; 5–7: 133.

franca of all foreigners. Although the same price was charged of both foreigners and Ottoman subjects, only the Arabic text exhorted the locals not to steal—although in fact it was a long-established habit of European travelers (such as the French poet Alphonse de Lamartine) to help themselves to the antiquities they fancied.

Hamdi Bey understood the task of Ottomans such as himself to be a struggle both against the fanaticism and ignorance of the local Arab population and against the rapacious and relentless encroachment of Western imperialism. He warned that “it would be a profound mistake to believe that this work of devastation is due, as is commonly repeated, to the fanaticism of the [local] inhabitants. It must be recognized that the true cause lies in the venality and ignorance of the lower classes of the population, both Muslim and Christian, which incessantly are excited and encouraged by foreigners established in this country who have no goal but to traffic widely in antiquities.”<sup>70</sup> Hamdi Bey’s interpretation of the Ottoman past dissociated the imperial classical past represented by Baalbek and the Necropolis of Sidon from the primitive, superstitious, lowly, and religiously confused Arab inhabitants.<sup>71</sup> The former represented a heritage and a platform to demonstrate their modernity—their ability scientifically to excavate, transport, display, and appreciate the artifacts. The latter epitomized backwardness—exploited by selfish Europeans—which threatened to destroy the foundations of the empire. This dissociation between a noble past and a contemporary decline among the Oriental inhabitants—a point at the heart of European Orientalism—was made even more explicit by Hamdi Bey when he traveled to Damascus during his excavations at Sidon. There, he lamented what he called the “decadence of taste” among the inhabitants of Damascus. He mourned the loss of an Islamic heritage and aesthetic in the face of what he saw as blind and vulgar imitation of European style. The result, said Hamdi Bey, was “a sad spectacle of the degeneracy of taste among the peoples of the Orient . . . While there is still time, I advise architects and artists who love beautiful things to hasten to Damascus to admire what is left of the marvels of Islamic art.”<sup>72</sup>

Hamdi Bey believed that Ottoman modernization could succeed only if it preserved some sense of Ottoman difference from the West. He saw native culture as a timeless patrimony that set the Ottoman Empire apart from the West.<sup>73</sup> In other words, anticipating what would become a standard Third World nationalist claim that modern Western science could and should be married to an essential indigenous tradition, Hamdi Bey sought to reconcile Western science and national culture rather than totally to emulate the West.<sup>74</sup> Yet in his understanding of native culture of the Ottoman Empire, be it the Islamic architecture of Damascus or the traditional attire of the various peoples of the Ottoman lands, which he detailed in

<sup>70</sup> Hamdi Bey and Reinach, *Une nécropole royale*, iv.

<sup>71</sup> Hamdi Bey and Reinach, *Une nécropole royale*, 63. See also Hanssen, “Imperial Discourses,” 167.

<sup>72</sup> Hamdi Bey and Reinach, *Une nécropole royale*, 112.

<sup>73</sup> This point has been made before by Çelik, *Displaying the Orient*, 42, in her discussion of Osman Hamdi Bey and Marie de Launay’s *Les costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873* (Istanbul, 1873). She interprets it as a work that “repeated the false generalization common to European interpretations: by failing to note transformations over time and by characterizing ‘costumes’ as timeless, they froze the culture historically.”

<sup>74</sup> See Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), 6.

his *Les costumes populaires de la Turquie en 1873* for the Universal Exposition at Vienna, Hamdi Bey articulated a vision of Ottoman modernity that was hierarchical and imperial. He intimated that it was the task of Ottoman modernizers to save Ottoman heritage not just from the West but also from the Oriental peoples of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>75</sup> He proposed to save the Ottoman subjects of the Arab provinces from themselves—both the supposedly indolent majority in need of uplift and the active minority who were blindly imitating European style, which threatened to destroy any sense of Ottoman uniqueness. Behind Hamdi Bey's romantic discourse of Ottoman difference from the West lay a rhetoric of modernization that necessitated an Ottoman civilizing mission.

