

LEVANTINES  
*OF*  
THE OTTOMAN WORLD

COMMUNITIES, IDENTITIES, AND CULTURES



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**Levantines of the Ottoman World**  
**Communities, Identities, and Cultures**

Editors  
Erik Blackthorne-O'Barr  
Burhan Çağlar

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Burhan Çağlar



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## Erik Blackthorne-O'Barr

Erik Blackthorne-O'Barr is a doctoral candidate in the Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies department at Columbia University in New York. Before coming to Columbia, he completed a master's degree in Turkish Studies at Sabancı University in Istanbul, and a bachelor's degree in the Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations department at the University of Toronto. His current research focuses on representations of Iran and the Persian language in late Ottoman literature, as well as how these representations influenced the later project of Turkish language reform. His most recent publications include "Passing as Persian: Alterity and Desire in Ahmed Midhat Efendi's *Dürdâne Hanım*," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 8, no. 2 (Spring 2022); and "The City, the Sea, and the Subaltern: The Urban Subcultures of Galata and Piraeus, 1880-1930," in *Spectacle, Entertainment, and Recreation in the Modernizing Ottoman Empire and Republican Turkey*, eds. Seda Kula Say and Nilay Karaca (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2023).

## Burhan Çağlar

Burhan Çağlar earned his bachelor's degree from Istanbul University's Faculty of Literature in 2010. Subsequently, he attended the Academic English Program at the University of Alberta followed by an M.A. in Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Manitoba. In 2013, he undertook a year-long Persian language immersion course at Tehran University. He further pursued an M.A. in Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto, spanning from 2014 and 2016. Presently, he is a post-graduate researcher at Brunel University London and a Ph.D. candidate in History at Sakarya University, where he also serves as a research assistant. His research primarily focuses on late Ottoman political, social, and legal history, with a particular emphasis on the Hamidian era. He delves into prosopographical and biographical studies, media and press history, and public administrations. He publishes a semi-annual, open-access, academic journal, "*Kadim*" in the field of Ottoman Studies.

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## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

The abbreviations and acronyms below have been used in the book:

ACCIM	Archives de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille (Archive of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Marseille)
ADBR	Archives Departementales Bouches du Rhône (Departmental Archive of Bouches-du-Rhône)
A.DVN.MKL.	Sadaret Divan Mukavelenameler (Council of Ministers Contracts)
AFL	Archives de l'Association French Lines (Association of French Lines Archive)
A.MTZ.	Sadaret Eyalet-i Mümtaze Bulgaristan Evrakı (Prime Ministry's Special Province of Bulgaria Documents)
ANF	Archives Nationales de France (National Archives of France)
ASV	Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Historical-Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
ASTO.	Archivio di Stato di Torino (State Archive of Turin)
BOA.	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri (Prime Ministry Ottoman Archives)
HR.TO.	Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası Evrakı (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Translation Office Documents)
İ. HR.	İrade-i Hümayun (Imperial Decrees)
Y. PRK.	Yıldız Perakende Katıplığı (Yıldız Palace Miscellaneous Papers Clerk's Office)
BT.	Records of the Board of Trade and of Successor and Related Bodies
CADN.	Centre d'Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes (Center for Diplomatic Archives in Nantes)
DH.MUI.	Dosya Hâl Müzekker İcmâlatı (Case Status Summary Compilation)
ed.	Editor
eds.	Editors

no.	Number
FM.	Fonds Marcopoli (Marcopoli Archives)
FO.	Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records
HR.H.	Hariciye Nezareti Hukuk Kısımı (Collection of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Law Department)
HR.MKT.	Hariciye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi Tahrirat (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Letter Office Records)
HR.SYS.	Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Political Division)
IAM.	Ιστορικό Αρχείο Μακεδονίας (Historical Archive of Macedonia)
Ibid.	Ibidem (in the same place)
LH.	Archives Nationales de France, Legion d'Honneur (National Archives of France, Legion of Honor)
MMSH.	Maison méditerranéenne des sciences de l'homme (Mediterranean House for Human Sciences)
no.	Number
NZD.	Nezâret-i Zâbita Defteri (Office of the Inspectorate Register)
Ph.D. diss.	Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation
RAS.	Revue archéologique syrienne (Syrian Archaeological Review)
Ş.D.	Şura-yı Devlet Evrakı (Council of State Documents)
STM.	Commercial Court of Thessaloniki (Commercial Court of Thessaloniki)
TNA.	The National Archives of the UK
A. DVNSNMH.d.	Divan-ı Nezâret-i Sâbıkanın Mühimme Defterleri (Council of Ministers' Former Records, Important Registers)
FP.	Fonds Poche (Poche Archives)
HR. SFR.3	Hariciye Nezareti Londra Sefareti (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, London Embassy's records)
ASV	Archivio Segretto Vaticano (Vatican Secret Archives)
ASDMAE	Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (Historical-Diplomatic Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

*This book is dedicated to  
Servinaz Vivian and Hatice Beyza,  
who have just begun their journey in life.  
May every step you take be filled with love,  
happiness, and success.*

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Ella FRATANTUONO, Department of History, University of North Carolina, Charlotte (United States)

Hale YILMAZ, Department of Art and Art History, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale (United States)

Heghnar Zeitlian WATENPAUGH, Department of Art and Art History, University of California, Davis (United States)

Houssine ALLOUL, Department of History, University of Amsterdam (Netherlands)

Milena B. METHODIEVA, Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations, University of Toronto (Canada)

Ömer Faruk CAN, Department of History, Sakarya University (Turkey)

Roger A. DEAL, Department of History, University of South Carolina, Aiken (United States)

Sakis GEKAS, Department of History, York University (Canada)

Vjeran KURSAR, Department of History & Department of Hungarian, Turkish and Judaic Studies, University of Zagreb (Croatia)

York A. NORMAN, Department of History and Social Studies Education, Buffalo State University (United States)

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# FROM COMPRADORS TO COSMOPOLITANS: HISTORIOGRAPHIC CURRENTS IN CONTEMPORARY LEVANTINE STUDIES

Erik Blackthorne-O'Barr\*

## Introduction

All fields of history, to a certain extent, must deal with the slipperiness of their supposed subject matter; the fuzzy boundaries and tangled webs of affiliation, influence and relation that make any definite historical categorization or periodization difficult, if not ultimately untenable. Yet in recent decades the emergent field of Levantine Studies has — perhaps more than most — centered itself around such difficulties. When we read the newest work in the field, we often encounter the same recurring questions: Who were, and are, the Levantines? What constitutes the Levant — both for our purposes, and in their eyes? Does the practice of Levantine Studies entail a certain temporal and analytical framework, or are we instead speaking of something more diffuse, a kind of aesthetic mode or relation to a space, an imaginary, and a possibility? Perhaps most intriguingly, from my perspective: are we interested in exploring a Levantine past, a Levantine present, or some potential Levantine future?

Our analytical terminology generally reflects this sense of indeterminacy. The Levantine subject, we write, is transimperial, transnational, transcultural, yet also inextricably intertwined with the shifting political and legal regimes of empire and the nation-state.<sup>1</sup> She is a privileged

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\* Ph.D. Candidate at Columbia University, USA. Email: eab2255@columbia.edu, ORCID: 0000-0002-8423-4829. doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384865

1 See, most notably, Natalie E. Rothman, *Brokering Empire: Trans-imperial Subjects between Venice and Istanbul* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 2012), 211–247.

figure in certain respects — she is rarely termed a “subaltern,” for instance<sup>2</sup> — yet is often described instead as “liminal,” “marginal,” or even “peripheral.”<sup>3</sup> She is normatively Christian in faith and background, but not necessarily so; she usually speaks a “European” language like French, Italian, Spanish, Mediterranean Lingua Franca, English or German, but this is hardly unique to her, nor is this always the case either.

The term Levant itself is likewise “suitably ambiguous:” it may sometimes refer broadly to the Eastern Mediterranean, to the coastal regions of the Ottoman Empire, or act as an equivalent to Greater Syria and the Arabic *al-Shām*. Other times, it refers to a network of ports and seaside cities ranging from Trieste to Tunis, with Thessaloniki, Istanbul, Izmir, Beirut, and Alexandria as central nodes, or to a kind of vague geographic and cultural phantasm which overlapped with, and yet was still distinct from, the notion of “the Orient.” As historian Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal aptly concludes, “thus, the abstract land of the Levant was populated by the equally uncategorizable Levantine.”<sup>4</sup> Indeed, in the end, the most mutually agreeable definition may be the one presented in Philip Mansel’s 2011 book, *Levant: Splendor and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean*, which suggests that, ultimately, “the Levant is an area, a dialogue and a quest.”<sup>5</sup>

The continual vagueness of these terms could, for some historians, be seen as a cause for despair. Yet for my part, it is above all what I find perpetually fascinating and intellectually productive about the field. If the methodological and conceptual turnover of “total histories,” “world systems,”

2 For one counterexample, see Gert Huskens, “Jean Eid (1819–1878): From Levantine Dragoman to Godfather of a Belgian-Egyptian Dynasty,” *International Journal for History, Culture and Modernity* 10, no. 1–4 (2023): 37–61. For the somewhat analogous notions of Levantine “undesirables” and “vulgar cosmopolitanism,” see Edhem Eldem, “The Undesirables of Smyrna, 1926,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 223–227; and Will Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality: Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

3 For a detailed discussion of the historiographic use of these terms, see Malte Fuhrmann, “Down and Out on the Quays of İzmir: ‘European’ Musicians, Innkeepers, and Prostitutes in the Ottoman Port-cities,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 169–185.

4 Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal, *Britain’s Levantine Empire, 1914–1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 6.

5 Philip Mansel, *Levant: Splendor and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 1.

“cosmopolitanisms,” “convivialities,” “globalities,” “borderlands,” “crossed histories,” “entanglements,” and “encounters” suggests a certain trend-following aspect to Levantine Studies. Nevertheless, it also testifies to its polymorphous interest in the developments of other disciplines, and its adaptability and versatility in applying new historical tools to address its foundational questions. In fact, there is little sclerotic about this field, which is surprising given how much of its writing is deeply melancholic in tone and suffused with a certain type of nostalgia. Of course, this productive churn is not without its drawbacks. The historian Malte Fuhrmann, for example, argues in his latest book on the Levantine world that the fascination of contemporary scholars with exploring novel conceptual frameworks has led to the abandonment of any effort at establishing a cohesive broader narrative, and any attempt to understand Levantine Studies as a source, rather than a mere receptacle, of historical theory. As he asks, “have we simply given up on the synthesis, preferring comfortable areas where the degree of specialization is so high few will ever rise to challenge our claims?”<sup>6</sup>

Alongside this, there is a recurrent criticism that scholars in Levantine Studies are prone to borrowing concepts from other fields without fully recognizing their more general implications, or their use in their original context.<sup>7</sup> This was a critique which especially dogged the notion of “cosmopolitanism,” a once-dominant framework which now appears relegated — and rightfully so, in my opinion — to the same deprecated status as “the Islamic city” or Ottoman “decline.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, we should also critically interrogate the reasons by which we, as historians, seem to cherish the ideals of cohesion and synthesis, as well as an authentic and context-specific use of theoretical terms. After all, we are dealing with subjects which we continuously proclaim defy any ready-made analytical system in their multiplicity

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6 Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 18.

7 For the most notable instance of this critique, see Will Hanley, “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies,” *History Compass* 6 (May 2008): 1346–1367.

8 See, for example, Janet L. Abu-Lughod, “The Islamic City--Historic Myth, Islamic Essence, and Contemporary Relevance,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 19, no. 2 (1987): 155–176; Dana Sajdi, “‘Decline’ and its Discontents and Ottoman Cultural History: By Way of Introduction,” in *Ottoman Tulips, Ottoman Coffee: Leisure and Lifestyles in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Dana Sajdi (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 1–40.

and multifariousness; perhaps, in this case, a certain conscious eclecticism is warranted. But there is also the issue that — as I will briefly argue below — the terms of the field's previously dominant syntheses can quite readily be tied to the political exigencies of the historian's present, rather than marking the unfolding of a process of achieving greater and greater historical precision. Indeed, it was quite common in the works of the last decade to conclude, with great expectation, that the Levantines of the future were to be the worldly, mobile, and culturally cosmopolitan citizens of global centers such as New York, London, Paris, Tokyo, Istanbul, and Dubai.<sup>9</sup> The fact that in most cases these academics were describing their own particular class affiliation was left unsaid.

It is in this light that the present volume, entitled *Levantine of the Ottoman World: Communities, Identities, and Cultures*, does not insist upon a singular narrative, vision, or set of terms. Nor does it claim that the articles included in this volume comprise a cohesive new trend or turn in Levantine Studies. Rather, it presents the latest research from scholars in the field in all of their analytical multiplicity and conceptual heterogeneity, with approaches ranging from social history to urban studies, and from event history to critical biography. In our role as editors, Burhan Çağlar and I have attempted above all to represent a diversity of perspectives, subject matter, and historical approaches amongst the contributing scholars. It is our hope that in this way this volume may be both contemporary, and yet not bound to any particular contemporary viewpoint; instead of advancing a singular historiographic narrative, we aim to reflect the variety of Levantine pasts, Levantine presents, and possible Levantine futures.

Yet it is still important to contextualize this volume, and the moment of its composition, within the broader historiography of Levantine Studies. In addition to the particular literature reviews contained within each article, then, in the rest of this introduction I also wish to offer a short meta history of the contemporary field, and the seminal role of compilations like this one in shaping its direction and serving as crucial spaces of self-reflection and critique. Following this, I will introduce the articles contained

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9 See Biray Kolluoğlu and Meltem Toksöz, eds. *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 4; Mansel, *Levant*, 356.

within this volume and outline their respective approaches and themes, which we have divided into the three general sections of “Communities,” “Identities,” and “Biographies.” Ultimately, we hope that *Levantines of the Ottoman World: Communities, Identities, and Cultures* will prove both an exciting and thought-provoking contribution to this ever-evolving field.

### From Compradors to Cosmopolitans (and Back Again)

In a 2009 review of the state of the field, the historian Sakis Gekas noted the “two analytical paths that have so far defined the research paradigm of the history of Eastern Mediterranean ports during the long nineteenth century: world-system analysis and cosmopolitanism.”<sup>10</sup> Although there is some overlap between these approaches, in general the era of the former is considered to span from the 1970s until early 1990s, and the latter prevailed from the mid-1990s until the mid-2010s. Although we are now much removed from that point in time, the influence of these two paradigms continues to persist. Indeed, in current literature, we even may detect a certain wistfulness for those eras and the striking, if brittle, claims that were presented then.<sup>11</sup> Already, in 2009, the analytical fragility of the cosmopolitan paradigm was becoming apparent. Today — with the resurgence of revanchist nationalism and great power politics, alongside the worsening problems of massive economic inequality, epidemic disease, and apocalyptic climate crisis — it would be impossible to take seriously some of the utopian claims made only a decade ago. Perhaps a historian a decade from now will rebuke us for our own pessimism — certainly I hope so! Yet our current skepticism towards such paradigms must read in light of the apparent (though hardly given) failure of their broadly emancipatory visions.

To be sure, the role of the Levantines within the political project of the world-system theorists was almost exactly inverse that of the later theorists of cosmopolitanism, even though both paradigms shared a vast number of

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10 Sakis Gekas, “Class and Cosmopolitanism: The Historiographical Fortunes of Merchants in Eastern Mediterranean Ports,” *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 96.

11 As Malte Fuhrmann writes in his most recent book, “One must also concede that the world system theoreticians are the school that remains superior in contextualizing the Eastern Mediterranean in an entangled world.” See Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean*, 14–15.

themes and concerns. Within world-system theory, the Levantines were regarded as a particular and contingent class-effect of the capitalist penetration of the non-capitalist Ottoman economy, and as such their influence and importance was largely relegated to a specific historical period. By contrast, the abandonment of “the bourgeoisie” as an analytical category by the cosmopolitanism paradigm made it possible for the nineteenth and twentieth-century Levantines to take on a *future* historical role — a model of possible global conviviality, free from class determinism. In fact, the position of the world-system theorists already represented a considerably softened stance vis-à-vis earlier Marxist historians of the Ottoman Empire. These historians regarded the Levantines as wholly and thoroughly a comprador bourgeoisie, whose sole purpose was to be the middlemen of economic imperialism. As the Turkish Marxist theorist Doğan Avcıoğlu argued in 1968, for instance, “the class called Levantines, or ‘freshwater Franks’ among the Turkish people,” were set diametrically opposed to “the impoverished strata of the people.”<sup>12</sup> By subverting the Ottoman state through institutions like the Public Debt Administration, they served as the stooges of imperialism by thwarting an indigenous, anticolonial industrial revolution. Theorists of different Marxist tendencies, such as Behice Boran and İdris Küçükömer, largely shared the view that the Levantines were fundamentally a historical obstacle, and that their particular social identity emerged essentially out of their comprador role in the Ottoman economy.<sup>13</sup>

It would not be until the later 1970s that this rather Manichean position would be tempered by a new perspective. Marked by the publication of the first volume of Immanuel Wallerstein’s *The Modern World System* in 1974, this new approach — later termed world-system theory — drew broadly from both classical Marxism, Braudelian “total history,” and the economic structuralism of dependency theory.<sup>14</sup> The profound influence of Braudel’s works on Wallerstein already gave the Mediterranean, as both a geography and analytic, particular significance within the world-system

12 Doğan Avcıoğlu, *Türkiye’nin Düzeni* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1968), 94.

13 Behice Boran, *Türkiye ve Sosyalizm Sorunları* (İstanbul: Gün Yayınları, 1968); and İdris Küçükömer, *Düzenin Yabancılaşması* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1969).

14 See Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System: Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

paradigm. This significance was further extended in a series of seminal articles during the late 1970s and early 1980s. As early as 1976's *Emperyalizm, Azgelişmişlik ve Türkiye*, Çağlar Keyder's adoption of the "semi-periphery" category from world-system theory allowed for a much more flexible analysis of the Ottoman bourgeoisie.<sup>15</sup> The following year, Huri İslamoğlu-İnan and Keyder developed this approach into a broader methodological and ideological critique of earlier Ottoman historians such as Halil İnalcık and Bernard Lewis.<sup>16</sup> Over the subsequent years both authors, as well as İnalcık, Reşat Kasaba and Wallerstein himself, would write articles laying out a research program for incorporating the Ottoman Empire into a rigorous world-system framework.<sup>17</sup> In a 1986 article entitled "Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities and Their Bourgeoisies: Merchants, Political Projects, and Nation-States," Keyder, Kasaba, and Faruk Tabak examined port-cities like nineteenth-century Alexandria, Izmir and Beirut as "opulent and cosmopolitan outposts of the European bourgeoisie," in which the political dynamics of the post-Ottoman world were first formulated and negotiated.<sup>18</sup> Over time their perception of this cosmopolitan class morphed into outright approval, with nineteenth-century Levantine sociality seen as a forerunner of progressive ideas like urban citizenship and the "right to the city." As Keyder wrote in 2010, "port-city populations thus became agents of a modernization from-below, in a century when states in these empires were still too weak to embark on modernization-from-above."<sup>19</sup>

It is possible to theorize as to why world-systems theory became such a dominant paradigm in this field. It clearly offered a vastly more flexible and less partisan understanding of Levantine populations, and by focusing especially on the economic flows between nodes of the world system it

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15 Çağlar Keyder, *Emperyalizm, Azgelişmişlik ve Türkiye* (Istanbul: Birikim, 1976).

16 Huri İslamoğlu and Çağlar Keyder, "Agenda for Ottoman History," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 1, no. 1 (Summer 1977): 31–55.

17 See Çağlar Keyder, "Introduction," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1988): 119–123.

18 Reşat Kasaba, Çağlar Keyder, and Faruk Tabak, "Eastern Mediterranean Port Cities and Their Bourgeoisies: Merchants, Political Projects and Nation-States," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 10, no. 1 (Summer 1986), 122.

19 Çağlar Keyder "Port Cities in the Belle Epoque" in Biray Kolluoğlu and Meltem Toksöz, eds., *Cities of the Mediterranean: From the Ottomans to the Present Day* (London: Tauris, 2010), 22.

gave particular analytical importance to spaces and peoples, like Ottoman port cities and their merchant populations, that were mediums of trade and communication. At the same time, we can think of more metahistorical reasons. The previous years had been marked by bitter disputes between the Marxist/Maoist and Braudelian schools of Ottoman history. World-system theory offered a means of methodologically and ideologically synthesizing these opposing strands into a rigorous and coherent framework. Moreover, it largely deemphasized political praxis in favor of *longue durée* systemic analysis, an important consideration during the fraught post-1980 era.<sup>20</sup> It has since come under rather sustained critique, on a number of grounds. It has been argued, for example, that world-system theory ignored the agency of peripheral populations and construed them as wholly reactive to European capital. It also assumed an unproblematic distinction between “local” and “foreign” actors, and focused primarily on merchants as the only noteworthy class within port-cities; furthermore, tended to generalize accorded to set, unproblematized formulae (such as universally linking “cosmopolitanism” to “the bourgeoisie”) where it lacked detailed data. Nevertheless, the decline of the comprador paradigm seems to owe more to a broader shift in political climate than to its own interior contradictions and occlusions. The end of the Cold War and the rise of neoliberal internationalism during the 1990s was accompanied, for better or for worse, by a waning academic interest in class as privileged analytical category. The problems that historians could engage with suddenly changed. Now revanchist ethno-nationalism and religious fundamentalism appeared as the primary obstacles to political emancipation, rather than capital; indeed, in many cases the cosmopolitan global nomad or migrant (often phrased in Deleuzian terms) replaced the proletariat or the subaltern as the future revolutionary class.<sup>21</sup>

20 See Halil Berktaş, “The ‘Other’ Feudalism: A Critique of 20th Century Turkish Historiography and its Particularisation of Ottoman Society” (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, University of Birmingham, 1990).

21 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, for example, make explicit that their aim is to “construct an apparatus for bringing together the subject (the multitude) and the object (cosmopolitical liberation) within postmodernity,” with their work serving to unite particular struggles through a new “cosmopolitan language.” See Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000). For a more general survey of this trend in critical theory, see Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, ed. *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998).

For scholars like Robert Ilbert, whose writings on Alexandria mark a turning point between the two paradigms, Levantines and other urban populations of the Eastern Mediterranean seemed to offer a historical antidote to the contemporary violence in Yugoslavia, Palestine, the Caucasus, and other former Ottoman realms, suggesting a possible model for a future global cosmopolitan order.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the growing interest within Ottoman Studies in cultural history, microhistory, and the methodologies of new historicism encouraged a shift away from class and toward culture and cosmopolitics as more suitable topics for research.

The early 1990s were largely marked by transitional works, like those of Daniel Goffman, Elena Frangakis-Syrett, Roger Owen, and Fatma Müge Göçek, which largely extended and deepened aspects of the world-system paradigm.<sup>23</sup> But already change was afoot. In 1997, François Georgeon and Paul Dumont's edited volume *Vivre dans l'Empire Ottoman: Sociabilités et Relations Intercommunautaires (XVIIIe-XXe Siècles)* rejected the grand structures of world-system theory in favor of a micro-scaled studies that explored different communal socialities.<sup>24</sup> In 1998, a seminal conference held in Izmir entitled "Levantines or Europeans" brought to the fore questions of culture, belonging, and, to use Arus Yumul's term, "hybrid identities;" the proceedings of the event were published in 2006 as an edited volume entitled *Avrupalı mı Levanten mi?*, marking the ascendance of culture, rather than class, at the central theme of Levantine Studies.<sup>25</sup> In 1999, Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman and Bruce Masters's collected volume

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22 See Robert Ilbert and Giannakakis Ilios, eds. *Alexandrie 1860–1960. Un modle éphémère de convivialité: Communautés et identité cosmopolite*. (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992); Robert Ilbert, 'Alexandrie, Cosmopolite?' in *Villes Ottomanes a la fin de l'empire*, ed. Paul Dumont and François Georgeon (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992).

23 See Daniel Goffman, *Izmir and The Levantine World 1550-1650* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990); Elena Frangakis-Syrett, *The Commerce of Smyrna in the Eighteenth Century, 1700–1820* (Athens: Centre for Asia Minor Studies, 1992); Roger Owen, *The Middle East in The World Economy, 1800–1914* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1993); and Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

24 François Georgeon and Paul Dumont, eds. *Vivre dans l'Empire Ottoman: Sociabilités et Relations Intercommunautaires (XVIIIe-XXe Siècles)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997).

25 Arus Yumul, "Melez Kimlikleri," in *Avrupalı mı Levanten mi?*, ed. Arus Yumul and Fahri Dikkaya (Istanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2006), 39–51.

*The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* exemplified a further shift towards detailed, comprehensive surveys of urban structure and culture. The authors included largely emphasized the contingency, rather than structural inevitability, of historical developments in the region.<sup>26</sup> Each author, in their own way, emphasized the possibility of a “new and pluralistic kind of society” that these cities once represented, but also that they carried the seeds of their own destruction: as Daniel Goffman wrote in his section on Izmir, “the city, however, also helped introduce into the [Ottoman] Empire singularly western (and ultimately fatal) notions such as nationalism, ethnicity, and racism.”<sup>27</sup> This implicit dichotomy — between Levantine cosmopolitanism and the violence and exclusionary politics of ethno-nationalism — would soon form the rhetorical core of much writing in Levantine Studies. Notable works by Hervé Georgelin, Oliver Schmitt, Mark Mazower, and Philip Mansel to varying degrees made this theme explicit, with the lost cosmopolitanism and intellectual vibrancy of Levantine cities like Izmir, Thessaloniki, Alexandria, and Beirut set against the violence and expulsions which would befall them in the era of the nation-state.<sup>28</sup> Already there were murmurs of dissatisfaction with the archly normative character of this framework.<sup>29</sup> Conviviality was proposed as alternative lens which, unlike cosmopolitanism, recognized that surface multiculturalism nevertheless did not exclude structures of segregation, oppression, and violence; practically speaking, however, the methodological difference between the two terms was often negligible.<sup>30</sup> With hindsight, it seems that external political events were again responsible for the collapse of the cosmopolitanism paradigm. The 2007-2008 financial

26 Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters, *The Ottoman City Between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

27 Ibid., 205, 133.

28 See Hervé Georgelin, *La fin de Smyrne: Du cosmopolitisme aux nationalismes* (Paris: CNRS, 2005); Oliver Schmitt, *Levantiner: Lebenswelten und Identitäten einer ethnokonfessionellen Gruppe im osmanischen Reich im “langen 19. Jahrhundert”* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2005); Mark Mazower, *Salonica: City of Ghosts* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005); Philip Mansel, *Levant*.

29 Henk Driessen, “Mediterranean Port Cities: Cosmopolitanism Reconsidered,” *History and Anthropology* 16, no. 1, (2005): 129–141.

30 See, for example, Ulrike Freitag, “‘Cosmopolitanism’ and ‘Conviviality’? Some Conceptual Considerations Concerning the Late Ottoman Empire,” *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 17, 4 (2013): 375–391.

collapse, the Eurozone crisis, and the outbreak of the Arab Spring revolutions each seemed to belie the idea that the world was inexorably moving towards a liberal, entrepreneurial cosmopolitan order, and redirected scholarly attention back to questions of class, subalternity, and economic imperialism. During this period, Will Hanley, Edhem Eldem, Malte Fuhrmann and Julia Clancy-Smith each turned towards the study of Levantine “undesirables” and “vulgar cosmopolitans” rather than the classic figures of merchants, diplomats and bureaucrats.<sup>31</sup> Hanley’s 2008 article “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies,” in particular, vociferously attacked the elitism, classism, and nostalgic frame of the cosmopolitanism paradigm, concluding that “this field of writing amplifies the experience of a tiny group of elites and broadcasts it across the whole of a heterogeneous social past.”<sup>32</sup> In the introduction to their 2010 collective volume, Biray Kolluoğlu and Meltem Toksöz expressed a desire to preserve the analytic of cosmopolitanism, but argued strongly for the necessity of “decolonizing the concept from the imaginary of the nation-state and European hegemony.”<sup>33</sup> In 2013, Edhem Eldem further argued that if Levantine cosmopolitanism did indeed exist, it was an extremely marginal, elite phenomenon, which flourished only for the “first three or four years that followed the Young Turk revolution of 1908.”<sup>34</sup> That same year, Hala Halim’s *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive* exposed both Ilbert and Mansel’s works as reproducing a colonialist mindset in which a secular European cosmopolitanism must be defended against “barbarism reinscribed as an encroaching Islam, as the menace of Islamism.”<sup>35</sup> The strong return of class as an analytic can be seen in the work of K. Mehmet Kentel, whose writings on the notion of “cosmopolitan Pera” emphasize the “role of exclusion as a constitutive

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31 Will Hanley, “Foreignness and Localness in Alexandria, 1880–1914” (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 2007); Edhem Eldem, “The Undesirables of Smyrna, 1926;” and Julia Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration c.1800–1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2012).

32 Will Hanley, “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies,” 1352.

33 Biray Kolluoğlu and Meltem Toksöz, eds. *Cities of the Mediterranean*, 5.

34 Edhem Eldem, “Istanbul as a Cosmopolitan City: Myths and Realities,” in *A Companion to Diaspora and Transnationalism*, ed. Ato Quayson and Girish Daswani (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013), 224.

35 Hala Halim, *Alexandrian Cosmopolitanism: An Archive* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 51.

principle” in the construction of putatively cosmopolitan spaces.<sup>36</sup> Finally, recent years have seen a clear resurgence of interest in the mechanics of empire, as part of the so-called “imperial turn” in history, as well as how the figure of the “nationless Levantine” served as both a racial marker and a source of racial anxiety within European colonial discourse.<sup>37</sup>

Research in the wake of the cosmopolitanism paradigm has been characterized by a diversity of methods and areas of focus. Some scholars have been inspired by the neo-Braudelian return to the Mediterranean as a unit of analysis, exemplified by the writings of Peregrine Holden and Nicolas Purcell, or by the promise of rapidly consolidating maritime fields such as Indian Ocean Studies.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, some of the most important scholarship of the past few years has brought conceptual frameworks from Black Studies and contemporary critical theory to the history of the African diaspora in the Mediterranean, challenging the Eurocentric exclusions and normative assumptions that continue to structure both Mediterranean and Ottoman Studies.<sup>39</sup> Other recent works by Noel Malcolm and E. Natalie Rothman have focused instead on tracing the epistemological legacies of Levantine actors within disparate fields of knowledge, including early modern political philosophy, philology, and Orientalism.<sup>40</sup> Finally, the “biographical turn”

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36 K. Mehmet Kentel, “Caricaturizing “Cosmopolitan” Pera: Play, Critique, and Absence in Yusuf Franko’s Caricatures, 1884–1896,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 29.

37 See Daniel-Joseph MacArthur-Seal, *Britain’s Levantine Empire*; Ozan Özavcı, *Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798-1864* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2021); Jonathan Parry, *Promised Lands: The British and the Ottoman Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2022).

38 See Peregrine Holden and Nicolas Purcell, *The Corrupting Sea: A Study of Mediterranean History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2000). For a provocative example of Ottoman Indian Ocean Studies, see Giancarlo Casale, *The Ottoman Age of Exploration* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

39 See, for example, Eve M. Troutt Powell, *Tell This in My Memory: Stories of Enslavement From Egypt, Sudan, and the Ottoman Empire* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2012); SA Smythe, “The Black Mediterranean and the Politics of the Imagination,” *Middle East Report*, no. 286 (2018): 3–9; M’hamed Oualdi, *A Slave Between Empires: A Transimperial History of North Africa* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020); Zavier Wingham, “Arap Bacı’nın Ara Muhaveresi: Under the Shadow of the Ottoman Empire and Its Study,” *YILLIK: Annual of Istanbul Studies* 3 (2021): 177–183; Mostafa Minawi, *Losing Istanbul: Arab-Ottoman Imperialists and the End of Empire* (Redwood City: Stanford University Press, 2022).

40 See Noel Malcolm, *Useful Enemies: Islam and the Ottoman Empire in Western Political*

in history has led to the publication of many formerly obscure memoirs and accounts that testify to the complexity and particularity of Levantine identities and communities.<sup>41</sup> Each way appears to offer a different direction for the field: a return to asking big questions about “modernity,” for instance, or else increasingly engage in micro-scaled studies of individual life-narratives. Is it possible to account for this multiplicity within Levantine Studies by looking, again, towards the influence of external events?

To be sure, certain trends seem to have clear proximate causes. Although in many cases pre-dating the outbreak of COVID-19, it is undeniable that the surging academic interest in epidemics, regimes of quarantine, and the medical institutions of the nineteenth-century Mediterranean owes much to experiences of the global pandemic.<sup>42</sup> At the same time, the general diversity of methods and frameworks could be said to reflect the more foundational political uncertainties of our present moment. To be sure, every generation likely imagines itself standing on the edge of a historic precipice. Yet in contrast to the paradigms of both the world-system and cosmopolitanism, today’s scholars lack any credible notion of an “end of history” which would coalesce our efforts along a certain set of questions and values. Is our great crisis the ongoing climate emergency? In that case, K. Mehmet Kentel’s efforts to think through the “environmental and material foundations that give ways to ideas of cosmopolitan lifestyles” could turn Levantine Studies into a vehicle for a broader conceptual critique.<sup>43</sup> Is

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*Thought, 1450-1750* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); E. Natalie Rothman, *The Dragoman Renaissance: Diplomatic Interpreters and the Routes of Orientalism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2021).

- 41 For a general overview, see Hans Renders, Binne de Haan, and Jonne Harmsma, eds. *The Biographical Turn: Lives in History* (London: Routledge, 2016); for an example within Levantine Studies, see Christoph Herzog and Richard Wittmann, eds. *Istanbul - Kushta - Constantinople: Narratives of Identity in the Ottoman Capital, 1830-1930* (New York: Routledge, 2018).
- 42 Shana Minkin, *Imperial Bodies: Empire and Death in Alexandria, Egypt* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2019); Alex Chase-Levenson, *The Yellow Flag: Quarantine and the British Mediterranean World, 1780-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020); Nükhet Varlık, “The Plague that Never Left: Restoring the Second Pandemic to Ottoman and Turkish History in the Time of COVID-19,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 63 (Nov 2020): 176-189.
- 43 K. Mehmet Kentel, “Assembling ‘Cosmopolitan’ Pera: An Infrastructural History of Late Ottoman Istanbul” (Unpublished Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 2018), 241.

it the return of great power politics? Then we would do well to emphasize the imperial turn in our field, and to trace out the geographic and economic reverberations of early modern and modern imperialism in our present moment. Perhaps we face these, and many other crises, all at once — what has been termed our current “polycrisis.” In that case, perhaps what appears at first glance to be this field’s lack of methodological and conceptual synthesis is precisely the correct and necessary response, if Levantine Studies is indeed to remain relevant to the concerns and questions of our time.

### **The Present Volume**

As may be evident from this brief literature review, collective volumes have played a crucial role in the definition and evolution of the field. In addition to bringing together a wealth of scholarship and research, these volumes often have been read, retrospectively, as turning points in the direction of Levantine Studies, marking the retreat of one historiographic current and the foretelling the rise of another. Indeed, in a field as potentially vast and disperse as this one, collective volumes offer an invaluable space for emphasizing scholarly collaboration, networks of influence and citation, and shared interests between researchers of different backgrounds and perspectives. We hope, above all, that this present volume reflects this collaborative spirit. Although we have highlighted a diversity of subjects and methods within this introduction, in our role as editors we have also attempted to identify threads of connections and similar concerns between the volume’s contributing scholars. In this regard, we have divided the chapters below into three general sections, each united by certain common themes.

The first section, “Communities,” encompasses those contributions which read to us as focusing on the how social networks and ties of affiliation emerge and are consolidated. The articles in this section explore how shared states of precarity, marginality, and criminality, as well as experiences of common risk and loss, served to constitute Levantines as communities beyond the typical markers of affiliation like ethnos, religion, or language. In his chapter entitled “Marginality and Boundary-making among Latins of 19th-century Ottoman Istanbul,” Gabriel Doyle critiques the general trend within Levantine Studies to focus upon the elite strata, by instead emphasizing the “boundary-marking” role of precarious and impoverished

Catholic Levantines within Istanbul's urban fabric. Although their faith entailed a shared framework of certain values, relations of charity and patronage, and communal spaces of socialization, the internal diversity of this population and the extremes of inequality and economic stability between them necessitated a delicate balancing act among Catholic institutions: he notes how populations such as Istanbulite Maltese and Croats were stigmatized as criminals but, as a consequence of their stigmatization, also received disproportionate efforts to incorporate them into a broader Catholic community. As Doyle writes, "in Istanbul, 'Levantines' were less members of a static community and more part of a plural configuration subject to negotiations and alterations on the ground."

In the second chapter, "Mediterranean Criminal Networks: Diplomacy and Illicit Connections Between Constantinople and the Italian Peninsula (1856-1861)," Giorgio Ennas extends this interest in Levantine marginality and criminality by focusing on how efforts to combat international organized crime served to develop political, diplomatic, and legal relations between the Ottoman Empire, the states of the Italian Peninsula, and other governments around the world. As Ennas writes, "criminal activities effectively played a fundamental role in the Ottoman decision to increase its diplomatic relations with other countries;" in particular, the proliferation of counterfeit paper money by Italo-Levantine networks had long-ranging institutional consequences far beyond the initial impact of the crime itself. If the history of Levantine diplomacy has, all too often, focused exclusively on the realm of the elite, Ennas's analysis instead brings together both underclass Levantines and the networks of diplomats, lawyers and police who worked to combat their illicit activities.

Lastly, Joanna Hyslop's "Dilemma and Risk among Smyrna's British Levantine Community: September-November 1922" takes a micro-scale view of perceptions of physical, legal, and financial risk and uncertainty among the British community of Izmir, both during and following the catastrophic burning of the city in September 1922. Combining court and consular records, memoirs, and personal narratives, Hyslop explores the oft-forgotten personal choices and quotidian legal ramifications of extralegal violence: should one abandon one's posting, colleagues, and responsibilities in the face of imminent disaster? Can one truly recover damages for

losses in the wake of massacre? The pertinence of these questions to our present day are, unfortunately, all too clear.

The second section, “Identities,” brings together contributions that analyze processes of self-fashioning and self-description, each within the social structure of a particular Levantine city: Aleppo, Izmir, and Thessaloniki, respectively. In each case, the authors analyze how the changing political and economic fortunes of their resident cities affected their subject’s modes of identification and sense of belonging, including into the era of the nation-state. In the fourth chapter of this volume, “The Levantines of Aleppo City and Countryside: Changing Aspects of Identity and Belonging Among a Foreign Elite in 19th-century Syria,” Mafalda Ade uses a wealth of archival documents, narratives, and photographic evidence to trace the generational histories of two prominent Levantine families, the Poches and the Marcopolis, in Ottoman Aleppo. While seeking to maintain sentimental and familial ties to Europe, these two families also deeply integrated themselves into Syrian Arab culture and the particular urban fabric of Aleppo: as Ade argues, “the very success of families such as the Poches and the Marcopolis essentially depended on how they were able to juggle their foreign identity and their increasingly close association with the city and its hinterland.”

In the fifth chapter, entitled “The Smyrna Mail and the Construction of British Levantine Identity in Ottoman Izmir (1862-1864),” Alexandra Solovyev examines how local media cultures and press institutions — in this case, the English-language newspaper *The Smyrna Mail* — could serve to catalyze and consolidate communal identities in ways perhaps reminiscent of Benedict Anderson’s elucidation of “print capitalism.” As Solovyev argues, *The Smyrna Mail* attempted to balance upholding its original affiliation with Great Britain with the particular interests of its community, resulting in strategic rhetoric that at times constituted British Levantines as a separate national body politic. Using the notion of “British nationalisms,” Solovyev thus complicates our already rather multifarious understanding of the forms of national affiliation expressed among Levantine peoples.

In the sixth chapter, “International Elites in Ottoman Salonica: The Commercial and Diplomatic Portfolios of the Hadjilazaro Family,” Kaleb

Herman Adney explores both the extensive business enterprises and the sociopolitical entanglements of the Greek Orthodox Hadjilazaro family in late Ottoman Thessaloniki, focusing on the ways in which their extended investments and ties of personal relations made them indispensable within the economic structure of the city. Critiquing both narrow definitions of Levantine identity and conceptual holdovers from the old comprador paradigm, Adney ultimately concludes that “Salonica offers a significant challenge to the terminology of Levantine,” and that “far from demonstrating that capital accumulation was exogenous to Europe, these examples reiterate that European networks and Ottoman institutions alike were crucial aspects of Levantine entrepreneurial success in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.”