In his *Les costumes populaires*, Hamdi Bey explicitly outlined where and how tradition fit within a modernized world. He carefully distinguished between what he called clothing and costume. For him, clothing was the manifestation of the homogenizing and rationalizing impulse of modernization: "Day by day, clothing tends to become more uniform across the world, and to efface not only all distinctions between diverse classes of society, but also those between different nations which seemed otherwise to be permanently separated by natural and moral barriers."<sup>76</sup> Traditional costume, on the other hand, was the clearest expression of an innate—and hence, for Hamdi Bey, authentic—characteristic of a people.<sup>77</sup> Costume, like the archaeological treasures of the empire, gave the Ottoman state its distinctive cultural and historical code in an otherwise homogenous modernity. For this reason, Hamdi Bey gave an exhaustive account of the myriad costumes, and customs and manners, of the various peoples of the empire. He began with "Turquie d'Europe" and more specifically Istanbul, which he declared was a link between East and West, and then he proceeded to the Balkan provinces; he next turned to Anatolia, then the Arab provinces, before ending with Africa.<sup>78</sup> Yet in constituting the various popular costumes of the empire as integral components of Ottoman "tradition" and, therefore, as the authentic underpinnings of any project of modernization, Hamdi Bey made it abundantly clear that his ethnographic survey—just like his later archaeological expeditions—was linked to a more general Ottoman mission to civilize quaint, but backwards and often fanatical, peripheries. For example, Hamdi Bey prefaced his discussion of what he understood to be native dress in Syria by stating, "Great historical memories are in abundance in these rich countries, conquered in turn by the Phoenicians, the Hebrews, the Greeks, and the Romans; [these countries] where the Quran and the Bible—two books of peace, fraternity, and tolerance—have long served as a pretext for crusaders coming from all over the Occident and for Arabs who founded Islam to tear each other apart. [This continued] up until the Ottoman conquest contained by force [these] fanatical hatreds, which, on occasion, would reawaken."<sup>79</sup> Hamdi Bey not only sought to rewrite the history of the Ottoman conquest of the Arab provinces in a profoundly nineteenth-century discourse of tolerance, but he seized on the supposedly timeless costume to underscore other allegedly timeless characteristics of various groups in

<sup>75</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*.

<sup>76</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*, 5.

<sup>77</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*, 6.

<sup>78</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*, 11–12.

<sup>79</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*, 258.

the Ottoman domains; he sought to adduce what he considered to be the essential characteristics of the native inhabitants of these provinces who were tamed, disciplined, and civilized—that is to say, forcibly removed from their endlessly repeated history of putatively endemic and age-old tribal violence—by the Ottoman imperial center. He described “the Muslim of Lebanon” (by which he meant a Sunni) as imbued with “soft and tranquil manners and customs,” unlike his “turbulent neighbors,” the Druzes and Maronites.<sup>80</sup> The Maronites, he declared, were “remarkably intelligent and proud” and were “industrious and rich,” but, “just like their Druze neighbors, with whom they have never been able to live in harmony, the Maronites have proved difficult to subdue. Only in the last few years have the joint efforts of the imperial Ottoman government together with its faithful allies succeeded in pacifying [Mount Lebanon]; today the age-old hatreds of the Druzes and Maronites seem to have been finally quelled; obedient subjects, they now live as brothers under the legitimate authority of a Christian Pasha sent by Istanbul to govern Mount Lebanon.”<sup>81</sup>

OTTOMAN ORIENTALISM EMERGED IN ITS OWN RIGHT during the last decades of Ottoman rule. It did so in the context of an ongoing Ottoman challenge to a European discourse of a fanatical and depraved Ottoman Empire and in the context of the loss of Balkan provinces in 1878 and again in 1913. Ottoman Orientalism reflected the rise of a specifically *Turkish* sensibility as the dominant element of a westernized Islamic Ottoman nationalism. This sentiment was most clearly expressed by Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, who wrote that the “real strength of the Sublime State lies with the Turks. It is the obligation of their national character (*kavmiyyet*) and religion to sacrifice their lives for the House of Osman until the last one is destroyed. Therefore it is natural that they be accorded more worth than other peoples of the Sublime State.”<sup>82</sup>

Ottoman modernization was not predicated on the abandonment of Islam as much as it was on buttressing the notion of a Muslim Great Power ruled by an Ottoman Turkish elite. Like Japan, which was an important example for Ottoman officials especially after its defeat of Russia in 1905, the late Ottoman state saw itself as at once part of East but above the rest of the Eastern peoples.<sup>83</sup> If the

<sup>80</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*, 265.

<sup>81</sup> Hamdi Bey and de Launay, *Les costumes populaires*, 267.

<sup>82</sup> Quoted in Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 170. To be sure, there were many differences among late Ottoman reformers. Many emphasized the Islamic nature of Ottoman modernization, while others, particularly some circles within the Young Turks (who seized power in 1908), gravitated toward a more unabashedly and openly secular interpretation of modernization. Despite divisions within metropolitan Ottoman culture, practically all Ottoman reformers—be they “Islamists,” “Westernizers,” “Turkists” or (as in most cases) a combination thereof—were committed to an Ottoman Empire in which Istanbul’s grip on its remaining provinces would be consolidated rather than abolished. See Hanioglu, *Young Turks in Opposition*, 9–16; Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire*, 118, 132–36. See also Feroz Ahmed, *The Young Turks: The Committee of Union and Progress in Turkish Politics, 1908–1914* (Oxford, 1969), 154; and Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 337.