The last section, “Biographies,” includes works which evince the influence of the recent “biographical turn” in history, with a strong emphasis on the micro-scaled study of individual lives and a methodological focus on the broader historiographic and theoretical implications of their particular perspectives and narratives. For the nineteenth-century in particular, the wealth of available historical material — including consular, court and police records, business reports and ledgers, memoirs, letters, telegrams, press reports, paintings, photographs, and material culture — make the turn to biography as a critical method especially rewarding; such sources allow us, in some way, to understand the daily complexities of Levantine life, as well as counterbalance the top-down theoretical models that have hitherto held sway within our field. Each of the three chapters within this section focuses on a particular figure, as well as the institutions with which they were associated: *The Levant Herald* newspaper, the Messageries Maritimes shipping company, and the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey. In the seventh chapter, entitled “Pen and Politics: The Intellectual Legacies of Two Levantine Journalists” Burhan Çağlar explores the cultural and intellectual world of James McCoan and Edgar Whitaker, who were editors-in-chief of the long-running Istanbul-based *Levant Herald*. Despite the complex and sometimes conflicting relationship they had with the Ottoman state, Çağlar examines the literary contributions of these Levantine journalists, including their journalism, books, booklets, and translations; further, he analyzes their political stances, and how they navigated between the competing

demands of the British government, its multiple readerships, and the Sublime Porte, whilst at the same time managing to craft the paper into a strong journalistic and intellectual force within the Ottoman capital.

The eighth chapter by Süleyman Uygun and Hakan Güngör, entitled “Levantine Prince of Izmir: Charles Salzani (1825-1916),” focuses on a notable character in the history of Izmir, and the changing affiliations which marked his family’s rise within the social structure of the city. Although Italian in background, the Salzanis arduously acquired French citizenship and subsequently became deeply involved in a network of French institutions within Izmir, without fully losing sense of their Italian heritage. Uygun and Güngör thus emphasize the importance of marriage ties, commercial relations, and flexible regimes of citizenship and legal responsibility in the consolidation of Levantine communities in the Ottoman world.

In the final chapter of this volume, entitled “The Whittall Family and the Making of British Commercial Interests in the Ottoman Empire,” Semih Gökatalay explores the critical role of British Levantine William Whittall in the foundation of the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey, and the connected rise to prominence of both his family and the Chamber over the final decades of the nineteenth-century and the start of the twentieth. Although supported by British interests abroad, the Chamber was forced to deal with indifference from London, hostility in Istanbul, and the rapid political shifts which accompanied the transition from Empire to Republic. Ultimately, Gökatalay highlights — as do Çağlar, and Uygun and Güngör — that a sense of adaptability was deeply woven into the fabric of Levantine life.

Of course, it is evident that the order of these sections could have been arranged differently, as could the chapters assigned to each; we could have instead emphasized common cities — Istanbul, Izmir, and Thessaloniki, for example — or else more traditional bases of affiliation like language, religion, or ethnic background. But we hope that this arrangement brings out both what is common to these contributions, and what is unique to each scholar and their particular analytical perspectives. We are enormously appreciative of our colleagues for sharing their recent work here, to the peer reviewers whose insightful comments and advice on each chapter were

truly invaluable, and to all those at Ibn Haldun University Press for making this present volume possible. We are deeply grateful to İhsan Fazlıoğlu, Professor of Philosophy at Istanbul Medeniyet University, for his advocacy of our volume and for putting us into contact with the team at Ibn Haldun. We would also like to extend our appreciation to Büşranur Bekman and team members Rumeysa Dobra, Şeyma Nur Yayla, and Nihat Efe Dokumacı for their diligent efforts in managing receipt of the book, orchestrating its distribution to institutions, libraries, authors, and reviewers around the world, and for their work in promoting our volume on social media. We express our sincere gratitude to Ömer Faruk Can, the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Sakarya University, as well as to the Center for Ottoman Studies (OSAMER) at Sakarya University, for their generous support throughout the process of composing this volume. Our particular thanks go to Arif Bilgin and Erkan Atak, the former and current managers of the Center. Lastly, the editors would like to thank our families and friends, who have been a source of constant encouragement, kindness, and care. All faults, of course, are the editors' own. By way of conclusion, allow me to paraphrase here Philip Mansel's famous quote: we are grateful to be able to further extend Levantine Studies as an area of research, as a dialogue among scholars and readers of all backgrounds, and as a continual quest to tackle the difficulties that have challenged, provoked, and intrigued us from the start. Who were, and are, the Levantines? What constitutes the Levant? What was the Levantine past, and what will be its future?

Kadıköy, 2023

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COMMUNITIES:  
INTERACTIONS AND IMPACTS

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## MARGINALITY AND BOUNDARY-MAKING AMONG LATINS OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY OTTOMAN ISTANBUL

Gabriel Doyle\*

In his classic 1871 urban travelogue, Edmondo de Amicis dedicates different passages on Levantines written from the point of view of a young Italian intellectual who has witnessed the unification of his country which has imperialist ambitions in the region. The most famous description insists on the language spoken by this ethno-confessional group living in Istanbul:

A language formed by mingling the Italian spoken by a Piedmontese doorkeeper, a Lombardian hack-driver, and a Romagno porter would, I think, be less outrageous than that the one spoken on the banks of the Golden Horn. It is Italian which, impure at the outset, has been mixed with four or five other languages, each impure in their turn; and the most singular part of it is that in the midst of all these barbarisms you suddenly come plump upon some such scholarly word or phrase as *puote*, *imperocche*, *a ogni pie sospiuto*, *havvi*, *puossi*, witnesses to the efforts made by some of our worthy compatriots, who by dipping into anthologies seek to preserve the celestial Tuscan speech.<sup>1</sup>

These notes by Amicis were fundamental in the construction of the image of Levantines for the recent Italian state and society up until a much later period. The figure of the Levantine speaking a ‘bastard’ *lingua franca* confirmed other stereotypes on Levantines that spread in Western descriptions of Ottoman society. The Levantines were often portrayed as ambiguous, playful, untrustworthy and particularly driven by economic profit and mundanity. In language as in business, the Levantine appeared as a jack

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\* Ph.D., Sciences Po Paris, France. Email: gab.doyle@yahoo.fr,  
ORCID: 0009-0000-9970-4822. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384863](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384863)

1 Edmondo de Amicis, *Constantinople*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Henry T. Coates & Co, 1896). Trans. M. Hornor Landscale, Project Gutenberg electronic version.

of all trades but a master in none. Writing about a journey in Istanbul forty years after De Amicis, French writer Bertrand Bareilles reiterated these stereotypes namely of the Levantine as profit-driven and in search of social consideration.<sup>2</sup>

In other parts of De Amicis' travelogue however, the writer emphasizes other aspects of everyday life such as the socio-economic conditions in which some of these Levantines were living at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century:

The Italian colony at Constantinople, while it is one of the most numerous, is far from being the most prosperous there. It numbers among it but few rich persons, and many who are wretchedly poor, especially those who come from Southern Italy and are unable to find work.<sup>3</sup>

This short description of economic plight in the heart of Istanbul comes in contrast with some of the essential sources at hand on 'Levantine' of the Ottoman Empire, even produced by members of the so-called community itself. In his work on historical myths of *levantinity*, Alessandro Panutti underlines how the image of enriched and cosmopolitan Levantines could be reappropriated and reiterated by Levantine themselves.<sup>4</sup> In Sahid Duhani's book on Pera Levantines, studied by Panutti, Levantines are described as a group of rich merchants and in-betweeners particularly prone to the pleasures of life and contributing to the economic meltdown of the Ottoman empire thanks to the Capitulations.<sup>5</sup> Many sources reproduced a narrative according to which Ottoman Levantines either came from Latin Catholic aristocratic families of the Aegean (since the 1204 crusade) or were descendants of revolutionary heroes fleeing the Austrian repression during the *Risorgimento*. These myths have then molded historiographical trends in the study of Levantines, with a focus on major banking families for example. The recent work of Semih Sefer on two of the richest

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2 For Bareilles, the concept is used to include all non-Muslim inhabitants of Istanbul, but his book occasionally seems to only concentrate on Catholics with European heritage. Bertrand Bareilles, *Constantinople. Ses cités franques et levantines* (Paris: Bossard, 1918), 261–285.

3 De Amicis, *Constantinople*.

4 Alessandro Panutti, "Mythologie levantine," Paris, Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Web site CIRCE <http://circe.univ-paris3.fr/Alessandro%20Pannuti%20Mythologie%20levantine.pdf>, 2004.

5 Panutti refers to Saïd Duhani, *Quand Beyoglu s'appelait Péra: les temps qui ne reviendront plus* (Istanbul: La Turquie Moderne, 1956). See Panutti, "Mythologie levantine," 8.

families of the city with Levantine background, the Tubini and Lorando, is a recent illustration.<sup>6</sup> Beyond their material wealth, the two families are remembered for their real-estate operations, their philanthropic activities in the city and a series of high-interest loans to sultan Abdülhamid II, resulting in an embarrassing French military intervention on the island of Lesbos in 1901. Already in the Ottoman press of the time, these two families were portrayed as greedy moneylenders. Yet, as Malte Fuhrmann has recently noted: “The exclusive association of the Europeans of Smyrna, Salonica, and Constantinople with the haute bourgeoisie is another fallacy of later ideology and historiography that is in need of revision.”<sup>7</sup>

There are several reasons that may explain why historiography has concentrated so much on such wealthy figures of urban society, and occasionally reiterated stereotypes on Levantines, but the most fundamental one is the available sources at hand on the topic. They are not necessarily scarce but very disseminated geographically, linguistically and administratively. This is itself a result of the various nationalities, languages and religious institutions involved with ‘Levantine’ life in Istanbul, Thessaloniki, Izmir and other smaller Ottoman cities. The second fundamental aspect is that the wealthiest Levantine families of Istanbul may not have been actual aristocrats, they were most certainly what M-C. Smyrnelis has called *archival aristocrats*.<sup>8</sup> Their philanthropic activities and involvement in property-related affairs turned them into omnipresent names within the documentation. Even when previously unheard-of archives are disclosed, such as the property-related documents used by historian Zeynep Suvari, they deal mostly with the real-estate strategies of the wealthiest Levantine families of Istanbul.<sup>9</sup>

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6 Semih Sefer, *Lorandolar ve Tubiniler – Osmanlı Devleti’nde Levanten Banker Aileler ve Faaliyetleri* (Istanbul: Al Baraka, 2021).

7 Malte Fuhrmann, *Port-Cities of the Mediterranean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 302.

8 Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une société hors de soi, Identités et relations sociales à Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe siècles* (Paris-Leeuwen: Peeters, 2005), 185.

9 Z.C. Suvari, “The Italians of Istanbul between 1873-1910 and their properties: an analysis through the property petitions addressed to the Italian Consulate, 1873-1910,” in Paolo Girardelli and Ezio Godoli, eds., *Italian Architects and Builders in the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey: Design across Borders* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2017), 183-198.

These archival biases did not prevent a larger understanding of who were the 19<sup>th</sup> century Levantines, namely in the monography on Levantines this social group published in 2005 by Austrian historian O.J. Schmitt. In his work, Schmitt was able to deconstruct the many stereotypes attached to this group by including other members than the notables, namely the large population of European migrants who came to find work in Ottoman port-cities from the 1840's onwards. One of Schmitt's most fundamental achievements was to warn us regarding the scholarly use of the term 'Levantine' itself:

The term Levantine takes on different colors and seems at first inadequate for scientific needs. Levantine is an exonym for a group that nobody wanted to identify with.<sup>10</sup>

Only rarely did those of European descent living in the Ottoman Empire identify as Levantines in part because of the set of stereotypes attached to them by European observers and the surrounding Ottoman society. Still, Schmitt preferred to keep the term Levantine in his study that he defines as a social group characterized by religious denomination, Roman Catholicism, and by a legal concept: foreign protection provided by the treaties of the Capitulations. J. Hansen was one of the only historians to tackle Schmitt's work in a critical way by underlining how his use of the Levantine category as an ethno-confessional one portrayed them as if they "stood apart from — and in opposition to — the profound transformations of the Ottoman state during the 19th century."<sup>11</sup> On the contrary, Hansen focused on a family with close ties to Abdülhamid II's regime and understands Levantines through their trans-imperial trade networks. By focusing on the successful imperial and business careers of the Malhamé, Hansen sees Levantine networks within the Ottoman imperial framework and including non-Catholics. Still, this imperial and socio-economic perception of Levantines reiterates the cosmopolitan trickster figure previously mentioned while leaving aside how the majority of less fortunate Levantines saw their own identity within Ottoman society before the First World War.

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10 Oliver J. Schmitt, *Les Levantins* (Istanbul: The Isis Press, 2005), 14.

11 Jens Hansen, "Malhamé-Malfamé: Levantine Elites and Transimperial Networks on the Eve of the Young Turk Revolution," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 43, no. 1 (2011): 31.

As with other ethno-confessional categories in use in the Ottoman period, and as has warned sociologist Rogers Brubaker, the categories that define a group must be questioned before historians use them again.<sup>12</sup> One option consists in tracing the processes of self-identification through ego-documents, as has chosen M. Fuhrmann in his work on port-cities of the Eastern Mediterranean.<sup>13</sup> In this chapter, the individuals studied in this chapter travel from one Ottoman city to another but also navigate between social, confessional and national categories available to them at the time.

A second option could be to see how the Ottoman administration considered this population. Whereas Nationalist historiography has used rigid ethno-confessional categories to separate Ottoman society into clear groups that ineluctably became national realities in the post-imperial order, no clear Levantine nation came out of this social group after the fall of the Ottoman empire.<sup>14</sup> Hence, it is usually considered that because of foreign protection and the Capitulations of various European embassies, Levantines did not have any official administrative reality as a *millet* in the Ottoman empire. Yet, in Ottoman documents and in many other archives, the category of ‘Latin’ can be found when addressing Roman Catholics and their institutions in the Ottoman Empire. For example, throughout the second half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed a ‘Latin Chancellery’ (*‘Latin vekilliği’*) in Galata.<sup>15</sup> The chancellor (*vekil*) was mostly in charge of identifying who were the Ottoman Latins living in the city and sending the censuses to the imperial administration.

The idea of a local latinity was also prevalent in some self-identification discourses on Levantines by members of the group, as an attempt to

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12 This is what Rogers Brubaker calls ‘groupism:’ “the tendency to take discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded groups as basic constituents of social life, chief protagonists of social conflicts, and fundamental units of social analysis.” See Rogers Brubaker, “Ethnicity without Group,” *Archives européennes de sociologie* XLIII, 2 (2002): 164.

13 Fuhrmann, *Port-Cities of the Mediterranean*, 302–343.

14 Marc Aymes, “La communauté d’historicité. La nation à l’horizon de la confession,” *Labyrinthe* 21, no. 2 (2005): 59.

15 Gabriel Doyle, “The Latin Vekil of Istanbul: local representation, intermediary work and communal politics in the late Ottoman capital”, in Claudio Monge and Vandessa de Obaldia, eds. *Latin Catholicism in Istanbul: Property, People and Missions* (Istanbul: Isis, 2022), 84–106.

bring together various nationalities into one local identity. The best example of this attempt is the historicist work by diplomat and philologist François-Alphonse Belin: *La Latinité de Constantinople*, first published in local newspapers in 1872.<sup>16</sup> In his work, Belin draws a direct and continuous line between the 1204 arrival of Venetians in Byzantine Constantinople and the large presence of Catholic hospitals, schools, cemeteries and inhabitants in 19<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman Istanbul. Beyond this intellectual effort to historically legitimize the presence of Latin Catholicism in the city, inhabitants themselves could demonstrate similar forms of self-identification. One paramount example is the political effort to introduce “Latin representatives” in parliament after the Young Turk implementation of the constitution in 1908. Various inhabitants of Istanbul signed a petition to the Grand Vizir, instigated by the *vekil* Othon Varthaliti in which they demanded representatives in Parliament just as any other non-Muslim *millet*. As possible representatives, the petition did not mention the wealthiest families working in Galata’s financial market on which historiography has mostly concentrated. Instead, the *vekil* listed employees of concessionary companies (Joseph Valenda, César Saih) or a doctor who served the Sultan Abdülhamid II (Zannibei).<sup>17</sup> This document shows a Levantine middle-class who used petitions and imperial politics to clearly state their identification as *Ottoman Latins* and not *Cosmopolitan Levantines*.

There is finally a third option to develop new categories of analysis which is to underline what anthropologist Fredrik Barth called “boundary markers”<sup>18</sup> and “boundary maintenance”<sup>19</sup>, that is the practices that allow a group to differentiate itself from another. This is what this chapter intends to do by studying processes of inclusion and exclusion of individuals within the so-called Levantines of Istanbul. In order to trace the dynamics of community making and unmaking, this article will mostly focus on marginality. In a collective study on marginality in the Middle East,

16 Arsène De Châtel (ed.), François-Alphonse Belin, *Histoire de la Latinité de Constantinople* (Paris: A. Picard, 1894).

17 See Doyle, “The Latin *vekil* of Istanbul,” 96.

18 Fredrik Barth, “Boundaries and Connections,” in Anthony Cohen, ed., *Signifying Identities* (London: Routledge, 2000), 17–36.

19 Fredrik Barth, *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Cultural Difference* (Long Grove: Waveland Press, 1998 [1969]), 24–25.

Eugene Rogan defines the concept as “the individual non-conformity to legal or social norms,” adding however that “customary practices often play just as important a role as formal law in setting the boundaries between what is acceptable and what is marginal.”<sup>20</sup> Studying marginality and especially marginalization may help to better understand where the boundaries of latinity were set according to specific actors. In this case, sources stem mostly from religious congregations and clerical authorities which have left a rich array of documents on inhabitants of Istanbul they considered marginal. The strong inner diversity within the Latin configuration, the constant arrival of European migrants, employed or unemployed, and the constant interaction with other ethno-confessional groups have multiplied the forms of marginality that can generally be found in an ethno-confessional community. The chapter is divided into moments and places when the sources refer to groups transgressing the communal norms, also showing the geographical fragmentation of Ottoman Istanbul’s Latin configuration.

French historian Matthieu Grenet, who was attentive at these dynamics in his work on the Greek diaspora of three Mediterranean cities, came up with a definition of a community that seems also appropriate for I will now call here the ‘Latin configuration:’ “a reality that is labile, practical, relative (because situational), and perpetually reinvented and reformulated, in both an individual and collective mode.”<sup>21</sup> In Istanbul, Levantines were less members of a static community and more part of a plural configuration subject to negotiations and alterations on the ground.<sup>22</sup>

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20 Eugene Rogan, “Introduction,” in Eugene Rogan, ed., *Outside In: On the Margins of the Modern Middle East* (London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2002), 5.

21 “Une réalité labile, pratique, relative (car situationnelle), et perpétuellement réinventée et reformulée, sur un mode à la fois individuel et collectif.” See Matthieu Grenet, *La fabrique communautaire: Les Grecs à Venise, Livourne et Marseille* (Rome and Athens: École française de Rome and École française d’Athènes, 2016), 219.

22 Norbert Elias, *Qu’est-ce que la sociologie?* (Paris: Pocket, 1981), 157.

## Galata's Underworld and Ethno-linguistic Differentiation

The neighborhood of Galata held a special place in the everyday life of Roman Catholics of Istanbul, not only as a dynamic financial district but as the symbolic heart of their religious practice in the city. When the Ottomans took over Constantinople, Galata counted five major religious buildings administered by Catholic congregations, three of which were still standing as such in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the Dominican St-Peter and Paul complex, the Saint-Georges complex run by Bosnian Franciscans between 1853 and 1882, and then by Austrian Lazarists, and the Saint-Benoît complex controlled by the French Lazarists since the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Despite being the oldest Roman Catholic buildings the oldest Roman Catholic buildings of the city, all three institutions were presented in congregational sources as becoming marginal compared to the more affluent areas of Pera and Feriköy in the north of Istanbul. The main issue the three institutions had to deal with in their immediate surroundings was prostitution linked to Galata's port life. Although prostitution was prevalent in Galata since the arrival of the Ottomans, the 1860's witnessed a rise in moralizing discourses and actual attempts to get rid of the brothels. A police report of 1860 associates for example the streets adjacent to the once prestigious *Saint-Benoît* school with the problem of prostitution.<sup>23</sup> In the following years, French missionaries working in Galata regularly complained to authorities in France that they were brought to work in unhealthy environments.<sup>24</sup> Prostitution, constant fires, and stray dogs all contributed to an ill repute for the state of Istanbul's Latin Catholic heritage.

Another point of complaint was the arrival of new communities to Galata, especially immigrants from the Eastern provinces of the Habsburg Empire. The area became associated to poverty, moral decay and

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23 Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives, Ottoman Archives (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, thereafter BOA), Bâb-ı Âli Sadâret Evrâkı, Mektubi Kalemî Nezâret ve Devâir (A. MKT. NZD), 401/63, 19 February 1862 (19 Şaban 1278).

24 For example, in 1914, the Lazarists of Saint-Benoît wanted to send a letter to the French ambassador concerning the neighboring brothels, knowing that the French diplomat would not be able to do much himself. Lazaristes au Supérieur Général à Paris ACM, *Saint-Benoît*, Carton XII, Chemise 2, Doc 10/.

frowned-upon mixings of different religions and languages by church officials. The Dominicans of St-Peter and Paul started to report that they could not recognize their old neighborhood because so many Jewish immigrants had settled around them. In response, the Dominicans developed a closer relation to a specific sub-group of the Latin configuration of Istanbul: the growing number of Maltese migrants in the city. Although many families of Maltese origin benefitted from the Capitulations agreement between Britain and the Ottoman Empire to practice lucrative trade, they were also the first sub-group within the Latin configuration to be associated to poverty and criminality. For example, during a major charitable operation for Galata's impoverished population in 1863 in which the French embassy, the charitable association *Dames de Constantinople* and the Beyoğlu 6<sup>th</sup> district Municipality collaborated, most Catholic families who received help were inscribed as 'Maltese.'<sup>25</sup> The local police also associated the Maltese to criminality according to the records studied by Stefanos Yerasimos.<sup>26</sup> In Tunis during the same period, migrants from Malta were described in even more derogatory terms and for French authorities "scarcely distinguishable from the lowest rungs of native Tunisian society."<sup>27</sup> J. Clancy-Smith states that as an ethnic category, they had become "the scapegoats of the Mediterranean expatriate underworld."<sup>28</sup>

So that the church would stay relevant in an urban area marked by migration and trade acceleration, the Dominicans of St Peter and Paul decided to cater this sub-group. They for example welcomed every year a Maltese procession for *Notre-Dame du Rosaire* and often organized religious ceremonies in Maltese rather than in Italian or Latin. In 1874, the consul and orientalist Belin described 136 young Maltese men walking through Galata wearing white albs attached with a red cord and a blue cape, all members of the confraternity *Societa cattolica maltese di mutuo soccorso* in Galata.<sup>29</sup> The

25 "Noms des pauvres reçus par l'assemblée des Dames de Galata", in CADN, 166/POE, Carton 68, Dossier "Œuvres de bienfaisance."

26 Alain Borie, Pinon Pinon, and Stefanos Yerasimos, *L'occidentalisation d'Istanbul au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Rapport de recherche pour l'école d'architecture de Paris-La Défense, 1989), 23.

27 Julia Clancy-Smith, "Marginality and Migration: Europe's Social Outcasts in Pre-colonial Tunisia, 1830-81," in Eugene Rogan, ed. *Outside In*, 154.

28 *Ibid.*, 160.

29 De Châtel, *Histoire de la Latinité de Constantinople*, 403-404.

Dominicans also used the symbol of the rosary in their iconography within the church in order to stay close to the religious practices of the Maltese.<sup>30</sup> If this strategy helped the Dominicans to stay relevant in Galata, they disrupted a vision of unity within Roman Catholics of Istanbul. Various other actors preferred that all Roman Catholics of Istanbul remain under the domination of wealthy Italian speaking commercial families protected by the French embassy.

The authority that mostly felt threatened by inner divisions and the development of urban margins was the Apostolic Vicar, the highest Catholic authority in the city appointed by the Roman *Propaganda Fide*. By the 1850s, all Vicars were imported either from France or Italy (one from Belgium) and brought to Istanbul instead of picked within the local population. The strategies of these new Vicars consisted in moving away religious life from the historical center of Latin Catholicism of Galata to the northern suburb of Feriköy. After the Pera fire of 1871, the Vicar moved all his administrative headquarters in Feriköy, declared that the small Feriköy church of Saint-Esprit was from now the city's cathedral and translocated religious ceremonies to this area. The yearly Corpus Cristi procession, considered the most important celebration for the local church, led by the Vicar and the French Ambassador, had to pass in this new area of Feriköy. However, the Vicariate could not always impose its religious authority over Istanbul's fluctuating Roman Catholic population as is illustrated by local and autonomous religious celebrations in Galata led by marginal groups.

In 1872, the Belgian Vicar Joseph Pluym received for example a petition signed by 150 individuals living in Galata who proclaimed to be 'Ragusans' and who demanded the right to celebrate their protector saint 'Santo Biaggio' in Galata, in the Saint-Georges complex, rather than in the Saint-Antoine church on the *Grande Avenue de Pera*. Among the reasons for this geographical preference, the petition gives four interesting details on marginalization in the Latin configuration:

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30 Raphaëlle Ziadé, "La 'Madone de Constantinople' de l'église Saints-Pierre-et-Paul du couvent dominicain de Galata à Istanbul et son revêtement en argent représentant la Vierge au manteau," in Jacques Charles-Gaffiot and Alain Desreumaux, eds., *Grandes heures des manuscrits irakiens: une collection dominicaine inconnue de manuscrits orientaux (XIIIe-XXe siècles)* (Suresnes: Les Éditions du Net, 2015), 81.

1° Because the church of Saint George is closer to the center of the colony, which is Galata, 2° because in the latter, we, families and servants, fulfil our Christian duties in our mother tongue, 3° because we hear the word of God in the appropriate language, 4° and finally, because it is the poorest church in Constantinople and seems to us to be more sympathetic than the others.<sup>31</sup>

Those who proclaimed here to be proud Ragusans did not actually all come from the city of Dubrovnik, but rather different Slavic speaking regions that practiced Catholicism in the Balkans and under Austro-Hungarian sovereignty, especially Dalmatia. The Saint-Antoine church in which the ‘Santo Biaggio’ was celebrated was run by Italian Franciscan priests. Saint-Georges in Galata on the other hand was controlled by Bosnian Franciscans and could organize the ceremony in Slavic language. The choice of changing spaces of celebration also indicates a certain division within the Latin configuration in which linguistic, geographic and socio-economic dynamics come into play.

Just like the Maltese, Croatian immigration in 19<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul is mostly known thanks to some commercially successful families like the Zellich who ran one of the first major printing businesses of the city, starting in 1869.<sup>32</sup> Yet, in ecclesiastical sources, Croatian migrants of Istanbul were often referred to in everyday life as impoverished workers, involved in alcoholic brawls and most of all employed as imposing doorkeepers (*cavas*) or, more curiously, as henchmen in different disputes.<sup>33</sup> Thanks to the work of Vjerman Kursar, we now know more on the great number of Croatian immigrants living in 19<sup>th</sup> century Istanbul, comprising a vast majority of sailors and workers employed by the Austrian Lloyd steamships and the railway companies.<sup>34</sup>

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31 “Perche la chiesa di s giorgio e più vicina al centro della colonia ch’è Galata 2° perché in essa noi, le nostre famiglie ed i nostri domestici adempiano in lingua materna i nostri doveri di Cristiani 3° perché in essa possiamo sentire la parole di Dio nella lingua propria 4° finalmente perché è la più povera di tutte le altre chiese di Costantinopoli e sembra a noi più simpatica delle altre.” See Petition to the Apostolic Vicar in APE, *Romania e Costantinopoli*, Busta 35, 815-820.

32 Vjerman Kursar, “Carigradska tiskara “Zellich,” in *Knjizevna Smotra*, no. XLV, 173, 3 (2014), 91–110.

33 It is not uncommon to see the use of the term Croat as a threat in different disputes in Ottoman Istanbul. A priest working for the Vicariate for example threatened a journalist of sending “100 Croats” as a revenge for a scandalous article he wrote in the paper. Beyoglu Municipality to the Vicariate, 11 August 1884, in ASV, D.A.C. 1246, D.A.C., Busta 43, Fasc 159.

34 Vjerman Kursar, *Croatian Levantines in Ottoman Istanbul* (Istanbul: the Isis Press, 2022), 126–128.

Just as the Maltese, there was an overall association of Croatian immigration to misdeeds and criminality as compared to other members of the Latin configuration is very clear and can be corroborated by sources from the Ottoman authorities. At the very start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Ottoman authorities even decided to expel 49 ‘Croats’ back to the Balkans.

This petition of self-proclaimed ‘Ragusans,’ speakers of ‘Illyrian,’ is one of the rare documents in which the Istanbul Croats expressed their own subjectivity and distinction from the surrounding Roman Catholic environment. Their demand to celebrate Feast of St. Blaise had moreover strong political meaning: this celebration had been forbidden by the French and Austrians in Dalmatia until 1836.<sup>35</sup> Unsurprisingly, the petition was not well received by the Vicar who rejected this demand claiming that only 15 of the names under the petition were actual ‘Ragusans’ and that this would run the risk of creating national divisions within Istanbul Latin Catholicism: “Over time, little by little, they could change the S. George chapel into a national and parochial church of Slavons.”<sup>36</sup> This distrustful reaction by clerical authorities illustrates how the church was perceiving the inner socio-economic and linguistic diversity within the Latin configuration of Istanbul. For local congregations such as the Dominicans and the Bosnian Franciscans, playing on these linguistic differences gave them some autonomy and helped them stay relevant in a changing urban environment.

From the 1860’s onwards, Galata had become concurrently an international financial district in which commercial *hans* and ostentatious banks had been built, the laboratory for urban reform initiated by the municipality of the 6<sup>th</sup> district and the cradle of an international impoverished underworld. For many Catholic authorities, Galata still held symbolic importance, but the newly arrived immigrants had undermined its reputation. On the contrary, the northern neighborhoods of Pera and Feriköy were supposed to present a more respectable image of Roman Catholicism. As Istanbul’s population grew, many individuals included in the Latin configuration also started to settle permanently in areas outside of the

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35 Ibid., 113.

36 “Avec le temps et peu à peu on parviendrait à changer la chapelle de S. George en une église nationale et paroissiale de Slavons,” Mgr Pluym to Prop. Fide, 8 August 1871, in APF, *Romania e Costantinopoli*, Busta 35, 815–820.

Galata-Feriköy axis. Wealthy families bought property in the peripheral areas of Moda, Bakırköy and San Stefano (all close to the sea) and thanks to the development of the trainline and steamboats, started living there all year round. Other peripheral areas seemed on the other hand inhabited by less fortunate members of the Latin configuration and can thus be considered places of marginality.

### Poverty and Intermarriage in the Area of Üsküdar

In Catholic missionary sources on Istanbul, complaints about the surrounding environment to higher authorities living in Western Europe were very common. This was a way for missionaries to enhance the adventurous and endangered aspect of their work, even when it involved taking care of an elite school for the bourgeoisie, and above all to obtain more financial aid from donors. There is however definitely a difference in the way the area of Üsküdar and the Catholic families living there were described by French missionaries settling in Istanbul. In the 1850s, the Lazarist congregation opened their first parish in the hills above this neighborhood on the Asian side of the Bosphorus. On the contrary to Pera and Galata, missionaries saw no prestige in pursuing their activity in Üsküdar. The neighborhood was described as a peripheral area inhabited by a volatile Roman Catholic population in which confessional boundaries were too ambiguous.

Officially, the parish of Üsküdar only counted 142 members in 1908 as opposed to thousands or tens of thousands of Muslims, Jews, Armenians of various denomination and Rum Orthodox living in the area.<sup>37</sup> Yet in 1864, the local French priests mentioned many more supposedly 'Catholic' inhabitants of Üsküdar: "Poles, Hungarians, Italians living in isolation, six or seven Armenian Catholic families, at least two hundred and fifty Croats without counting the Albanians of which I ignore the number and who are all subjects of the Porte."<sup>38</sup> The difference in numbers between 1864 and 1908 could mean that when the official census of Catholic parishes was conducted by the Vicariate in 1908, Ottoman subjects from the Balkans and

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37 P. Méral to Mgr. Sardi, 30 January 1908, ASV, D.A.C. 1246, Busta 57, Fasc. 228, "Scutari".

38 Descamps to the French embassy, 23 January 1864, in CADN, Nantes, 166 PO/E, 614.

other nationals were not counted despite being Roman Catholic. This discrepancy recalls the ethno-linguistic boundaries that were made between Galata and Pera and between European Levantines and poorer Catholic inhabitants from the Balkans and Malta. Üsküdar was furthermore described until the 1890s as a place of economic desperation in which the only mission for congregations was charity and basic care to the poor.

One main worry for missionaries and the church that pushed them to intervene in a less dense area like Üsküdar was the belief that lower social classes were not as respectful of confessional boundaries and could lose their Roman Catholic identity by practicing intermarriage. In fact, Oliver Schmitt's careful study of the sources indicate that European workers who migrated to Izmir and Istanbul married much more outside of the confessional barriers than old families settled in the Ottoman empire for generations.<sup>39</sup> The Vicariate had initially a very tough position towards intermarriage: in 1888 Augusto Bonetti distributed an official guideline to all missionaries and priests of the city on how to prevent it.<sup>40</sup> A decade later however, authorities started to give in and authorize marriages between different Christian denominations. This new tolerance was still very much rejected by most religious clerks on the ground who felt threatened by the blurring of confessional boundaries, especially in an area like Üsküdar. For example, when the family Bicci was authorized to marry their son with a Greek-Orthodox woman in 1903, the local priest protested and claimed it would launch a massive movement towards intermarriage and that the little Roman Catholic community of Üsküdar would entirely vanish.<sup>41</sup>

Several examples of families living in Üsküdar show in fact how common it was for individuals to marry across religious denominations and how difficult it was for religious authorities to associate them to a specific religion. In 1908, the church was looking for a family to live in and guard the Üsküdar Latin Catholic cemetery and the local priest suggested a peculiar family:

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39 Schmitt, *Les Levantins*, 222.

40 "Message de Mgr. Bonetti au sujet des mariages mixtes, traduction de M. Murat," in ACM, *Saint-Benoît*, Carton XV, Chemise VI, 3/.

41 Tchilingaroff to the Apostolic Vicar, 12 July 1903, in ASV, D.A.C. 1246, Busta 57, Fasc. 228," Scutari."

They are English, the husband, the old man is Protestant, his wife also, born however of Catholic parents who are buried in this same cemetery. The children, both boys and girls, are Catholic. They live in an entirely dilapidated Turkish house that the owner is only waiting for them to leave in order to destroy it, and soon they will be obliged to find themselves on the pavement.<sup>42</sup>

Where this family is from was difficult to understand, Protestantism here could very well be what gave them British nationality or protection, while Catholicism of the children could be a result of their missionary education. Anyhow, the description of this impoverished family in which religious denomination seems very relative, and the fact that they seem fit to guard the Üsküdar Latin Catholic cemetery shows a certain ambiguity in the boundaries of what makes someone a member of the Latin configuration in Üsküdar. The cemetery that they guarded was itself an ambiguous space: in 1886 local inhabitants wrote a petition to the Vicar to complain that Ottoman authorities had not imposed a clear material separation between the Protestant and Catholic graveyards, even causing brawls between local 'Croats' and 'Protestants.'<sup>43</sup> Other testimonies highlight impoverished families from Europe who do not seem to be associated with Levantines or Latin Catholicism but who are only here for new economic opportunities:

In this parish of St. John, the Baptist lives a family almost unknown to the Catholic world, so indifferent are they to church attendance. The wife is French, the husband Italian, a violin teacher in Scutari. They are far from being rich. They have a child over 4-5 months old. A second child of 3 years old who, like the first, has not been baptized. They have always promised me to have them baptized but they keep the date from one Sunday to the next. Yesterday they told me that they are leaving for Egypt hoping to find work. It is therefore more than certain that these two poor little ones are likely to remain for a long time without baptism in a country where they will not be known so soon.<sup>44</sup>

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42 Georgian brother to the Vicariate, September 1908, in ASV, D.A.C. 1246, Busta 85, Fasc. 378.

43 Petition to the Apostolic Vicar. 12 August 1866. In ASV, D.A.C. 1246, Busta 57, Fasc. 228, "Scutari".

44 "Dans cette paroisse de S. Jean Baptiste habite une famille presque inconnue du monde catholique tant ils sont indifférents à fréquenter l'église. La femme française, le mari italien professeur de violon à Scutari. Ils sont bien loin d'être riches. Ils ont un enfant de plus de 4- 5 mois. Un second de 3 ans qui comme le premier n'a pas reçu le baptême. Ils m'ont toujours promis de les faire baptiser mais recèlent la date

The Latin configuration in Istanbul also approached these types of migrants who had little connection to the church, very limited economic capital but most of all who were particularly prone to move around and between Mediterranean cities. This mobility could also cause panic among the ecclesiastic and diplomatic institutions that were supposed to represent these marginalized migrants. Malte Fuhrmann has studied how the Austrian embassy in Istanbul perceived the massive arrival of compatriot migrants into the Ottoman Empire in search of a better life. Hamidian Istanbul, Thessaloniki and Izmir became crowded with European musicians, entertainers, sex workers whose liminality and capacity to transgress urban norms could, in the eyes of Austrian diplomats, diminish the image of a civilized European population in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>45</sup>

Documents produced by foreign missionary congregations often expressed a very similar epistemological anxiety, as formulated by Ann Laura Stoler in her research on Dutch colonial archives on Indonesia.<sup>46</sup> The Italian violin teacher and his family based in Üsküdar were not necessarily presented as marginals to control or lock up but rather as an example of the failure of the missionaries to be the guides of a local homogeneous and pious Roman Catholic population. Üsküdar was seen as peripheral first because of its geographical distance with the symbolic space of Galata, the embassies of Pera and the ecclesiastical authorities of Feriköy. However, missionary reports associated this area to another form of marginality which has less to do with geographical distance from the center than distance from certain norms, namely marriage within the Latin community, having close contact to European embassies and if in difficult economic circumstances accept the charitable initiatives of missionaries.

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d'un dimanche à l'autre. Or hier ils m'ont dit qu'ils s'en vont pour l'Égypte espérant trouver du travail. Il est donc plus que certain que ces deux pauvres petits risquent de rester longtemps sans baptême dans un pays où ils ne seront pas si tôt connus." See Georgian brother to the Vicariate, September 1908, in ASV, D.A.C. 1246, Busta 85, Fasc. 378.

45 Malte Fuhrmann discusses, for example, the case of musician Martha Fehnl, who married an Ottoman general and the consulate's panicked reaction to this news. See Malte Fuhrmann, "Down and Out on the Quays of Izmir: 'European' Musicians, Innkeepers, and Prostitutes in the Ottoman port-cities," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 24, no. 2 (2009): 174.

46 Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 13.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, as immigration to Istanbul from Europe accelerated, Catholic missionaries reconsidered part of their work as a duty to re-evangelize a fluid, impoverished and linguistically diverse population escaping the control of diplomatic and ecclesiastical authorities. The work of charity towards the poor became less about converting individuals from outside the group and more about preventing the growing local community from going astray. In this sense, missionaries in Istanbul resembled other moral entrepreneurs of major European metropolises described for example in Andrew Lees' work on late 19<sup>th</sup> century German cities. In his study, Lees observes how the city became a source of panic for many religious authorities because it "threatened to intensify wrongdoing"<sup>47</sup> of incoming working-class migrants. 'Wrong-doing' could go from prostitution to socialism in the minds of Berlin's Protestant reformists. Around the same period in the French city of Lyon, the local Catholic church launched a new movement for the construction of churches, schools and dispensaries in peripheral areas of the city in order to prevent 'dechristianization' of the working class.<sup>48</sup> In Istanbul, the threat of immorality and dechristianization materialized in the simple choice of blending into local society without assistance from the Church, because of religious indifference and/or intermarriage.

One of the major factors for the growing anxiety towards these urban margins was the development of modern transport infrastructure in Istanbul. When the Ottoman state launched railroad projects with financial and technical support from European banks and engineers, thousands of European workers also came along and settled in and around Istanbul. The response by congregations and diplomats was Janus-faced: it was a way to increase a numerically small Roman Catholic population but only if the newcomers were willing to stay within the communal boundaries.

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47 Andrew Lees, *Cities, Sin and Social Reform in Imperial Germany* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 4.

48 Pierre-Yves Saunier, "L'église et l'espace de la grande ville au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle : Lyon et ses paroisses," *Revue historique, Presses Universitaires de France* CCLXXXVIII, no. 2 (1991): 322–348.