<sup>83</sup> The Ottoman view of Japan has been the subject of a recent dissertation by Renée Worringer, “Comparing Perceptions: Japan as an Archetype for Ottoman Modernity, 1876–1918” (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2001). The Ottoman-Japanese comparison is compelling precisely because of the manner in which both sought to westernize despite Western imperialism at the same time as they

Japanese viewed themselves as superior to Koreans and Chinese, so, too, Ottoman reformers expounded what Deringil has called an “Ottoman *mission civilisatrice*” to backward and indolent Arabs, Islam notwithstanding.<sup>84</sup> For example, Sultan Abdülhamid II, who believed that the “Turks were the basic (*asli*) group of the [Ottoman] state,”<sup>85</sup> opened a new school in Istanbul in 1892, the Aşiret Mekteb-i Hümayun, to educate the sons of the leading Arab and Kurdish tribal notables. The goal was to turn them into loyal Ottoman functionaries by sending them back “to their tribes” to continue the process of civilization and Ottomanization. By teaching them Ottoman Turkish, classical Arabic, French, and Persian as well as Islamic sciences, geography, and history, the school aimed to “enable the tribal people to partake of the prosperity that emanates from knowledge and civilization, and to further augment their well-known natural inclination towards and love for the Great Islamic Caliphate, and the Sublime Ottoman Sultanate, as well as to strengthen and confirm earnest loyalty to the state and religious duties incumbent on them by the Seriat and civil laws.”<sup>86</sup>

What the Aşiret Mektebi signified educationally, Sabri Pasha’s third volume of *Mer’at ül-Haremeyn* accomplished textually through an anthropological study of Arabia.<sup>87</sup> Published in 1889, *Mer’at ül-Haremeyn* was a compendious tome that charted the history of Arabia from before the rise of Islam to the present under Ottoman rule. It is no surprise that Sabri Pasha wrote at a time when the Ottomans were militarily reasserting their authority over the region in the name of Islam and civilization.<sup>88</sup> In addition to providing extensive geographical and topographical information on the different routes, towns, and cities in Arabia, it discussed the various tribes of Arabia, their divisions and alliances, their social and political organization, family life, how they raided, and what kinds of weapons they used. Despite its claim to accuracy, and its stated desire to reduce the gaps in the knowledge of Arabia, Sabri Pasha’s *Mer’at ül-Haremeyn* was also a paean to the modernizing Islamic regime of Abdülhamid.<sup>89</sup> Sabri Pasha described the famous early nineteenth-century campaign of the modernizing Mehmed Ali of Egypt against the Wahabis as an effort to “destroy that vile group’s foul existence and to purify the holy soil” of Mecca and Medina.<sup>90</sup> This typical Ottoman description of the Wahabis as purveyors of error and deceit, corruption and sedition—as faithless heretics—was juxtaposed against a modernizing Ottoman state, personified by

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both saw themselves as at once part of Asia but no longer of Asia (or “Good-bye Asia,” as the Japanese writer Fukuzawa Yukichi put it in 1885). See David J. Lu, *Japan: A Documentary History* (Armonk, N.Y., 1997), 352.

<sup>84</sup> Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 158.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Karpát, *Politicization of Islam*, 176. *Asli* can be translated as “original” or “essential” or “fundamental” rather than “basic.”

<sup>86</sup> Eugene L. Rogan, “Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II’s School for Tribes (1892–1907),” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996): 83–107.

<sup>87</sup> Eyub Sabri Pasha, *Mer’at ül-Haremeyn*, 3 vols. (Istanbul, 1889). The third volume was subtitled *Mer’at Cezirat’ül-arab*.

<sup>88</sup> The Ottoman invasion of the Hasa region of Arabia in 1871 was ostensibly to help the local Abdullah bin Faysal in his struggle against his more powerful and British-backed brother, Sa’ud bin Faysal. See also Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar* (New York, 1997), 16–20, 34–53.

<sup>89</sup> Sabri Pasha, *Mer’at ül-Haremeyn*, 3: 3.

<sup>90</sup> Sabri Pasha, *Mer’at ül-Haremeyn*, 3: 99–100.

Sultan Abdülhamid, “the sustainer of state and nation, renewer of the age, and the embodiment of justice and civilization.”<sup>91</sup> Arabia, for Sabri Pasha, was an unchanging world, a place of falsehood and savage customs from which the Wahabis naturally emerged. It was a place of perennial raiding, violence, and heresy. It was now marked by an abundance of ignorance and a paucity of knowledge and religion. In addition to eminently useful knowledge about Arabia, knowledge that could be put to good use by the Ottoman state, intent on pacifying the region, *Mer’atü’l-haremeyn* carefully dissociated Islam, whose symbolic potential was being used by the Hamidian regime to bolster its own legitimacy and own modernization drive, from the inhabitants of Arabia.