## The International Rivalry for the Control of 'European' Railway Workers

The arrival of European workers with the construction of the Balkan and Anatolian railway lines triggered both a resurgence in imperialism by France and Germany and questioned the demographic basis of the Latin configuration. With the railway lines leading the Balkan provinces to the Sirkeci station (and then when the Haydarpaşa port area became connected to Ankara), different European actors became interested in urban and rural areas that were previously considered irrelevant. Concessionary companies, diplomats and missionaries started to discuss possible interventions in neighborhoods that either did not exist before the 1880s or were not populated by Roman Catholics, and all these sights were located along the new railway line. For example, an 1892 reedition of the *Histoire de la Latinité de Constantinople* stated that although Catholics had left Galata, the Sirkeci area offered new missionary opportunities with many coreligionists working in the train station (rebuilt in 1888) and the surrounding workshops.<sup>49</sup> On the Asian side, the port area of Haydarpaşa, with a train station finished in 1899, was also described as the most promising neighborhood for missionary activity.

The development of the railway triggered an interest that was intertwined with international rivalries between French and German imperialism, but it also involved the Vatican against possible Protestant rivals. The Balkan railway was administered by an Austrian concessionary company (until 1909 when it was conceded to the Ottoman state), the Anatolian Railway was financed by the *Deutsche Bank*. Both railways were built by a majority of German-speaking engineers and workers and the space along the railway was especially marked by an architectural and linguistic cooperation between the Ottoman and German Empires.<sup>50</sup> When Théophile Delcassé became France's minister of Foreign Affairs, French diplomacy made it a priority to undermine this strong Ottoman-German cooperation in infrastructure.<sup>51</sup> On the ground, preoccupations were older than

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49 De Châtel, *Histoire de la Latinité de Constantinople*, 379.

50 Peter H. Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railways: Art, Empire, and Infrastructure* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017).

51 André Autheman, *La Banque Impériale Ottomane* (Paris: Institut de la gestion publique et du développement économique, 2018), 187–195.

Delcassé's office in the *Quai d'Orsay*. Local missionaries and the clergy worried mostly of the possible domination of the German language in educational life instead of French or Italian and of the workers' children possibly going to Protestant schools instead of the more numerous Catholic ones.

This double rivalry is perfectly illustrated by the mission of a French congregation created in 1864: the Assumptionists and their female counterpart the 'Oblates de l'Assomption'. Benefitting from French governmental support, they started to settle in different areas of Istanbul like Yedikule, Samatya and Kumkapı all of which were situated along the railway line. These areas were not only located outside the historical heart of Galata, but they were also situated in the historical peninsula coined in the sources 'Stamboul' and previously imagined as impermeable and unfriendly to European congregations. On the Asian side of the city, the two congregations settled in Kadıköy, Fenerbahçe and Haydarpaşa, the infrastructural heart of the German-Ottoman collaboration. This mission had started as an autonomous initiative by the congregation but quickly, the Assumptionists obtained official support from the Vatican to pursue their work, with European workers being the principal target. The *Propaganda Fide*, the Vatican's bureau dedicated to religious missions, decided to delegate "the spiritual assistance of Latin Catholics" around the Anatolian railway line to this French the congregation. In an official decree dating from November 18, 1890, the Assumptionists were given the monopoly of missionary activity in Bursa and Mudanya and "in the towns and villages of Malatépé, Kartal, Pandik, Bey-Keuy, Panterma, Sultan-Tchair, Sonsourlou, Badi-Keysser, Balia, Eski-Cheir, Ismid and Angora, as well as [over] railway workers assigned to intermediate locations between these two cities [Bursa and Mudania] along the railway line".<sup>52</sup> The Assumptionists were chosen to compete with British, American and German protestant missions that had multiplied in Eastern Anatolia and the Middle East, but the decree also aimed at preventing the common disputes among Catholic congregations for the control of a given region. In Eskişehir, they oversaw a parish comprising "French, Italian, Austrian, German, Swiss, Spanish, English, Romanian, Ottoman (...) and even American"<sup>53</sup> workers.

52 ASV, *Turchia* (D.A.C.), Busta 60, Fasc. 238, "Assumpzionisti", 18 November 1890.

53 Letter of Assumptionist Father Silberman, 2 June 1907 in Christine Babot, *La Mission des Augustins de l'Assomption à Eski-Chéhir* (Istanbul: Isis, 2011), 67.

In response to the Vatican's initiative, some German diplomats were willing to subsidize other Catholic congregations just so that the workers could send their children to German-speaking schools.<sup>54</sup> Around the same time in Sirkeci, a thirty-year old French missionary working in Üsküdar asked the French embassy for urgent financial help to create a French-speaking school to prevent the risk of transforming the surroundings of the train station into a German neighborhood. Just as the others dismissed Galata in the 1860s, this French missionary made antisemitic associations between Jewishness, Germanness and immorality when discussing new infrastructural neighborhoods of Istanbul.<sup>55</sup>

The linguistic rivalry between French and German was not only a question of foreign affairs. Various groups defended their right to education and worship provided by Catholic congregations. One case involves workers living in the area of Yedikule, where the railway entered Istanbul. In 1886, inhabitants of the neighborhood considering themselves 'a colony of around 230 Catholics' wrote a petition to the Vicariate asking for a local priest who could speak both German and Italian (the previous one was francophone). The petition clearly shows a particular self-identification to the German language and to the social condition of workers stating that out of the 230 inhabitants of the area, "3/4 are Austrians and Germans" and that German was "certainly the most necessary language, because we are workers, and our children will be the same."<sup>56</sup> The petition explains that the Assumptionists had abandoned their mission in Samatya because the locals preferred schools in German and that if a German-speaking school was not created, they would be forced to send their children to Protestant schools. The 'colony' obtained the return of an Italian Dominican priest who could speak fluent German and a Catholic German-speaking school was opened in the area. According to Krusar, the local Yedikule church was built in by the workers themselves, even using rails to construct the belfry.<sup>57</sup> The Yedikule example shows how recently arrived European workers could represent themselves within the complex multi-linguistic Ottoman world, asking for autonomy and distinction from other more affluent

54 Christensen, *Germany and the Ottoman Railways*, 28.

55 Lettre de Léon Roy au supérieur à Rome. AAR, 2 CW.

56 ASV, *Turchia*, busta 43, fasc. 157, 28 August 1886.

57 Krusar, *Croatian Levantines*, 127.

communities in the city (in a very similar way than the Ragusans of Galata had done 30 years before). In contrast, missionaries kept on describing workers in derogatory ways as indifferent to religion and capable of mixing with local society. The testimony of a member of the female congregation Oblates de l'Assomption on the port-area of Haydarpaşa in 1908 illustrates this ongoing despise:

“Previously, the Catholics of Haïdar Pacha [sic] were happy to do without any mass under the pretext that they were too far from the parish church of Moda (Cadi Keüi); this excuse is not valid anymore now that a chapel opened for worship. It must be said that many of them took advantage of this new situation to follow the religious services: they learned the way to the church so as not to forget it anymore. Here, as elsewhere, the school rendered great service to the church. The parishioners, happy to entrust their children to missionaries, developed relations with the Fathers [Pères] and Sisters and thus rediscovered the habits of faith that they had acquired in Italy, Austria, France, etc. Some, in fact, continued to live with a guilty indifference to God and of their own souls, but what always consoled us was that all of them showed excellent dispositions at their death-bed. Not one died without receiving the sacrament of the church. (...) Why should these children, most of whom are from mixed marriages, encounter at home, with their parents, opposing ideas of skepticism and indifference that paralyze the good effects of the education received at school and at church?”<sup>58</sup>

The arrival of European workers deeply complexified what historians have considered Levantines in different ways. They settled in areas with no historical connection to the historical Roman Catholicism, the Latin identity imagined by Belin in the 1870s, thus accelerating the process of a dispatched Catholic population already seen in Üsküdar. By preferring to speak German, the migrant workers also increased the linguistic diversity that had already threatened the unity of the local Roman Catholics with the Galata Maltese and self-proclaimed Ragusans. Finally, by presenting a working-class identity acquired in Europe that, for the Yedikule colony at least, they were proud of, the new workers rejected the common association between Levantines and financial wealth. This combination of factors deepened the epistemic anxiety already seen in missionary sources on

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58 ASV, D.A.C. 1246, Busta 81, doc. no. 12.

Üsküdar. By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Latin configuration of Istanbul presented manifold examples of marginality to the point that breaking social norms had become more common than actually respecting them. This in turn gave religious congregations a new mission, similar to the one they had in Western European metropolises, reconverting immigrants, as the initial aim of converting other groups to Catholicism seemed unfruitful.

There are specific documents and moments of interaction that are very helpful to understand the processes, actors and spaces of marginality within Levantine life and thus start to write a history from below of people generally associated to trans-imperial lucrative networks. In an Ottoman urban context, petitions, such as those used in this chapter, are essential documents to circumvent the discourse of authorities and “to hear the voices of ordinary, non-elite people.”<sup>59</sup> Although they are not necessarily a reflection of a collective point of view, they are a practice of communication and complaint that involves all socio-economic strata living in the city. Secondly, studying charitable and philanthropic initiatives can illustrate the dire conditions in which many so-called Levantines were living in and around Istanbul but also the anxiety this population caused among religious officials and elites. Finally, following the expansion of infrastructure in which European laborers were employed sheds light on the everyday life of a working class that because of its affiliation to Roman Catholicism was supposed to be absorbed by the so-called Levantines.

This chapter has used mostly religious sources emanating either from the Catholic Vicariate’s correspondence or from missionary reports sent to different institutions financing their activity. These archives do not give a complete overview of the population studied but they can offer a divergent narrative from how marginality is generally analyzed through documents emanating from consulates, judiciary courts and the police. First, in a space where nationality and foreign protection could be largely negotiated and

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59 As illustrated by the collective work on Jerusalem based on petitions: Yasemin Avcı, Vincent Lemire, and Ömür Yazıcı Özdemir, “Collective Petitions (‘*arz-ı mahzâr*’) as a Reflective Archival Source for Jerusalem’s Networks of *Citadinité* in the late 19th Century,” in Angelos Dalechanis and Vincent Lemire, eds., *Ordinary Jerusalem* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 161–185.

circumvented according to specific circumstances,<sup>60</sup> religious affiliation was a more stable criteria of identification. By practicing charitable activity or simply by administering a parish, religious actors give insight into aspects of everyday life that diplomats or the police would not find worthy of noting or could not even have access to. Secondly, marginality in the Ottoman context was not purely a question of governmentality but a question of self-image and what it meant to be, for example, a member of the “Istanbul Latin community.” Hence marginals were not necessarily prostitutes and criminals to be isolated or punished, but various ethno-linguistic sub-groups or impoverished families that needed to be kept close to prevent further distancing from the collective norms. The case-studies show some clear guiding norms that if transgressed, could also mean going beyond the boundary of the community. To be a member of the Latin configuration, it was required to obey to the Apostolic Vicariate as the representative of the Vatican, for example by not organizing autonomous religious celebrations like the Maltese and Ragusans of Galata. It was also recommended to have a connection to the French language and accept the *rapprochement* with francophone religious congregations by sending children to missionary schools and if impoverished accept the charity of Catholic nuns. It was expected to marry other Roman Catholics and not individuals of different denominations, a norm however that progressively became negotiable even for the religious authorities. Overall, all these norms show an institutional will to create a sedentary community of well-off and presentable Latins and thus reject mobility, autonomy and cosmopolitanism as an acceptable way of life.

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60 Will Hanley, *Identifying with Nationality. Europeans, Ottomans, and Egyptians in Alexandria* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017).

## Appendix



Figure 1. Map illustrating the geographical distribution of Catholic parishes across Istanbul, sourced from the Augustinian Archives in Rome.



Figure 2. Topographical and Archaeological Plan of Galata - A depiction by A.M. Schneider and M. Is. Nomidis, published in Istanbul by Emel Basmevi in 1944.

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**MEDITERRANEAN CRIMINAL NETWORKS:  
DIPLOMACY AND ILLICIT CONNECTIONS  
BETWEEN CONSTANTINOPLE AND THE  
ITALIAN PENINSULA (1856-1861)**

Giorgio Ennas\*

“[...] it is important that these individuals cannot escape the vindictiveness of the Law.”<sup>1</sup>

“[...] the state of indigence in some of the defendants, in others of greed for profit, because they were somewhat disrupted in their business affairs, could be the impulses for the crime.”<sup>2</sup>

In May 1860, the tribunal of Bologna condemned the members of a ‘criminal association’ of counterfeiters acting between Constantinople and the Italian city. The court affirmed that, in the second half of the 1850s, the members of this criminal association produced and spread Ottoman counterfeited paper money between Constantinople and the Italian Peninsula. In order to describe the existence of Italo-Levantine criminal networks, and trace their spread far beyond Italian and Ottoman shores thanks to migratory routes and their influence on diplomatic relations between different

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\* Ph.D, Franklin University, Switzerland. Email: [gennas@fus.edu](mailto:gennas@fus.edu),  
ORCID: 0000-0001-8948-9823. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384861](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384861)

- 1 Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives, Ottoman Archives (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, thereafter BOA), Hariciye Nezareti Hukuk Kısmı collection (HR. H.) 169/5, enc. 42, dispatch (d.) 616, 20 October 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin. (French quotes in this article have been translated into English by the author).
- 2 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 106, 4 April 1861, Translation of the Act of Indictment, Bologna.

states, this article investigates the development on the ground of these criminal 'gangs', generally composed by members of the new Italo-Levantine community and the collaboration of Ottoman diplomats and consuls with Italian authorities during criminal investigations and trials. Consequently, this article considers organised crime as an active force in the making of imperial and national states and their diplomatic relations between the 1850s and 1860s.

Furthermore, it highlights the nature of the illicit networks composed of Italo-Levantine elements that existed between the eastern and the western Mediterranean and the Atlantic Ocean. By analysing the documents in the Italian and Ottoman archives, the article aims to highlight the terminology used by the Ottoman and European authorities to picture these Italo-Levantine '*bandes*' and the international environment where they operated. Moreover, the article underscores how the efforts against these organisations shaped the Ottoman commitment to counteract these international criminal organisations. Finally, it describes how Ottoman actions against Italo-Levantine gangs influenced their diplomatic networks in new countries. From this perspective, illicit trade not only connected capitals and resources, but also diplomatic agents on the international scenario.

### The Italo-Levantine Origins of a Global Criminal Phenomenon

After the Baltalimanı Convention of 1838 and the liberalisation of the Ottoman economy,<sup>3</sup> the 1840s were also characterised by major reformist efforts in 'economic, fiscal and monetary affairs.'<sup>4</sup> Integration into the global markets and the consequent increase of foreign trade inspired the Ottoman government to pursue monetary reform, in an effort to strengthen its internal stability. The creation of a bimetallic system based on a golden standard stabilised the imperial currencies and the praxis of coinage debasement was abandoned. To limit fiscal difficulties, in the 1840s, the Sublime Porte created one method of fiscal revenue, printing and circulating interest-bearing paper money called '*kaime-i muteber-i nakdiyye*'. As

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3 Ozan Ozavci, *Dangerous Gifts. Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798-1864* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021), 196–97.

4 Şevket Pamuk, "Money in the Ottoman Empire, 1326-1914," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire Vol. 2: 1600-1914*, eds. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 970.

reported by Şevket Pamuk, the quantity of *kaimes* was limited until 1852. However, during the economic crisis caused by the Crimean War (1853-6), this quantity was largely increased and *kaimes*' value decreased to less than half its nominal value.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, until the curtailment of paper money at the beginning of the 1860s, this produced a major source of inflation. Simultaneously, the creation of this paper money and the apparent ease in replicating it created new opportunities for the international networks of Mediterranean counterfeiters.

In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of merchants and immigrants coming from the states of the Italian Peninsula increased due to the signing of commercial treaties, and the increased trafficking between these states and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>6</sup> As Giuseppe Cossuto points out, '[c]olonies of [w]estern Europeans have always existed both in the eastern Mediterranean and on the shores of the Black Sea.'<sup>7</sup> Under the collective name of '*Ifrenk*' were included the members of trading colonies, such as Amalphytans, Pisans, Genoese, Venetians, and Catalans. With the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204, this European element consolidated its positions in Byzantine territories, especially on the Aegean coasts and the Black Sea.<sup>8</sup> In the Ottoman society, the members of these communities, autonomous from their countries of origin and under the protection of the sultan, 'provided a foothold and a network of assistance both to European states' and to 'western merchants and travellers'. With a high level of linguistic education, the members of Levantine elites often occupied the position of '*giovani de lingua*' and '*tercüman*' or '*dragomanni*', useful in all kinds of transactions, both commercial and diplomatic.<sup>9</sup>

5 Pamuk, "Money", 971.

6 Fabrice Jesné, *La face cachée de l'empire. L'Italie et les Balkans, 1861-1915* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2021), 20-21.

7 See Giuseppe Cossuto, "I Levantini ovvero: gli Europei d'Oriente e lo specchio negativo dell'Europa," *Islamistica.com*, [https://web.archive.org/web/20081120182320/http://www.islamistica.com/giuseppe\\_cossuto/levantini.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20081120182320/http://www.islamistica.com/giuseppe_cossuto/levantini.html) (accessed 06.11.22).

8 Alessandro Baltazzi, "Gli italiani di Turchia: identità nuove e vecchie," in *Gli Italiani di Istanbul. Figure, Comunità e Istituzioni dalle Riforme alla Repubblica 1839-1923*, eds. Attilio De Gasperis and Roberta Ferrazza (Torino: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 2007), 97.

9 Giuseppe Cossuto, "I Levantini ovvero: gli Europei d'Oriente e lo specchio negativo dell'Europa," *Islamistica.com*, [https://web.archive.org/web/20081120182320/http://www.islamistica.com/giuseppe\\_cossuto/levantini.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20081120182320/http://www.islamistica.com/giuseppe_cossuto/levantini.html) (accessed 06.11.22).

Defining it as an *ante-litteram* European community, Cossuto points out how even members of other communities, such as the Sephardic Jews fleeing Spain and others, became part of these Levantine communities. Gradually the old nations of which they were part ended up being assimilated into the new ones. As pointed out by Sergio La Salvia, the various migratory waves from the Italian Peninsula to the Ottoman territories, especially during the ‘long’ 19<sup>th</sup> century, had lasting effects on the Ottoman Levantine communities, with ‘more than one generation of new migrants joining the old trunk’.<sup>10</sup> In fact, in this period ‘there was a migratory movement from all regions of Italy’.<sup>11</sup> These movements mainly regarded sectors of the crafts and professionals, such as bankers, doctors and engineers, especially toward the Ottoman ports.

Gradually, the members of the old Levantine community and new immigrants from the Italian Peninsula began to be perceived, and to perceive themselves, as a single national group,<sup>12</sup> especially thanks to the efforts of the Sardinian consuls, who pursued a foreign policy of promoting Italian national identity.<sup>13</sup> From the documents analysed, the images of a part of the new Italo-Levantine communities and of their spaces in the city of Constantinople clearly emerge. They moved into the districts around the Galata Tower, between Kadıköy, Galata, Beyoğlu, Taksim Square and Kurtuluş, looking for part-time and full-time employment and spending time in social spaces such as coffee houses, like the *Café du Jardin* or the *Café de Prado*, storehouses, theaters, and brothels.<sup>14</sup>

10 Sergio La Salvia, “La comunità italiana di Costantinopoli tra politica e società,” in *Gli Italiani di Istanbul. Figure, Comunità e Istituzioni dalle Riforme alla Repubblica 1839-1923*, eds. Attilio De Gasperis and Roberta Ferrazza (Torino: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 2007), 16.

11 İlber Ortaylı, “Gli italiani di Istanbul,” in *Gli Italiani di Istanbul. Figure, Comunità e Istituzioni dalle Riforme alla Repubblica 1839-1923*, eds. Attilio De Gasperis and Roberta Ferrazza (Torino: Edizioni della Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli, 2007), 47.

12 Fiorenzo Toso, “I Levantini, la più antica comunità storica italo-fona all'estero,” *Treccani: Enciclopedia Italiana*, [https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua\\_italiana/articoli/scritto\\_e\\_parlato/Europa12.html](https://www.treccani.it/magazine/lingua_italiana/articoli/scritto_e_parlato/Europa12.html) (accessed 02.11.22).

13 Antonio D'Alessandri, “Il Quarantotto e l'attività consolare del Regno di Sardegna nei porti danubiani e del Mediterraneo orientale,” in *Consoli e consolati italiani dagli Stati preunitari al fascismo (1802-1945)*, eds. Marcella Aglietti, Mathieu Grenet and Fabrice Jesné (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 2020), 117.

14 La Salvia, “La comunità,” 18.

Between exiled patriots and labour migrants looking for new opportunities, who constituted the majority of the migrants,<sup>15</sup> many criminals also took advantage of the ease of movement offered by the new means of transport. Sometimes described by external observers as ‘porters, sycophants, meddlers [...], men who escaped from prison, used to live in taverns, [...] not averse to dipping their hand in blood to steal and commit every kind of crimes’,<sup>16</sup> some of these new Italo-Levantines focused their criminal activities on the production of false *kaimes*. Their small organisations or gangs were generally composed of individuals from Italian and Balkan centres, with family ties, bonds of friendship or working connections between the shores of the western and eastern Mediterranean, and, sometimes, the Atlantic Ocean as well.

Actually, from the sources analysed emerges how they generally were not career criminals or mafia organisations. Even if in their documents Ottoman and Italian diplomatic and consular agents often described their work as a ‘*mauvaise industrie*’ (evil industry) and their organisations as ‘*bandes criminelles*’ (criminal gangs), the most part of them was simply composed of artisans or migrants with elementary education and in search of immediate profits.<sup>17</sup> In one of the rare pieces of research dedicated to this topic, Marc Aymes analysed the documents produced by Ottoman police concerning several groups of counterfeiters who, between the 1840s and 1860s falsified great quantities of coins and bills. In his analysis, Aymes underscored that the gang members were mainly Constantinople’s residents and were under the protection of several European powers. He has demonstrated how, for the Ottoman authorities, the condemnation of counterfeiters had both an administrative and political nature.<sup>18</sup> In fact, these criminals not only ‘break the binding of the good order of the countries’,<sup>19</sup> but, in the context of the vast monetary reform of 1844, also questioned the state’s

15 Ortaylı, “Gli italiani,” 47.

16 Giuseppe Cossuto, “I Levantini ovvero: gli Europei d’Oriente e lo specchio negativo dell’Europa,” *Islamistica.com*, [https://web.archive.org/web/20081120182320/http://www.islamistica.com/giuseppe\\_cossuto/levantini.html](https://web.archive.org/web/20081120182320/http://www.islamistica.com/giuseppe_cossuto/levantini.html) (accessed 02.11.22). See also La Salvia, “La comunità,” 18.

17 La Salvia, “La comunità,” 15.

18 Marc Aymes, *Les Faux-Monnayeurs d’Istanbul* (Toulouse: Anarcharsis Editions, 2019), 7–8.

19 *Ibid.*, 147.

fiduciary authority.<sup>20</sup> For this reason, the reform of the *Corps de droit ottoman* (or Ottoman Law Code) of 1858 increased the penalty for producing false Ottoman currency, by introducing the juridical principle of undifferentiated liability.<sup>21</sup>

Despite this, between the 1850s and 1860s, groups of Italo-Levantine counterfeiters continued their activities both within and outside of Ottoman territories, taking advantage of ever-growing trade connections in the Mediterranean. In pursuing this activity, these criminal groups, also took advantage of the time required to create an efficient Ottoman diplomatic and consular network in Europe and the Mediterranean. In summary, the ease of forging Ottoman *kaimes*, the poverty of a part of the Italo-Levantine communities, and the Crimean War produced a multiplication of counterfeiting organisations in the Mediterranean. In the post-war period, numerous groups of counterfeiters were discovered in different countries between the Atlantic Ocean and the Black Sea. This criminal phenomenon was considered detrimental of Ottoman fiduciary authority,<sup>22</sup> and, for this reason, Ottoman diplomats and consuls devoted part of their missions to contrasting the counterfeiting of *kaimes*. They negotiated new measures of control with local authorities, and tried to obtain the condemnation of these criminals in foreign tribunals. In their opinion, exemplary punishments were needed to deter the international phenomenon.

### Creating an International Criminal Network

From the Italian and Ottoman diplomatic documents analysed, it emerges that, between the end of the 1850s and the beginning of the 1860s, the Italian states hosted a remarkable concentration of counterfeiting gangs in their territories. This increase was partly due to the widespread poverty of a part of the Italian population, the opening of the Ottoman world to the great migration processes of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and, finally, the great mobilisation of migrants from the European continent toward Russo-Ottoman borders during the Crimean War. As highlighted in the depositions of the counterfeiters, this global conflict, which marked

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20 Ibid., 7.

21 Ibid., 176-77.

22 Ibid., 7.

'Italy's glorious resurrection', also became the cause for the migration of individuals with financial difficulties to the new opportunities offered by the 'Orient'. Their migration was not motivated by the will to protect 'civilisation', or to obtain military glory but simply to find rapid profits and 'remedy the hardships of destiny'.<sup>23</sup> From this point of view, the Crimean War represented an opportunity for many people from the Italian Peninsula looking for a better life.

The case of Randaboschi's gang is one of the cases that best exemplifies the nature of these organisations and how the Ottoman and European governments acted to contrast the criminal phenomena of international counterfeiting. During the Crimean War, a Bolognese subject under Austrian protection, Ludovico Randaboschi, followed the allied armies in Crimea and undertook the business of retailing wine and liquor to soldiers.<sup>24</sup> In his deposition, Randaboschi reported that he had boarded in Gallipoli and had followed the allied armies in Varna, Balaklava, Kamianets and Kerch, selling beverages. In 1856, Ludovico Randaboschi was reached by his uncle, Raffaele, who helped him in his business. Randaboschi's activity suddenly concluded with the end of the conflict. As a result, they returned to Constantinople and Bologna.

Raffaele asked his nephew to participate in the counterfeiting of Ottoman *kaimes*, involving his Italo-Levantine connections in Constantinople, who accepted the invitation to join in his criminal projects in order to repair their depleted finances.<sup>25</sup> In Bologna, the group enlisted three individuals for the process of production: Henry Corty, a lithographer from Mecklenburg, who wanted to strengthen his finances, and, after him, Sebastiano Zanetti and Vincenzo Busi. Under Tommaso Facchini and Raffaele Randaboschi's supervision, they produced 'six-thousands of these [*kaimes*] to the apparent value of twelve thousand francs approximately.' Of this first production, only six-hundreds of these *kaimes* were sent to Ludovico Randaboschi in Constantinople, and 'easily' put into circulation.<sup>26</sup>

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23 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 106, 4 April 1861, Translation of the Act of Indictment, Bologna.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

In 1859, the deposition of another counterfeiter, Ulisse Baldini, permitted the court to reconstruct the Ottoman ramification of this criminal association.<sup>27</sup> Baldini, a goldsmith, and engraver, confirmed that he left Bologna and went to Constantinople at the end of July 1856 to seek work in his profession. In the Ottoman capital, he was implicated in counterfeiting by another Bolognese goldsmith, Francesco Pedrazzi, who instructed him to make two stamps to be used for the forgery of *kaimes*. In a short period of time, he met his ‘companions’ in forgery, Angelo Gennari, Agostino Mainer, Giovanni Battista Vieller, Aristide Bongiacchi, and his brother Nicolino. After internal problems within the association related to the division of false paper money, a split occurred. Baldini associated himself with Angelo Gennari and Giovanni Battista Vieller in producing false money, creating a new gang. The imprinting was done in Gennari’s rooms in the house of the lawyer Ambrosio Bondesio and the property of Bongiacchi’s wife Aurelli in Galata.

The gang members freely moved between Bologna and Constantinople, taking advantage of the freedom of movement between the Italian Peninsula and the Ottoman cities, especially Constantinople. The *kaimes* were generally transported through an Austrian ferry boat by Raffaele and circulated in Constantinople by Ludovico Randaboschi and his local accomplices, all members of the Italo-Levantine communities who lived in Constantinople. This trafficking continued into 1857 and 1858. From the police reports and the depositions made in front of the Ottoman, Savoyard and papal authorities, it is evident just how important the networks of migrants from the Italian Peninsula and the members of the new Italo-Levantine communities living in Constantinople were in the formation of local criminal associations of forgers. Newcomers in search of fortune, with a wealth of craftsmanship knowledge imported from the Italian Peninsula, represented a tempting opportunity for local networks of smugglers and counterfeiters.

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27 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 29, 17 March 1859, copy of the extra-judiciary exam of Ulisse Baldini, Bologna.

### **Sardo-Ottoman Collaboration: Between Success and Impunity**

In 1859, Ottoman police discovered the false *kaimes* and arrested Ludovico Randaboschi and his accomplices in Constantinople. As underscored by the documents of the Bolognese court, the Ottoman government acted with the 'greatest diligence' and succeeded not only in making the fraud manifest, but also in identifying the authors of it in Constantinople and, especially, in establishing the criminal connections that existed between them and those of Bologna.<sup>28</sup> When, during the interrogations, the imperial police discovered that the production of false *kaimes* continued in Bologna,<sup>29</sup> the international dimension of the case and the need to contact the governments of the Italian Peninsula clearly emerged. For this reason, the Ottoman ministry of police contacted the two most important imperial representatives in the Peninsula, the *chargé d'affaires* in Turin, Rüstem Bey, and his colleague in Naples, Sigmund Spitzer Efendi.

Rüstem Bey and Spitzer Efendi immediately notified the existence of this international organisation of counterfeiters to the pontifical authorities of Bologna, and the arrest of Ludovico Randaboschi and his accomplices in Constantinople. In their dispatches, the Ottoman diplomats confirmed the desire of the local authorities to collaborate and support the decision of the imperial diplomats to persecute the members of the gang in the Peninsula.<sup>30</sup> Despite this, the Ottoman diplomats in the Italian states generally followed the development of the investigations and the processes of the counterfeiters with great apprehension. This apprehension was mainly due to the differences between the Ottoman and the Italian legislative systems regarding the legal persecution of counterfeiters of foreign currencies. In fact, as commented on several years later by Rüstem Bey, in Sardinian legislation, some provisions allowed a Sardinian subject guilty of counterfeiting in an allied state 'to escape the vindictiveness of the laws'.<sup>31</sup> Legal experts consulted by

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28 Ibid.

29 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 30, d. 2350, 6 April 1859, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, Constantinople.

30 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 7, d. 147, 21 February 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Naples.

31 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 106, d. 616, 20 October 1859.

Rüstem Bey in Turin confirmed this assertion. Therefore, in the face of the evidence, he ‘can only deplore a gap in Sardinian legislation which grants impunity for a crime committed in a foreign country.’<sup>32</sup>

This apprehension was also justified by an incident that occurred at the end of the 1850s. Only a few years before the Randaboschi case, in the Kingdom of Sardinia the Mestrallet Affair had given Ottoman diplomats in the Italian Peninsula the impression that, in certain cases, the laws of the Italian states allowed counterfeiters to avoid legal consequences due to the same provisions.<sup>33</sup> At the end of 1857, the Sardinian foreign ministry communicated to the minister of Justice the accusations of complicity made by the imperial government against the lithographer Grettet, and the engraver Quaglia, both residents of Turin, as having twice been guilty of the crime of counterfeiting together with the Sardinian subject Battista Mestrallet and the French Hartigue Climent, who had been arrested a few months earlier in Constantinople by the imperial police and condemned to seven years of hard labour by an Ottoman tribunal for the production and importation of false *kaimes*.<sup>34</sup> While Grettet falsified the Ottoman paper money, Quaglia made the false stamps and seals to be affixed to it. Therefore, Rüstem Bey requested the intervention of the Sardinian judiciary system against these two individuals in order to obtain their punishment according to the full rigour of the laws.<sup>35</sup>

Although Rüstem Bey hoped that the local judiciary system would confirm the Ottoman verdict by mirroring the same penalty handed down by the imperial tribunals, at the beginning of December, they were still free and ‘freely exercised the professions of which they have been so guilty.’ Therefore, he requested the Foreign Minister Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour to institute a legal proceeding against them and their preventive imprisonment as a first essential step against counterfeiters of Ottoman currency in the Kingdom of Sardinia. The Mestrallet Affair remained an open case in the

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32 Archivio di Stato di Torino (ASTO), Antichi regimi, Lettere Ministri Esteri, Porta Ottomana, 1843-1859, folder (f.) 1, 11 February 1859, d. 336, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister and Foreign Affairs, Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour, Turin.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

Ottoman diplomatic dispatches in the Italian states as an example of the impunity that the laws of some of these states guaranteed to those guilty of forgery abroad. After 1857, the efforts of Ottoman diplomats such as Rüstem Bey in counterfeiting cases were focused on avoiding this kind of outcome and guaranteeing the juridical condemnation of counterfeiters. For example, in 1858, Rüstem Bey requested the collaboration of the Sardinian police and the arrest of other three individuals suspected of counterfeiting Ottoman paper money: the pontifical subject Alessandro Venanzi, the Sardinian Luigi Varallo-Pandolfini, and the Frenchman Alphonse Invert.<sup>36</sup> The general secretary of the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ruggiero Gabaleone de Salmour, informed him that, following the indications of the Ottoman ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Sardinian police had found evidence of the production of false *kaimes* in Venanzi's house. For the Sardinian and the Ottoman authorities, there was abundant proof that they created a criminal 'association' between Constantinople and Turin with the Roman and Ottoman subjects Filippo Spadafora, Agostino Mayner-Veiller, and Demetrio Calvocorressi, and that they were continuing their criminal fabrication.<sup>37</sup>

Since the end of 1857, they had been printing false *kaimes* in Madonna del Pilone, close to Turin, much of which was exported. Thanks to the numerous testimonies that prove their association, and their secret meetings held with 'circumspection and secrecy' in a room prepared for this criminal fabrication, the Sardinian police arrested Venanzi and several of his accomplices. De Salmour believed that they had arrested the most critical members of the Italo-Ottoman organisation and that, in this way, they had definitively paralysed their guilty plans.<sup>38</sup> Apparently, in this specific case, Rüstem Bey directly collaborated with the Sardinian police, thanks to the mediation of the Sardinian foreign ministry, providing them with some information regarding the place where the Ottoman member Calvocorressi

36 ASTO, Antichi regimi, Lettere Ministri Esteri, Porta Ottomana, 1843-1859, f. 1, 11 February 1858, d. 208, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour, Turin.

37 BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 45, 13 April 1858, translation of the Order of the Chamber of Council of the Royal Tribunal of Turin, Turin.

38 BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 6, 15 February 1858, copy of a dispatch, from the general secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ruggiero Gabaleone de Salmour, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, Turin.

stayed during his time in Turin. He reported that the police found evidence and arrested the leader of the gang, Alessandro Venanzi, thanks to his efforts in constantly soliciting their activities.<sup>39</sup>

Nonetheless, even after the arrest, for Rüstem Bey, it was still necessary to monitor the action of the authorities and courts because of the apparent reluctance of the royal authorities to prosecute local criminals who committed crimes abroad, such as in the Mestrallet Affair, when the Sardinian authorities had committed a ‘blatant’ injustice against the Sublime Porte.<sup>40</sup> In fact, as reported by the Ottoman *chargé*, the Chamber dismissed the case in favour of Mestrallet’s accomplices in June.<sup>41</sup> The court had stated that, in imitating the Ottoman *kaimes*, they had acted in good faith because they ‘did not know how to commit forgery’. Upset by the news and concerned by the possibility that Crettet and Quaglia’s impunity could encourage others to imitate their example and commit the same crime ‘to the great detriment of the [i]mperial [g]overnment’, Rüstem Bey decided to adopt some measures to ensure the definitive conviction of these criminals.

From this point of view, Ottoman diplomats and consuls actively collaborated with the local authorities in the investigations of counterfeiters and tried to promote an active inter-imperial, or international, collaboration between the Ottoman and Mediterranean governments to ensure the arrest and conviction of the Italo-Levantine counterfeiters. In this way, they hoped to limit dangerous precedents and discourage the reiteration of these crimes in the future, as they were so detrimental to Ottoman sovereignty. Despite all these measures, the conviction of some counterfeiters, such as the lawyer Ambrosio Bondesio, remained substantially difficult, if not impossible. In fact, Bondesio, represented a difficult problem for Rüstem Bey. A Sardinian subject, Bondesio worked as a lawyer between Turin and Constantinople.<sup>42</sup> After his arrest as a member of Randaboschi’s

39 BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 5, d. 214, 17 February 1858, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

40 BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 3, d. 217, 18 February 1858, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

41 BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 7, d. 226, 25 February 1858, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

42 BOA, HR. H. 169/3, enc. 7, d. 427, 9 February 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

gang and his release in Turin, Rüstem Bey advised the Ottoman Minister of Foreign Affairs Keçecizade Mehmed Fuad Pasha that Bondesio was not 'an ordinary criminal'. He had 'talent, education and a personality of great energy' and, apparently, quite good connections in Constantinople, where he affirmed to have high protections.

According to the confessions of several accomplices, such as the Bolognese engraver Ulisse Baldini, Bondesio had contributed to the production of false *kaimes* in his house in Constantinople.<sup>43</sup> As a result, he was arrested with other members of the gang at the beginning of April 1858. For the Ottoman authorities, he had set up the criminal laboratory within his house in Galata and had personally transported the false money from Turin and Genoa. Unfortunately for Rüstem Bey, the other gang members negated Bondesio's involvement in the Turinese production, while he never admitted to any kind of collaboration with them. The Sardinian and Ottoman polices could not demonstrate that Bondesio was involved in producing false *kaimes* in Turin,<sup>44</sup> and his accomplices only admitted to his involvement in the Ottoman capital. Therefore, as had occurred in the Mestrallet Affair, the tribunal released Bondesio because the Sardinian Law only '[...] prevents Sardinia from becoming a centre for the manufacture of counterfeit foreign currency, leaving foreign [g]overnments to safeguard themselves on their own territory and to punish Sardinian subjects who commit this crime there.'<sup>45</sup> Rüstem Bey considered this decision a terrible mistake because Bondesio's impunity set another dangerous precedent.

When, in February 1859, Rüstem Bey communicated Bondesio's arrival in Constantinople to Fuad Pasha, he suggested arresting Bondesio upon his arrival because in the Ottoman capital 'Bondesio could not [...] in any way take advantage of the ruling of dismissal made [in Turin] in his favour to claim impunity if he fell into the hands of the Turkish police'. On the contrary, this verdict 'would become his verdict in Turkey', because it

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43 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 29, 17 March 1859, copy of the extra-judiciary exam of Ulisse Baldini, Bologna.

44 BOA, HR. H. 169/3, enc. 6, 24 January 1859, copy of dispatch, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, Turin.

45 Ibid.

proves his conviction and his guilt for counterfeiting in Constantinople.<sup>46</sup> A rapid arrest by Ottoman police would guarantee that he would be unable to 'escape the vindictiveness of the laws'. In this way, Bondesio's insinuations concerning the involvement of Ottoman high officials in counterfeiting could also be refuted. In a nutshell, despite some difficulties related to the differences between the legal systems of the Ottoman Empire and the Italian pre-unitarian states, the local authorities and the Ottoman diplomatic-consular corps actively collaborated in the investigations and in the capture of Ottoman *kaimes* counterfeiters. At the same time, the sentences obtained in Bologna, Turin, and Constantinople, condemning the members of Randaboschi and Venanzi's gangs, represented a victory for Ottoman diplomacy and the imperial government, not only for the incarceration of the criminals and the condemnation of their fugitive accomplices *in absentia*, but also because they represented a positive precedent against the international counterfeiters of Ottoman *kaimes*.<sup>47</sup>

### Ottoman Diplomats at Trial

At the end of the 1850s, Ottoman diplomats and consuls in Europe and the United States energetically pursued Italo-Levantine counterfeiters and their accomplices with the help of local polices and authorities. For this reason, during this period, Ottoman diplomats and consuls often found themselves involved in court cases and trials involving counterfeiters of imperial *kaimes*. The Ottoman government and many of these consuls and *chargés d'affaires* strongly believed in the necessity to participate actively, not only in the investigations, but also in the trials, in order to ensure both the conviction of the defendants according to the laws of the host country, to request their eventual extradition and, finally, to uncover possible international ramifications of such associations often involving members of the Italo-Levantine communities of Constantinople.

In one case, from London, Musurus Bey reported the identification and arrest in New York of another small gang of counterfeiters of Ottoman *kaimes*. This time the gang was composed only of a woman named Sevasti,

46 BOA, HR. H. 169/3, enc. 7, d. 427, 9 February 1859.

47 BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 52, d. 455, 10 March 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

alias Zaifmen, and a local printer, Harrison.<sup>48</sup> They were rapidly found, identified, and arrested by the local police. All the 22 plates, 27 seals with the Ottoman *tuğra* (the sultan's seal) and 16 seals of the Treasury, and a large quantity of fake *kaimes* were sequestered. Answering the charges made against him, Harrison claimed that he was entirely ignorant that he was counterfeiting Ottoman currency. He affirmed that Sevasti had deceived him, asking him to print a considerable quantity of labels, which he was in the habit of doing for others. The case was rapidly closed thanks to the efforts of the Ottoman Honorary Consul J. Hosford Smith in collaboration with the authorities of the American city. But it was mainly on the Italian Peninsula that the efforts of Ottoman diplomats and consuls were concentrated.