The pacification of Arabia, and the rise of what Deringil has called “Ottoman image management,” was undoubtedly part of a more general Ottoman attempt to defend and at the same time unify the empire.<sup>92</sup> One of the great Ottoman reformers and constitutional advocates, and himself a leader of the Ottoman military campaigns to pacify and civilize Arabia, Midhat Pasha wrote in 1878 (addressing Europeans) “that to speak of the East a man should know it well.” To know it meant, for Midhat Pasha, to acknowledge that “Islamism” embodied the principles of liberty, democracy, and justice, that Ottoman rule *had been* a civilizing influence in both Europe and the East. Midhat claimed “it was by equity that [Ottoman dynasties] developed their nascent authority, and extended it to neighboring countries, which, before they were attacked, were ready, such is the radiant power of justice, annexed in spirit to their dominion.” And he continued, “the nations of the East and of the North had not yet emerged from the state of barbarism in which they existed. As a consequence of this state of things there was an influx of crowds of immigrants from all directions toward the Ottoman countries.” Since that time, the Ottoman state had declined, Europe had launched itself along the “path of progress” and “modern civilization,” and the task of Ottoman reformers was clearly to oversee a “fusion” between the “different races” of the empire. “Out of this fusion should spring the progressive development of the populations, to whatever nationality and whatever religion they may belong; it is the only remedy for our ills and the sole means we have of struggling with advantage against enemies at home and abroad.”<sup>93</sup>

Ottoman Orientalism was defined by the promise of an imperial project of “fusion” (as Midhat Pasha put it) between races and religion and the limits of this promise, as it ran aground against an established hierarchy that sought to consolidate Ottoman Turkish imperial rule over various subordinate provinces. The two faces of Ottoman power—as a civilized and a civilizing Eastern Muslim great power—were represented both in imperial projections of power abroad and within the empire. In the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair, as Deringil and Çelik have illustrated, the Ottoman government sought to avoid objectionable (that is to say, unregulated) displays of things Oriental—from dancing girls to dervishes to wild Arab Bedouin. Moreover, a “Turkish village” was placed at an intermediary point

<sup>91</sup> Sabri Pasha, *Mer’at ü’l-Haremeyn*, 3: 2.

<sup>92</sup> Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 135.

<sup>93</sup> Midhat Pasha, “The Past, Present, and Future of Turkey,” *Nineteenth Century* 16 (1878): 981–1000.

at the Chicago Midway Plaisance, between the central “White City” and the allegedly most “savage” examples of humanity, the native Americans and Dahomayan peoples of West Africa.<sup>94</sup>

Within the empire, Midhat Pasha and other Ottoman officials continued their military campaign to pacify the Arab provinces as part of an Ottomanizing project of “fusion.” As early as 1871, for example, Midhat, then governor of Baghdad, launched a campaign to suppress the Wahabis in Arabia. His Ottoman forces arrived in naval vessels named *Asur* (Assyria) and *Babil* (Babylon), and they carried with them an Arabic proclamation to the Arab inhabitants printed by the imperial press in Baghdad. The proclamation very firmly associated civilization and Islam with the Ottoman state, which, in effect, had come to save the Muslim Arab natives from themselves, but it framed this civilizing mission squarely within Islamic idiom. It read,

Although the Ottoman state recognizes its responsibility to preserve Muslim might and power, it also recognizes that its preoccupation for some time with crises in other parts of the empire has led it to neglect its role and has thus not been able to resolve in an appropriate manner what is occurring in [this] region. The Ottoman state’s preoccupation has opened the opportunity in Najd and Yemen for rebellious movements by tribes and clans of the desolate regions and the desert. This situation continues to cause strife between Muslims and has led to despotism over the weak and the denial of their rights.

The proclamation noted that “the Muslim nation” had been harmed by the persistence of these untoward actions and that the days of Ottoman neglect were over. It warned in no uncertain terms,

It is inevitable that the Ottoman state will meet its obligation to reform the affairs of subjects in accordance with the order of the Ottoman state and its laws, which are based on the Islamic *shari‘a*. Therefore . . . the state begins with counsel and lenient and friendly treatment, and the appointment of officials to all regions, and has started to propagate the goals of this policy; if this policy of counsel and advise bears fruit [so be it], but if not, there will inevitably be recourse to force, and soldiers and artillery will be sent against those who oppose the state, particularly those who have distanced [themselves] from civilization and settlement, and have remained in a state of savage ignorance and nomadism.<sup>95</sup>

It is not that Midhat spoke with two contradictory voices in the West and in Arabia. Rather, he projected a single voice of imperial authority determined to represent a modern East and Islam, but in two registers, and from different positions of power within a single scale of progress: to pre-modern subjects as persuasion through power and to already modern Europeans as empowerment through persuasion. “Speaking back” (as Çelik has called it) to Western Orientalist discourse entailed the creation of an Ottoman Orientalist discourse with its own internal complexity. Arab provincial elites, particularly in Damascus, Cairo, and Beirut, participated in this process of hierarchical “fusion” inherent in Ottoman Orientalism. Many of them also subscribed to a notion of an East that could be

<sup>94</sup> Holly Edwards, “A Million and One Nights: Orientalism in America, 1870–1930,” in Edwards, ed., *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures: Orientalism in America, 1870–1930* (Princeton, N.J., 2000), 37. See also Deringil, *Well-Protected Domains*, 157–60.

<sup>95</sup> Quoted in ‘Abdullah bin Nasir al-Subay‘i, *Al-hamla al-‘askariyya al-‘uthmaniyya ‘ala al-Ihsa’ wa al-Qatif wa Qatar* (Riyadh, 1999), 59–60.

redeemed, the desert as primitive, the Bedouin, lower classes, and women as ignorant and *pre-modern*.<sup>96</sup> Some enrolled in modern Ottoman schools such as the Maktab ʿAnbar school founded in Damascus in 1893, while others studied in non-Ottoman missionary institutions such as the Syrian Protestant College founded in 1866, the Jesuit Université Saint-Joseph in Beirut, or the local Maqasid foundation schools set up in 1866. Arab elites embraced and in some cases, such as Butrus al-Bustani, actually led in the elaboration of an “awakening” modern Eastern identity, while others like Shakib Arslan personified a new class of self-declared Ottoman Arab notables. Stefan Weber has described wall paintings in late Ottoman Damascus as markers of a new Ottoman architectural style and aesthetic that marked the late nineteenth-century incorporation of Arab elites into an Ottoman modernity.<sup>97</sup> There was clearly a space for the educated inhabitants of the Arab provinces, therefore, to participate in the elaboration of Ottoman Orientalism. Ottoman officials of Arab descent, for example, wrote in Ottoman and described rural Arab provinces in teleological and civilizational terms similar to those adopted by imperial reformers in Istanbul.<sup>98</sup> There was a crucial interplay within Ottoman Orientalism between Arab (among other) elites and the Ottoman state, precisely because what it meant to be Ottoman—and, indeed, Arab, Eastern, and Muslim—in the late empire was itself being redefined.

The temporal differentiation at the heart of Ottoman modernization was amplified by the development of separate Arab, Turkish, Armenian, and Balkan nationalist discourses, and by nineteenth-century understandings of progress ineluctably bound up in an embrace of “scientific” European Social-Darwinistic thinking. It was perhaps inevitable, then, that an informal racial hierarchy would be consolidated in the empire following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908 and the rise to power of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).<sup>99</sup> Certainly, as most Ottomanists have pointed out, the specific racialization of Ottoman identity must be understood against the backdrop of the mass expulsions of Muslims from the

<sup>96</sup> See in this regard Rogan, *Frontiers of the State*, 213–17; see also Birgit Schabler, “From Urban Notables to ‘Noble Arabs’: Shifting Discourses in the Emergence of Nationalism in the Arab East (1910–1916),” in Thomas Philipp, *et al.*, eds., *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Beirut, forthcoming).

<sup>97</sup> Stefan Weber, “Images of Imagined Worlds: Self Image and Worldview in Late Ottoman Wall Paintings of Damascus,” in Philipp, *Empire in the City* (forthcoming).

<sup>98</sup> See, for example, M. Refik Bey and M. Behcet Bey, *Beyrut Vilayeti*, 2 vols. (Istanbul, 1919–20), 1: 1, 19. And see Michael Gilsenan, *Lords of the Lebanese Marches: Violence and Narrative in an Arab Society* (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), 73–76.

<sup>99</sup> See Şükrü Haniöğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902–1908* (Oxford, 2001), 289–311. See also Haniöğlu, “The Young Turks and the Arabs before the Revolution of 1908,” in *The Origins of Arab Nationalism*, Rashid Khalidi, Lisa Anderson, Muhammad Muslih, and Reeva S. Simon, eds. (New York, 1991), 32. Racial thinking, of course, was not the preserve of the imperial center. Arabic-speaking subjects of the empire also began to identify themselves as Arabs and see the government as run by “Turks.” See C. Ernest Dawn, “The Origins of Arab Nationalism,” in Khalidi, *Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 8. Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, 356, makes the distinction between a romantic rediscovery of a common Turkish ethnic identity or “Turkishness” (*Türklük*) between 1839 and 1908, and the rise of Turkish statist political nationalism or “Turkism” (*Türkçülük*) after 1908. The Young Turks, according to Haniöğlu, viewed the Arabs as “the most inferior ethnic group of the empire.” Most members of the Central Committee of the Committee of Union and Progress regarded Ottoman nationalism as a primarily Turkish effort, and some referred to the Arabs as “the dogs of the Turkish nation.” See Haniöğlu, “Young Turks and the Arabs before the Revolution of 1908,” 31–32, 215–16; Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire*, 136–37.