During the 1850s and 1860s, the Italian Peninsula remained at the centre of Italo-Levantine forger networks and trafficking. For this reason, there were a considerable number of trials involving Ottoman *kaimes* counterfeiters. For example, in July 1858, the Ottoman Consul General in Venice De Breganze confirmed the arrest of another group of counterfeiters in Vicenza by the Austro-Venetian authorities.<sup>49</sup> De Breganze wrote that the criminals had 'accomplices' in Constantinople, connected with the Italo-Levantine Giacinto Vedova, an Italian refugee after the events of 1848, who had lived for a long time in the Ottoman capital. Fuad Pasha ordered De Breganze to follow with attention the trial against them for the crime of manufacturing false *kaimes*.<sup>50</sup>

During the trial, De Breganze deduced that other Italo-Levantines, named Arnosio and Giuseppe Borelli, who lived in Constantinople, were not only members of this gang, but also accomplices in an association formed in Constantinople for the purpose of carrying out this kind of crime. Fuad Pasha affirmed that thanks to the information given by De Breganze, this association was discovered and stopped. At the beginning of 1860, he reported that, after a long process, the counterfeiters arrested in Vicenza were finally condemned by the tribunal of Venice. It sentenced Ange Zennari to two years, Laurent Zimma to one year, and Giacinto Vedova to eight months

48 BOA, HR. H. 114/2, enc. 6, 7 October 1858, copy of dispatch, the consul general, Hosford Smith, to the ambassador, Musurus Bey, New York.

49 BOA, HR. H. 259/17, enc. 1, d. 86, 4 July 1858, the consul general, De Breganze, to the minister of Foreign Affairs ad interim, Mahmud Nedim Pasha, Venice.

50 BOA, HR. H. 259/17, enc. 3, d. 157, 9 January 1860, the consul general, De Breganze, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Venice.

of severe imprisonment with chains and decreed that they were to undergo their sentences in Padova. Fuad Pasha expressed his satisfaction for the zeal and devotion De Breganze demonstrated in discovering and prosecuting ‘this execrable association of scoundrels’, who ‘intrigued in the shadow’, and for obtaining their condemnation from the Austro-Venetian authorities and identifying the ramifications in Constantinople.<sup>51</sup>

In the same period, the Ottoman *chargés d'affaires* in Naples and Turin, Spitzer Efendi and Rüstem Bey, contacted the Pontifical government to bring to justice Raffaele Randaboschi and Ludovico Alessandro Bastiano, the remaining members of Randaboschi’s gang in Bologna.<sup>52</sup> In fact, Fuad Pasha sought to open a direct channel between the Ottoman and Roman governments, promoting an active collaboration of respective police forces. Therefore, on this occasion, the Neapolitan consular channel was used to contact the papal authorities and the Apostolic Nuncio in Bologna, Pietro Giannelli. Even if the Nuncio was unable to guarantee the possibility for Spitzer Efendi to follow the trial in Bologna, Giannelli contacted the pontifical Secretariat of State by telegraph requesting special permission. Moreover, Fuad Pasha appointed Joseph Ange Ikiades Bey, interpreter of the imperial ministry of police, to transport to Bologna all the files of the counterfeiters affair in order to provide the pontifical authority of Bologna with all the information necessary for the trial.<sup>53</sup> He also recommended that Spitzer Efendi use all his influence over the Neapolitan nunciature to obtain all the assistance needed to ensure the seizure and punishment of the counterfeiters during the trial.<sup>54</sup>

After the arrival of Ikiades Bey in Naples and his visit to Rome, the Secretary of State Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli officially accepted the invitation to collaborate with the representatives of the Sublime Porte.<sup>55</sup> At the end of February, Spitzer Efendi registered the friendly hospitality granted to the Ottoman agent and the collaborative attitude adopted by the

51 BOA, HR. H. 259/17, enc. 4, d. 3740, 11 February 1860, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, to the consul general, De Breganze, Constantinople.

52 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 1, d. 136, 7 February 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Naples.

53 Ibid.

54 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 4, d. 2111, 9 February 1859, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, Constantinople.

55 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 7, d. 147, 21 February 1859.

pontifical authorities, which, he hoped, would permit a 'speedy and successful' outcome.<sup>56</sup> In a concise time following his arrival, Ikiades Bey confirmed the arrest of the counterfeiters and the seizure of the instruments used in the manufacture of counterfeited paper money. For its part, the pontifical government guaranteed that the measures adopted would satisfy 'the claim formulated by the Sublime Porte against the two individuals'.<sup>57</sup> Simultaneously, Rüstem Bey asked for the support of the Sardinian government against this 'formidable' association of counterfeiters, with strong connections with the group of Vicenza.<sup>58</sup>

When Rüstem Bey learned that three Bolognese members, Pietro Nanetti, Raffaele Fabbri, and Raffaele Manini, had escaped from Corfu to Genoa, he requested the help of the Sardinian authorities to arrest them upon their arrival in the city-port. The consul general, Nicola Allegretti, was also alerted and readied to collaborate with the local police to stop these fugitives. But, despite the efforts of the Ottoman and Sardinian authorities, Pietro Nanetti and Raffaele Fabbri were able, at the last moment, to escape to Malta with pontifical passports.<sup>59</sup> Once again, the Bolognese trial became an important objective for Ottoman diplomacy. It represented an essential occasion for Rüstem Bey and Spitzer Efendi to obtain a positive precedent against international counterfeiting and, simultaneously, an occasion to promote cooperation between the Ottoman and the Italian states.<sup>60</sup> Ulisse Baldini and the other members of Randaboschi's 'company of forgers' were arrested thanks to Ikiades Bey's collaboration. They were then judged in Bologna, confirming the sentence handed down to them by the Ottoman tribunal one year earlier.<sup>61</sup>

56 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 9, d. 149, 28 February 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Naples.

57 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 21, 23 February 1859, translations of two dispatches of the Apostolic Nunciature of Turin for Mr. Rüstem Bey.

58 ASTO, Antichi regimi, Lettere Ministri Esteri, Porta Ottomana, 1843-1859, f. 1, d. 467, 16 March 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour, Turin.

59 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 33, 3 April 1859, copy of dispatch, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Camillo Benso Conte di Cavour, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, Turin.

60 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 37, d. 2789, 20 July 1859, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, Constantinople.

61 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 28, d. 167, 28 March 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Naples.

In order to ensure their conviction, Spitzer Efendi and Rüstem Bey actively collaborated with the Turinese ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Bolognese tribunal, providing them with the necessary documentation for the case from Constantinople.<sup>62</sup> The delivery of the requested documents was not an easy task due to the complexity of the postal systems between the Italian and Ottoman states, the differences between the imperial and the local judiciary systems, and, finally, the internal upheavals within the Italian Peninsula. In fact, in October, Spitzer Efendi reported that the revolutionary events of the Second Italian War of Independence (April-July 1859) risked compromising the trial's outcome. Even if, in July the Ottoman *chargé d'affaires* in Naples sent the entire related documentation to the pontifical authorities of the city, by that point, the pontifical authorities had left Bologna and had taken away with them the other documents related to the case.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, while Italian unification reshaped the international balance, Ottoman diplomats decided to focus their efforts on negotiating with the new Sardo-Italian government to guarantee the continuation of the trial under the new regime;<sup>64</sup> obtaining the documents from the Ottoman and pontifical authorities; and, finally, avoiding any kind of clemency for Ulisse Baldini and his accomplices.

Spitzer Efendi tried to re-obtain from the ex-director of the police of Bologna the documents and proposed to go in person to Bologna to establish official contact with the current authorities of the country.<sup>65</sup> In the same moment, Rüstem Bey negotiated with the Savoyard foreign ministry to obtain guarantees of a favourable sentence against the counterfeiters of Ottoman *kaimés* because it was important that these individuals cannot escape 'the vindictiveness of the Law'. Once more, their severe condemnation had to become an example to 'curb the manufacture' of false *kaimés*.<sup>66</sup> During the trial, a problem concerning the differences of the Ottoman and the Italian juridical systems emerged. When the Ottoman ministry of Foreign

62 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 45, 16 October 1859, copy of dispatch, the minister of Foreign Affairs, Giuseppe Dabormida, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, Turin.

63 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 49, d. 279, 17 October 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, to the ministry of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Naples.

64 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 64, d. 736/46, 5 April 1860, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

65 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 49, d. 279, 17 October 1859.

66 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 106, d. 616, 20 October 1859.

Affairs sent the reports of the police magistrates to Naples as incriminating evidence, Rüstem Bey had to explain that in the European tribunals, this document typology was accepted only as an indictment and not as evidence.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, he requested the creation and the delivery of a list of documents that could be accepted as evidence in a European court, such as a certified example of false *kaimes* exchanged between Tommaso Facchini and Ludovico Randaboschi in Constantinople, the translations of the depositions of the other members such as Bongiacchi, official certifications of the falseness of *kaimes* found in Constantinople, and a host of other evidence collected by the Ottoman police. Only in this way would it be possible to avoid 'the acquittal of the accused currently detained in Bologna' and create 'a warning to those who might be tempted to follow such a guilty example'. From these dispatches, the effort of the Ottoman diplomats to increase the compatibility and, consequently, the collaboration between the Ottoman and Italian juridical institutions against international counterfeiters is evident. But, even if Spitzer Efendi obtained some of the necessary documents from Cardinal Antonelli at the end of December,<sup>68</sup> the remaining documentation was slow to arrive in Bologna from Constantinople. Even in February 1860, Rüstem Bey reported that the delay of the imperial government in delivering the documents was a cause of great embarrassment for the juridical authorities of Bologna and risked compromising a positive verdict for the Porte because if the documents requested in Constantinople were to be delayed, Ulisse Baldini and the other members of Randaboschi's gang would be released.<sup>69</sup>

In the end, thanks to Rüstem Bey's pressure on the imperial ministry, the documentation finally arrived in Bologna in time for the process. The issue concerning the exchange of documents between the Ottoman and Sardo-Italian governments continued to be a problem in the period immediately following the Italian unification. In fact, even in the spring of 1861, another

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67 BOA, HR. H. 169/S, enc. 50, d. 628, 17 November 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

68 BOA, HR. H. 169/S, enc. 53, d. 310, 12 December 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Spitzer Efendi, to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Naples.

69 BOA, HR. H. 169/S, d. 701, enc. 61, 22 February 1860, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, Turin.

delay by the Ottoman authorities in providing the necessary documentation concerning another group of counterfeiters to the tribunal of Messina risked compromising the final verdict.<sup>70</sup> At the end of 1860, Rüstem Bey wrote to Fuad Pasha that, this time, the lawyer of the Ottoman legation Tecchio had suggested to him that he avoid participating in the Bolognese trial as civil party because of the uncertainty of a favourable verdict, also considering the difficulties faced by the embassy in the trial against Venanzi and Varallo-Pandolfini. He recommended that the embassy maintain the position of complaining party, leaving the role of civil party to the Italian ministry.<sup>71</sup>

Finally, in April 1861, the attorney-general of Bologna, Bianchi, wrote a letter to Rüstem Bey, confirming that the imperial government could be certain that it would obtain a guilty verdict.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, Bianchi advised Rüstem Bey that the pontifical legislation of 1858 used in the trial would not punish the counterfeit of foreign currency. In any case, he could be confident that the Bolognese tribunal would consider the ‘spirit of the Law’ and the legislator’s desire to suppress every kind of currency counterfeiting, even if it would be difficult to obtain the desired penalty. In the end, although the tribunal of Bologna recognised the guilt of the counterfeiters, the court underscored how the ‘state of indigence in some of the defendants, in others of greed for profit, because they were somewhat disrupted in their business affairs, could be the impulses for crime.’<sup>73</sup>

As hoped by Rüstem Bey, the presence and involvement in the trials against Italo-Levantine counterfeiters of Ottoman *kaimes* undoubtedly represented both a reason for cooperation between imperial diplomats and Italian authorities, and an incentive for the recently founded Italian authorities to engage in the fight against the counterfeiting of foreign currency. Despite the results the Ottoman diplomats and consuls obtained in the

70 Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri (ASDMAE), Moscatti VI (M. VI), f. 787, d. 1119, 19 July 1861, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Bettino Ricasoli, Turin.

71 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 98, d. 942/176, 13 December 1860, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs ad interim, Emin Aali Pasha, Turin.

72 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 110, 19 April 1861, copy of a letter, the attorney-general of Bologna, Bianchi, to the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, Bologna.

73 BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 31, 5 April 1859, summary of Court findings in the case of forgery against Raffaele Randaboschi and accomplices, Bologna.

investigations and in the Italian tribunals, the counterfeiting of Ottoman *kaimes* continued until their withdrawal at the beginning of the 1860s. The crime involved not only Ottoman Italo-Levantine subjects, but also Italian citizens, such as the Milanese Giuseppe Bonfanti, or Nousrek Bey, an ex-colonel of the imperial army during the Crimean War and the son-in-law of the Ottoman Consul in Milan, Seraphin Manasse, all of whom were accused of counterfeiting.<sup>74</sup>

## Conclusion

The great mobility of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the Crimean War certainly favoured not only legal migration but also the spread of criminal activities. Italian and Ottoman communities such as the Italo-Levantine communities, characterised by a high level of indigence among their members, were particularly exposed to this criminal phenomenon.<sup>75</sup> For this reason, states such as the Ottoman Empire tried to implement international collaboration against criminal organisations, following the norms established between states based on international law.

This article investigated the formation of these international criminal gangs and networks and how Ottoman diplomats and consul, and local authorities collaborated in the investigations and trials to avoid the spread of criminal organisations in their respective territories. Moreover, it has highlighted how the diplomatic relations between the Ottomans and their international partners were also influenced by the desire of their respective governments to contrast criminal organisations. This desire influenced the Ottoman attitude towards European and American states, encouraging them to implement international collaboration with countries where gangs of Italo-Levantine counterfeiterers existed, such as the Kingdom of Sardinia, the Papal States, and the United States, and to consider the possibility of opening diplomatic relations with other countries, such as Switzerland.

In fact, while Ottoman diplomats continued to negotiate and coordinate international collaboration against counterfeiterers of Ottoman *kaimes*

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74 ASTO, Legazioni, Turchia 1833-1860, mazzo (m.) 20, d. 648, 18 December 1859, the *chargé d'affaires*, Rüstem Bey, to the minister of Foreign Affairs, Giuseppe Dabor-mida, Turin.

75 La Salvia, "La comunità," 30.

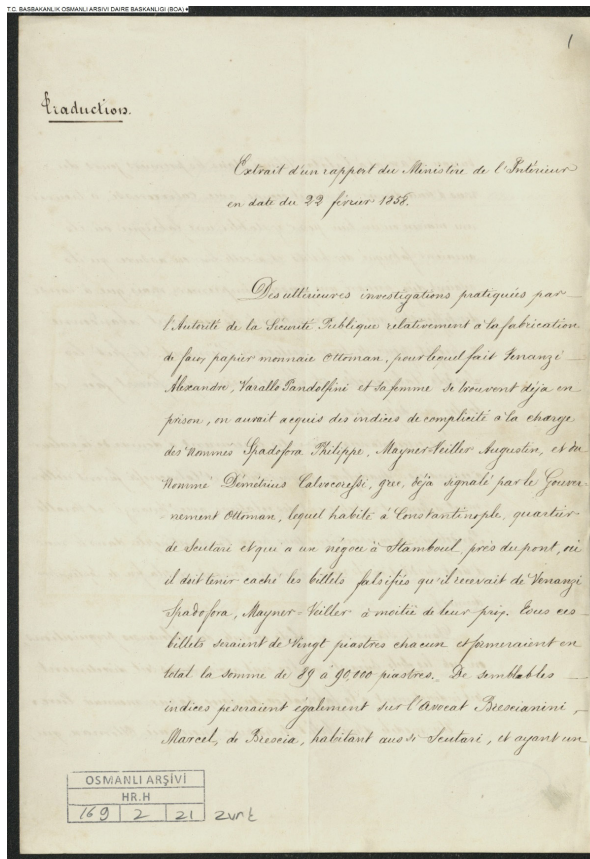
from the Black Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, there are also testimonies of other groups of Italo-Levantine counterfeiters in European countries, where they continued their criminal enterprises, taking advantage of the absence of an Ottoman consular network.<sup>76</sup> As emerges from the Sardo-Italian and Ottoman documents, even if during investigations and trials the local authorities involved often agreed to actively collaborate with Ottoman diplomats and consuls in the fight against the Italo-Levantine groups of counterfeiters, on several occasions, the local courts showed a tolerant attitude towards them, or at least tended to downsize the seriousness of their punishment. Simultaneously, their criminal activities effectively played a fundamental role in the Ottoman decision to increase its diplomatic relations with other countries.

From this perspective, the fight against international counterfeiters constituted an important motivation for the Ottomans in promoting good relations with their international partners, from Odessa to New York, and through the different pre-unitarian states of the Italian Peninsula. Thus, the fight against counterfeiting, which occurred between the 1850s and 1860s, can be considered as an important driving force in the development of inter-imperial and international diplomatic relations. Illicit trade connected not only capitals and resources, but also governments and diplomatic agents in the international scenario.

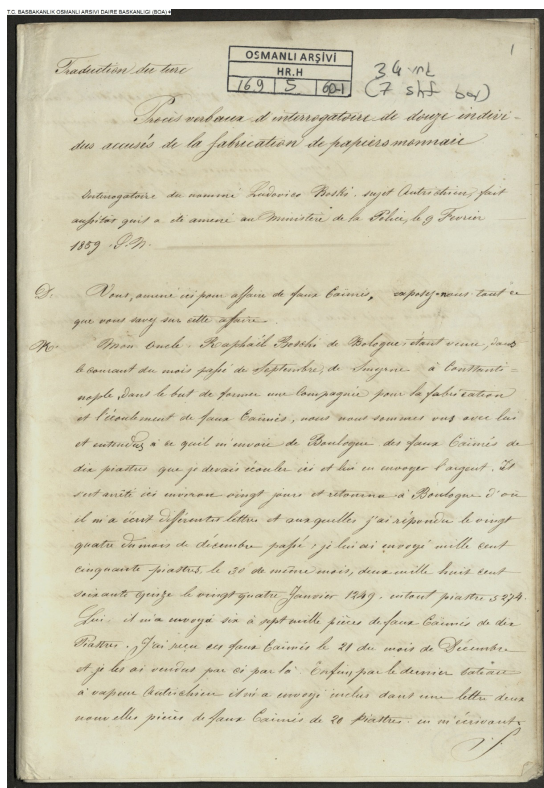
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76 BOA, Hariciye Nezareti (HR.) Londra Sefareti (SFR.3), 59/18, 10 June 1861, Letter of François Napoléon De Szostakowski to the minister of Finances, Tefik Pasha, London.

## Appendix



**Figure 1.** Extract from Chargé d'Affaires Rüstem Bey's report to Foreign Affairs Minister, Fuad Pasha, annexed to document 225 from the Sardinian Ministry of the Interior. 22 February 1858, Turin. (BOA, HR. H. 169/2, enc. 21).



HR.H.00169.00005.060

**Figure 2.** Translation from Turkish of the minutes of the interrogation of twelve individuals accused of counterfeiting, annexed to document 3751. Correspondence from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fuad Pasha, to Chargé d'Affaires Rüstem Bey. 15 February 1860, Constantinople. (BOA, HR. H. 169/5, enc. 60-1).



HR.H.00114.00002.007

**Figure 3.** Presumed example of a counterfeit Ottoman banknote, lacking the imperial Tuğra, annexed to a duplicate dispatch from Consul J. Hosford Smith to Ambassador Musurus Bey. 7 October 1858, New York. (BOA, HR. H. 114/2, enc. 7).