Balkan provinces in 1878. It is also true that, publicly at least, the Young Turks eschewed an explicitly antagonistic and divisive racial policy in favor of an inclusivist Ottomanist policy, albeit one defined increasingly along Turkish lines.<sup>100</sup> For the late Ottoman Empire, race signified the plurality and the promise of equality in a modern Ottoman nation-state, while religion signified its putative unity, at least insofar as the Arab provinces were concerned. Many Turkish officers of the Ottoman military, among them Mustafa Kemal himself, regarded the Arabs as fellow Muslims indeed, as *once* noble members of the race of the Prophet who could be redeemed and raised up by the Turkish race.<sup>101</sup>

Racial thinking, in effect, reflected and contributed to profound changes in the meaning of Ottoman across one century: from the old regime meaning of an imperial elite that disparaged the common “Turk,” to a secular Tanzimat legal citizenship and official discourse of patriotic *Osmanlılık* that included all Ottoman subjects, to a more ambiguous, more romantic, more exclusivist late Ottoman meaning that ennobled the “Turk.”<sup>102</sup> It signaled the beginnings of a linguistic, cultural, romantic, and historical exploration into a timeless “Turkish” patrimony of the empire that had to be rediscovered and rescued in the face of separatist nationalisms, and a concomitant mission to redeem a “besmirched” Turkish “nation,” whether in the lower-class quarters of Istanbul or the Anatolian countryside.<sup>103</sup> Members of the Muslim Ottoman Turkish elite—whose language began to be subject to a series of experimental reforms to modify the Arabic Ottoman script, whose architecture had grown increasingly Western in style, whose education was increasingly westernized over the course of the nineteenth century, and whose history according to Karpas was “Turkified”—represented themselves as nationally different from and superior to the Arabs whose historical value had past, and whose present status was subordinated to a putatively more vigorous Turkish nation.<sup>104</sup> This paradoxical relation to the Arabs as at once a source of the empire’s Islamic identity yet a present (but not the only) embodiment of decline could be colored primarily in Islamist terms, as it was under Sultan Abdülhamid, or in unabashedly secularist terms, as it was by his critics such as Hüseyin Cahit (Yalçın), a journalist who wrote in 1898:

We are bound, whether we like it or not, to Europeanize . . . Ibn Khaldun’s philosophy of history belongs to the infantile age of the science of history. Since then, the child has grown; he became a boy in Germany; he even grew to old age . . . The modern science of history is to come from Europe not from the Arabs.<sup>105</sup>

<sup>100</sup> See Hanioglu, *Preparing for a Revolution*, 299, who writes, “Despite their practice of employing Ottomanist, Turkist, and Panislamist rhetoric interchangeably depending on their targeted group, the CPU leaders’ Turkist inclinations had a profound impact on their interpretation of Ottomanism.”

<sup>101</sup> Andrew Mango, *Atatürk* (London, 1999), 65–66.

<sup>102</sup> The reasons for the rise of Turkish romanticism and ethnic nationalism have been well summarized in Karpas, *Politicization of Islam*, 328–73.

<sup>103</sup> Hanioglu, *Preparing for a Revolution*, 43. The precise path of “civilization” was subject to an intense debate between Islamists and secularists and those in between. See, for example, Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 385–410; Karpas, *Politicization of Islam*, 381–88.

<sup>104</sup> Karpas, *Politicization of Islam*, 229; see also Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, 2: 263; Hanioglu, *Preparing for a Revolution*, 42. Again, this does not deny that similar architectural and educational reforms and a more general westernizing turn were taking place in the Arab provinces or that Arabs themselves were developing (or rediscovering) an autonomous sense of Arabism.

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Berkes, *Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 298–99.

Past Arab and Islamic glory, in short, underscored present Oriental decline, which in Ottoman eyes also encompassed not only the Arabs but Iran, India, and after the 1908 revolution Sultan Abdülhamid himself.<sup>106</sup> Following the Young Turk Revolution, and amidst the development of Arab and Turkish (as well as Armenian and Balkan) national consciousness, the Arabs were increasingly set off (and set themselves off) as linguistically, historically, ethnically, and nationally different.<sup>107</sup> Yet Arabs were also depicted by the Ottoman Turkish press as fellow victims of European imperialism, and were incorporated into the temporally ascriptive landscape of a late imperial Ottoman Turkish modernity.<sup>108</sup> The challenge for the late imperial Ottoman state, however, was not how to exclude Arab subjects (as many Arab historians have claimed and many Turkish historians have denied) but how to *include* them in this modernity.

Nowhere, perhaps, was this more evident than during World War I, where the Arab provinces proved to be the last stand of the Ottoman state as a modern multi-ethnic empire. The perspective of Halide Edib Adivar, an Ottoman pioneer in the field of women's education, is instructive in this regard. Edib was sent to Syria during the war after the Arab revolt against Ottoman Turkish rule had begun. Her goal was to open and run several Ottoman schools to educate Arab women, to teach them Turkish, and most important to ensure their loyalty to the Ottoman state. Despite her own best efforts to encourage a more empathetic view of the Arabs, her understanding of her own mission was startlingly revealing of the imperial dimension of Ottoman modernity: she considered Arabs a "minority" who had to be taught to love their Turkish government and who, after a suitable period of education and uplift, would be allowed self-determination. "Turkey," she wrote, "must help the Arabs to develop a national spirit and personality, teach them to love their own national culture more than any foreign one [by which she meant the French]."<sup>109</sup> The role of the Turk, she added, was critical. The Turk was a natural leader; the Arab naturally corrupt. The Turk was closer to Europe—both physically and historically in the sense that the Turkish nation was undergoing a "tardy renaissance."<sup>110</sup> The Arab, according to Edib, was mired in local passions. When she visited Jerusalem, she noted that "there was a hot and unwholesome atmosphere, mixed with religious passion verging on hysteria. The Turk alone had a calm, impartial, and quiet look. He . . . stood calmly watching, stopping bloody quarrels and preventing bloody riots in the holy places."<sup>111</sup>

Edib's genteel racialism indeed drew on a long tradition of imperial paternalism.

<sup>106</sup> See Palmira Brummett, *Image and Imperialism in the Ottoman Revolutionary Press, 1908–1911* (Albany, N.Y., 2000), 91, 116.

<sup>107</sup> See Rashid Khalidi, "Ottomanism and Arabism in Syria before 1914: A Reassessment," in Khalidi, *Origins of Arab Nationalism*, 50–67. It should be noted that until the very end of the Ottoman Empire, the local, communal, and even national interests of the Arab subjects coincided with or were accommodated within an Ottoman imperial framework. See Dawn, "Origins of Arab Nationalism," 22–23. And see James L. Gelvin, *Divided Loyalties: Nationalism and Mass Politics in Syria at the Close of Empire* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998), for a criticism of Arab nationalist historiography's romance of Arabism.

<sup>108</sup> Brummett, *Image and Imperialism*, 323–24.

<sup>109</sup> Halide Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib* (New York, 1926), 402.

<sup>110</sup> Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, 244.

<sup>111</sup> Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, 426–27.

Yet by insisting that “Ottoman *Turks* created an Ottoman citizenship,”<sup>112</sup> and by referring to the Ottoman Empire as “crushed between the East and the West,”<sup>113</sup> Edib expressed the logic of Ottoman imperial modernization that broke decisively with a pre-Tanzimat understanding of the Ottoman Empire. For Edib, the modernizing Ottoman Empire was caught between two forces, the progressive West (with which the empire was trying to catch up) and the stagnant and fanatical Orient (from which the empire was trying to move away). In this narrative of progressive movement, the conflation between Ottoman and Turk signaled a proprietary attitude toward the Ottoman Empire, in which the Arabs were cast in an ambivalent role: at once members of an inferior “minority” who were to be civilized, disciplined, and (ultimately, perhaps) fully integrated, and at the same time as markers of a foreign Orient, above which the modern empire was struggling so hard to rise.

While Ottoman modernization, undergirded and galvanized by a sense of continual crisis, produced the likes of Halide Edib, it also produced Cemal Pasha, the wartime governor of Syria, who declared martial law and oversaw a reign of terror that culminated in famine and in the mass hangings of Syrian subjects in 1915.<sup>114</sup> Despite his reputation in the Arab historiography as an unremitting medieval “butcher,” Cemal Pasha was every bit as committed to modernity as Halide Edib. Before the outbreak of the Arab revolt, and indeed during it, he attended and gave speeches about the necessity and urgency of promoting the welfare of the Arab people.<sup>115</sup> In fact, Cemal Pasha invited Edib to Syria to mollify the Arab subjects whom he had just finished persecuting. He justified his persecution of Syrians by the exigencies of wartime; he accused them of “betraying” the empire, but he was convinced that these harsh measures in no way precluded an imperial Ottoman civilizing mission.<sup>116</sup> “In my reckoning,” Cemal Pasha admitted, “I am first and foremost an Ottoman, but after that I am a Turk and I never forget that. I am absolutely convinced that this element [the Turkish race] is the foundation-stone of the Ottoman Empire.” Cemal Pasha insisted, as well, that because of their promotion of science, knowledge, and civilization, the Turks had fortified Ottoman unity and strengthened the empire, “for in its origins the Ottoman Empire is Turkish . . . Therefore, the Arabs rebelled with the ambition of obtaining their independence; [look] into what condition they have fallen.”<sup>117</sup> The abiding contradiction in such a formulation is that while it underscored a *Turkish* claim to the Ottoman state—and hence in the view of Cemal Pasha, a Turkish responsibility to conduct the affairs of state—it also excoriated the Arabs (and others, most notably, the Armenians) for their “betrayal” of the Ottoman nation. This formulation lamented the seemingly inevitable decline of Arabs without the helping hand of a putatively more advanced and vigorous Turkish nation.

<sup>112</sup> Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, 235, emphasis my own.

<sup>113</sup> Edib, *Memoirs of Halidé Edib*, 237.

<sup>114</sup> See Hasan Kayali, *Arabs and Young Turks* (Berkeley, Calif., 1997), 199–200, for a discussion of Cemal Pasha from an Ottoman perspective.

<sup>115</sup> Cemal Pasha, *Haturat* (1920; Istanbul, 1996), 219.

<sup>116</sup> Cemal Pasha, *Haturat*, 210.

<sup>117</sup> Cemal Pasha, *Haturat*, 351.

THIS PRELIMINARY STUDY of Ottoman Orientalism points, in conclusion, to a hitherto-neglected aspect of the studies of Orientalism. For the most part, studies of Orientalism have focused on how Europeans have represented the Orient, or how Eastern societies (Ottomans and others) have resisted these portrayals—as if resistance were the only paradigm in which to study the encounter between non-Western worlds and Western powers. Or they have focused on a notion of Occidentalism that is often posited as a “reverse” Orientalism. There has been a reluctance to discuss representations of otherness advanced by non-Western regimes as simultaneous strategies of resistance and empowerment, of inclusion and exclusion.

What is revealing in the Ottoman case is how a double movement (moving an Islamic state independently *toward* a Eurocentric modernity and *away* from a representation of a stagnant Orient) modernized the representation and the raw language of power that characterized the pre-Tanzimat empire but did not do away with it. The challenge before scholars of the Ottoman Empire, specifically, is to explore how Ottoman resistance to Western imperialism engendered its own interrelated forms of Orientalist representation and domination that existed simultaneously at the center and the periphery. It is also to consider how these forms were shaped not by a will to exclude but by a desire and determination to include subjects and empire in a hierarchy of modernity.

Equally significant is that this double movement created the ideological space for Ottoman subjects to participate in this Orientalism as a project of national Ottoman resistance to Western colonialism. Unlike Western Orientalism, Ottoman Orientalism was as much a self-designation as it was a marker of difference from other, putatively less advanced, nations and races. It sought to unify Turks and Arabs within a rejuvenated East. At the same time, it differentiated them by overlaying temporal hierarchies with increasingly explicit ethnic and racial ones in which Ottoman became synonymous with Turk. To the extent that Arab elites were themselves involved in a similar dynamic with their own peripheries (whether constituted along ethnic, gender, or class lines), it becomes clear that the project of Ottoman modernization in an age of Western empire produced and anticipated multiple Orientalist discourses, many of which persisted long after the fall of the Ottoman Empire and with it the end of the specific line of Ottoman Orientalism.

“East,” observes Todorova, “is a relational category.”<sup>118</sup> How, then, to speak of Western Orientalism without taking into account the fact that Western colonialism, within which the former is embedded, has created myriad other Orientalisms? While it is true that the forms of Western Orientalism are unquestionably the most enduring, prolific, confident, and relentless because Western (and now American) power has remained so overwhelming, it is equally true that other non-Western forms coexist with yet resist, validate yet challenge, the original discourse itself. They mimic parts but are not clones of the original; they draw on indigenous histories and indeed become the very basis of its critique of modern Western Orientalism. Ultimately, both Western and non-Western Orientalisms presuppose a static and essential opposition between East and West; yet both are produced

<sup>118</sup> Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans*, 58.

by—and are an attempt to overcome—a crisis in this static opposition created by the same dynamic colonial encounter.

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**Ussama Makdisi** is an associate professor in the Department of History at Rice University. He is the author of *Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (2000) and several articles, including “Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity,” *AHR* 102 (June 1997): 680–713. His major fields of interest are Ottoman Arab history and American missionary history. He is currently working on a comparative history of American and Ottoman understandings of tolerance, through a case study of the death of the first Arab convert to Protestantism in the early nineteenth century.