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# DILEMMA AND RISK AMONG SMYRNA'S BRITISH LEVANTINE COMMUNITY: SEPTEMBER – NOVEMBER 1922

Joanna Hyslop\*

## Introduction

During the Greco-Turkish war, a Turkish counter-offensive in August 1922 resulted in the collapse of the Greek front in Anatolia and forces under Mustapha Kemal advanced towards Smyrna (Izmir). Anticipating their arrival, the inhabitants of Smyrna were confronted with a dilemma. Should they remain in the city or leave? In the days following the entry of Turkish cavalry on September 9, and before the fire which destroyed much of the city had been set, the precariousness of residents' safety intensified dramatically. Following the fire, a similar indecision overcame those who had escaped to safety but still held hopes of retaining interests in Smyrna: could or should they return to the city to guard or retrieve any surviving property? Hesitations over providing testimony for an insurance trial in 1924 demonstrate the continuing predicament faced by individuals, families and businesses over returning and their uncertain relations with the new authorities in Turkey. British Consular and Naval communications intersect with the personal narratives recorded in unofficial reports, diaries and memoirs of the British Levantine communities of Smyrna. Examination of these overlapping accounts, the questions over the evacuation of

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\* Independent Researcher, Professional Artist and Lecturer, United Kingdom. Email: [hyslopjoanna@gmail.com](mailto:hyslopjoanna@gmail.com), ORCID: 0009-0006-1043-4103. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384859](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384859)

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the British, and subsequent uncertainties in the aftermath of the catastrophe, form part of my work on the biography of my grandfather, the Reverend Charles Dobson (1886-1930), who was Anglican Chaplain at Smyrna in 1922.

The desire to understand the character and actions of Charles Dobson brings me to the people he engaged with during his brief time in Smyrna. Accounts left by some provide fragments from which to rebuild his communities. Chance discoveries in one account, ostensibly trivial scraps, add fresh insight when examined in relation with others. Covering the period from late August to mid-November 1922, this material provides multiple viewpoints of my central subject, while enabling me to explore beyond Charles Dobson's own voice through the perspectives of those who encountered him.

An abundance of useful information is revealed in these narratives. However, for the purpose of this chapter, my main focus is on the circumstances, events and considerations influencing British Levantines in their decision-making over leaving, or later returning to Smyrna. Fluctuations in confidence for a peaceful transition of power, subsequent hardships endured, hopes entertained, or dashed, are distilled and laid out chronologically. Place names and terms are used largely as originally. Initially, the variations of material, their styles, purposes or intended readers are considered here with a brief background on each of the authors.

### **Accounts and Their Authors**

Primarily from a British, or British Levantine perspective, the accounts I use incorporate official Admiralty and Consular telegrams and reports, personal memoirs, letters and journals, and the unofficial reports and testimony given by Charles Dobson himself. The narratives reflect on varied individual types, or communities. Besides Naval and Consular staff, these include railway employees, a farmer and his wife, a nursing sister, a chaplain, a merchant tailor and a college principal, who in turn reflect on their peers, those they served, and the elite or the servant classes of Smyrna.

As well as his own reports and evidence, the accounts examined for this chapter were made by people who, in varying degrees, knew Charles

Dobson or knew of him.<sup>1</sup> He was a recognised figure in the city and, in his role as clergyman, acted as a link across the strata of the disparate societies through which he moved. A collaborative relationship between chaplaincy and consulate brought about frequent impromptu, as well as professional interactions. Living at the English Nursing Home, which was a hub for British Levantines, he was well-informed as to their activities, and their news and views. Visitors were able to encounter him there, beyond the pulpit, as it were.

Admiralty reports on the conflagration at Smyrna were reviewed early in 1923 and, in case they might be published for Parliament or for enquiring insurance firms, telegrams were paraphrased with dates and numbers omitted so that no inferences could be drawn if they fell into the wrong hands. The Commander-in-Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet, Admiral de Beauvoir Brock (1869–1947) kept a daily log from 3 to 14 September. This was summarised and submitted, with enclosures regarding evacuation and shipment of British refugees, on October 2 after his departure from Smyrna for Chanak, and is an example of the tidiness of retrospect. Thereafter, “rough diaries” were kept by Rear-Admirals Tyrwhitt and Nicholson who remained as Senior Naval Officers (SNOs) at Smyrna during the weeks following the fire. These offer a wealth of information, documenting events after the fire, including evacuation of further British and other refugees, and detail conditions and considerations for those who might have wished to return.<sup>2</sup>

When he was appointed Consul-General at Smyrna in 1921, Sir Harry Lamb (1857-1948) had a long record of diplomatic service behind him, including at Constantinople, Adrianople and Van. He was Consul-General at Salonica before the war and attached to the Military Mission there in 1918. In 1920 he served again at the British High Commission at Constantinople.

Approached by the British Insurance Association requesting access to official reports on events leading to the fire, the Foreign Office was

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1 Dobson illustrated that he was known to more people than he himself knew when he described boarding *SS Bavarian* on the night of 14 September, “I went downstairs, and the place was crammed with people whom I knew. If I did not know them, they knew me...” Dobson, Defendants’ Evidence.

2 Brock, Report of Proceedings at Smyrna.

unwilling to allow these to be made public during the negotiations of the Lausanne Treaty. Although copies of documents could not be supplied, the Foreign Office had no objection to Sir Harry being contacted with a view to his giving information or evidence. Parker Garrett & Co. interviewed Lamb on behalf of British insurance companies. He produced a written statement for them well in advance of the trial which was held in December 1924 to test whether compensation for damage and losses caused by the fire should be covered by insurance. Lamb's statement was careful not to mention a difficult encounter with Nouredin Pasha or a chance meeting with Mustapha Kemal when Kemal refused to recognise his status as Consul-General.<sup>3</sup> These events had been flagged as matters of urgency in his cables.<sup>4</sup> Lamb confided to the Foreign Office's legal expert that he had told Parker Garrett representatives that he was not prepared to express his personal opinion as to the origin of the fire.<sup>5</sup>

Harry Lamb arranged that his subordinate, Vice-Consul Robert Urquhart (1896-1983), should remain at Smyrna once the majority of British had left and Urquhart took over after Lamb's departure on September 23<sup>rd</sup>. At twenty-six, Urquhart was remarkably young for such a responsibility but he was considered eminently skilled for the job. He had studied journalism and, after attending wireless school during the war, he served in the Royal Naval Reserve in the Adriatic, Aegean, and Black Sea. Post-war, he continued his studies at university, learning Arabic and Turkish. Living onboard British ships in the harbour, Urquhart wrote meticulously detailed reports which were sent to the Foreign Office via Constantinople.<sup>6</sup>

The Reverend Alexander Maclachlan (1858-1940) was President of the International College at Smyrna.<sup>7</sup> Born in Ontario, he came to Smyrna in 1891 as part of the American Foreign Mission. He married Rose Blackler<sup>8</sup> that year and set up the Smyrna Boys' High School which original-

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3 Lamb, Draft Statement.

4 Lamb, Dispatches.

5 Lamb to Malkin, Letter, 20 March 1924, TNA: FO 286/906.

6 Urquhart, Reports to Rumbold.

7 The International College was often referred to as "The American College" as its funding was American, as were some of its teaching staff.

8 Rose Blackler (1866-1954). The Blackler family had been established in Smyrna since the late 1840s. See Levantine Heritage Foundation (web page), accessed 5 March 2023, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/webber-family-in-smyrna.html>.

ly took Armenian boys, and later accepted Greeks, attracting some from mainland Greece and Macedonia. By 1902, the school was recognised as the “International College” when, with new freedoms gained by the Young Turk Revolution in 1908, it began taking Turkish pupils. The college was later moved to the suburb of Paradise (Şirinyer) where a large campus was built. In 1922, together with Maclachlan, Raymond de Candolle, the General Manager of the Ottoman Railway Company,<sup>9</sup> planned to start a new school for boys under fourteen and invited Charles Dobson to join them. Charles recognised the need for a school and wished them success but had reasons for refusing to have anything to do with it. “De Candolle and the Americans may think I’m spiking their pitch,” he said, adding, “it is incompatible with the general order of things, to have the British Chaplain doing his own job in the intervals of his work as one of the staff of an international teaching institution.”<sup>10</sup>

Written up from notes, with the retrospective view of months or years, Alexander Maclachlan’s document forms an unfinished personal memoir for his family, not intended for publication. Highlighting his own legacy and how he had developed the International College over many years, his wandering “potpourri” illustrates his long-standing good relations with the Ottomans, including during the war years, and offers insight into his optimism at the prospect of being able to ride out the transition of power. The narrative includes the days before the fire and his brief return in November 1922.<sup>11</sup> The college campus was some miles outside Smyrna and, incapacitated after a severe beating at the hands of Turkish irregulars on September 11, Maclachlan relied on staff and students for news of the developing situation in the city.

Francis Holton (1887-1965) and his wife Kate (née Heginbotham b. 1892) had a farm near the International College. His father, also Francis, was a senior member of staff for the Ottoman Railway in 1922 and he lived

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9 Raymond Charles Pyramus de Candolle (1864-1935) railway engineer who acted as a British wartime agent in Russia. The Ottoman (Aidin) Railway ran from the station, where de Candolle had his office in the Point district, situated opposite the Nursing Home.

10 Dobson to Philpott, letter, 3 June 1922, Smyrna Anglican Chaplaincy, G.L. Ms 32699/521, Guildhall Library, London.

11 Maclachlan, *Potpourri of Sidelights*.

at nearby Boudjah. The Holtons jointly kept a journal and their narrative is full of particular, first-hand detail.<sup>12</sup> Their relationship with Maclachlan was deferential, though familiar, referring to him as “Dr. Mac.” Right up until the last minute, they faced many twists and turns in their decision-making which was further complicated as they were unsure whether to follow the British lead over leaving Smyrna, or that of the Americans at the college.

A letter dated September 27 from Henry Locke, a merchant tailor with premises in Frank Street was sent from the Lazaretto in Malta to his uncle, Robert Simes in Australia, parts of which were published in Australian newspapers in November.<sup>13</sup> He and his family left Smyrna on September 12<sup>th</sup> and his letter refers to the fire as he heard it from subsequent arrivals at Malta, conveying both his own horror as well as the trauma of those who had witnessed it. Locke is full of admiration for Harry Lamb’s work which had been carried out despite his being “broken down with grief and sorrow” over the death of his daughter. He also eulogised Charles Dobson’s work in the last hours at Smyrna and on the *Bavarian’s* voyage to Malta, which he heard about from other passengers.

Smyrna’s English Nursing Home was run by the Williamson sisters, Grace, Alithea and Leila who were part of an established Levantine family.<sup>14</sup> This lying-in clinic served the city and its suburbs, including Boudjah, Bournabat and Cordelio, with a clientele of British Levantines, Greeks and Armenians. Situated in the Point district, the Nursing Home provided a clear view of arrivals, departures and gatherings with its shuttered windows looking onto the large square of the Smyrna-Aidin railway station opposite.<sup>15</sup> Many used it as their first or last calling place on arrival or departure for the suburbs or further afield. Likewise, its proximity to the Gasworks pier, one of the boarding points for ships, brought many visitors.

Throughout the war period, when those Levantines who were considered enemies of the Ottomans were confined at Smyrna, Sister Grace Williamson kept a journal for the benefit of relatives who lived far away and

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12 Kate and Francis Holton, Journal.

13 Locke, Letter.

14 Grace Williamson (1865-1948), Alithea (Williamson) Whittall (1873-1955) and Leila (Williamson) Lewis (1852-1936) were all born in Smyrna.

15 Now known as Alsancak Railway Station.

were deprived of news by means of regular letters.<sup>16</sup> When she saw the likelihood of the Turks' return, she took it up again.<sup>17</sup> She appears to talk directly to her relatives, chatting and exclaiming, and her writing has a breathless quality as she tries to put all of her experiences onto paper. Covering the final days in Smyrna, from September 5 until the rescue of the Nursing Home in the early hours of the 14, the account is rich in detail, not only of events, but also her opinions and emotions which fluctuated and pivoted as the situation developed. For example, she registered disgust when one friend who had been sheltering at the Nursing Home suddenly left to join a British evacuation ship, remarking that he had "done a bolt," adding, "he was with us till last night, but he could not stick it out." The following day, when it was clear that even the British were not immune to violence or death, she wrote about how glad she was her relatives had managed to leave, adding that her friend "was right to go when he could for we might be shut in for ages, and we know what that means." Here, she was referring to hard times endured during the war. However, her survival of that previous experience may have contributed to keeping her at Smyrna until it was almost too late.

Charles Dobson's early career was spent in a West Coast mining region in New Zealand at a time of social strife and his actions there demonstrate his socialist sympathies.<sup>18</sup> Later, as Vicar of the Marlborough Sounds, he walked many miles to visit the scattered communities of farmers and Māori settlements. As a military chaplain, he served in Egypt and Gallipoli where he contracted dysentery and was invalided to London. There he met Eleni Georgouloupoulos (1890–1940), who was born in Piraeus, educated in Paris and was now teaching French to schoolgirls. In France Dobson was injured twice and awarded the Military Cross.<sup>19</sup> He and Eleni were married in

16 Williamson, "Diary of life during WWI Smyrna, Turkey," See Levantine Heritage Foundation, Website, Diaries (web page), contributor Alithea Lockie, accessed 2 March 2023, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/note23.htm>.

17 Williamson, Diary 1922.

18 Dobson put himself forward to be manager of a Miners' Union. See "The Miners' Union Election," *Inangahua Times*, 2 August 1909, National Library of New Zealand.

19 Citation for MC: "During an attack the battalion was heavily shelled prior to its advance. The regimental medical officer and many of his men became casualties. Mr Dobson immediately took charge of the situation, established a regimental aid post, organized stretcher parties, and himself dressed wounded men under intense fire, and with few facilities. His example of gallantry and unselfish devotion to duty were the admiration of all who came in contact with him." New Zealand Defence Force Per-

Piraeus in 1919 and they sailed to New Zealand where he worked for two years.<sup>20</sup> The death of Eleni's father in 1920 signalled a desire to be closer to Athens when a suitable opportunity presented itself.<sup>21</sup>

In 1922, Charles Dobson was appointed Chaplain at Smyrna. He arrived in April with Eleni, who was pregnant, and their one-year-old daughter, Clio, having sailed from Greece on HMS *Iron Duke* with Admiral Brock.<sup>22</sup> His church, St. John's, was a matter of yards from the English Nursing Home where they took on rooms. Their second daughter, Rosemary,<sup>23</sup> was born there in late May and they employed a Greek nurse, Chrysanthi Valkaniotes, as her wetnurse.<sup>24</sup> St. John's vicarage was currently let out at a high rent and the Dobsons chose to stay on at the Nursing Home until September, when the lease would be reviewed.

As their Chaplain, Dobson was in touch with the Anglican congregation of the city and Cordelio. British naval parties were landed for weekly services and the Chaplaincy worked hand-in-glove with the Consulate. He also called on the Greek Metropolitan and "had an interesting hour" with him.<sup>25</sup> A relative newcomer to the city, a British subject who was married to a Greek woman, Dobson was closely connected with different communities at Smyrna but not necessarily a part of, or belonging to them, as illustrated by his unwillingness to be involved with the school planned by de Candolle and Maclachlan. As such, his viewpoint was that of an outsider.

Charles Dobson wrote two independent reports covering the fortnight leading to the fire at Smyrna. The first report was written at the request of Sir Ronald Graham, the British Ambassador to Italy, and sent from Rome to

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sonnel Record: Charles James Hamilton DOBSON, AABK 18805 W5537 0034302, Archives New Zealand, (web page), accessed 5 March 2023, <https://collections.archives.govt.nz/en/web/arena/search#/?q=charles+james+hamilton+dobson>.

20 It is interesting to note that Charles Dobson, an Anglican clergyman, married Eleni Georgouloupoulos under the Orthodox ceremony at Agios Spyridon in Piraeus, 12 May 1919.

21 Pavlos Georgouloupoulos (1855–1920), born in Piraeus, was a wealthy merchant.

22 Dobson to Tom Seddon, Letter, 10 May 1922, Seddon family papers, MS-Papers-1619-159, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

23 Rosemary Dione Collet (Dobson) Hyslop (1922–2013), the author's mother.

24 The existence of Rosemary's wetnurse with a daughter named Irene was merely a family story until her existence was confirmed on a list of refugees departing Malta, together with the Dobsons, dated 23 October 1922.

25 Dobson to Philpott, Letter.

Lord Curzon at the Foreign Office.<sup>26</sup> The second account, *The Smyrna Holocaust*, was written in France and published in London in early 1923.<sup>27</sup> As the author of independent reports, he was later sought out to give evidence for the 1924 trial between the American Tobacco Company and the Guardian Assurance Company. Initially, he was examined under oath in early September 1924.<sup>28</sup> In December he returned to appear as a witness for the trial at the Royal Courts of Justice.<sup>29</sup> His two reports are considered and structured, written from a personal viewpoint, identifying when he included information he had heard from someone else. The Rome report begins with the fresh doubts he had encountered around responsibility for the fire, and in *The Smyrna Holocaust* he reiterates his astonishment over this questioning. For both, the objective is to rectify the growing misreporting on the fire that he heard in Italy and later in France. Both pre-trial and trial evidence show a chronological ordering of events by his questioners, and his reports were used by them as occasional prompts for their approaches. The transcripts add extraordinary detail, through his memory being occasionally jogged, giving a personal richness to such a complex narrative. His evidence shows little variance from his reports in terms of essential content; they are consistent in facts. His manner guards against any lapse into hearsay and is resistant to any questioning intended to mislead. It is delivered as a reliving, sometimes in the present tense, of his experience of two years before.

### Unfolding Events and Dilemmas

HMS *Iron Duke* was en route from Constantinople for the Dalmatian Coast when news came through that the defeat of the Greek Army in Asia Minor was turning into a disorderly retreat. Admiral Brock abandoned this cruise and immediately proceeded to Smyrna. Arriving on Sunday September 3, he met with Sir Harry Lamb, the British Consul-General, to discuss the situation which might become critical at any moment. He also met with the Greek High Commissioner, Aristeidis Stergiadis,<sup>30</sup> who acknowledged that

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26 Dobson, Report on Smyrna.

27 Dobson, *The Smyrna Holocaust*.

28 Dobson, Defendants' Evidence.

29 Dobson, Transcript of trial.

30 Aristeidis Stergiadis (1861–1949) was appointed High Commissioner of Smyrna under the Greek administration in 1919.

the position for the Greek forces was becoming desperate and that the military and civil administration may have to evacuate the city soon. Brock speculated that, rather than the fate of the city's populace, the overriding concern for the Greek authorities was the evacuation of their army and stores.

With members of Smyrna's British community, Brock discussed arrangements for their safety should there be a disturbance. Surprisingly they seemed to favour immediate evacuation, whereas it had been supposed that they would only want to send women and children away. Lamb had already requisitioned commercial ships from the Levant Steamship Company and embarkation would start early on Tuesday September 5.<sup>31</sup>

Kate Holton and her infant son John had been holidaying at Fochia, forty miles north of Smyrna. Hearing news of the fall of Afyonkarahisar in late August, she urgently wanted to return to Smyrna and asked her husband Francis to come for her. Their departure was delayed until 4 a.m. on Tuesday September 5 as all other steamers were going straight to Smyrna without stopping at Fochia.<sup>32</sup>

That same Tuesday, Charles Dobson visited Metropolitan Chrysostomos<sup>33</sup> at his church, Agia Photini. Like his own churchyard and other public spaces, the churchyard and building were full of refugees from the interior. The Metropolitan predicted excessive violence should the Turks regain the city and gave Dobson a message for the Archbishop of Canterbury, begging him to use his influence with the British Cabinet to effect a treaty with Kemal outside the city or, in the event of an entry, to ensure protection of his people. Dobson took the message to the Consulate to show to Harry Lamb before sending it but, as Lamb was busy elsewhere, he discussed it with Admiral Brock instead. Brock was sympathetic but believed that the Turks' entry would be orderly, emphasising that there was considerable force already on the spot. He advised Charles to use his own discretion over cabling the Archbishop,<sup>34</sup> but to add to any message that the

31 Brock, Report of Proceedings at Smyrna.

32 Kate and Francis Holton, Journal.

33 Metropolitan Chrysostomos (1867–1922), head of the Greek Orthodox Church in Smyrna.

34 "This telegram I left concealed in a bureau in Smyrna, because in the last stages it was too incriminating to be caught with. [...] I met the admiral, and he agreed with me that it was late to send such a telegram, but he said that if I sent it I should also mention to

British Admiral had sent it and was prepared to give all protection in his power to all sections of the community. He gave his authority for Charles to publish a message in his name in the Press, giving his opinion that any occupation would be orderly and advising everyone to look after the refugees in the city. Dobson wrote the Admiral's message, leaving it with members of the Micro-Asiatic Defence League<sup>35</sup> and then returned to report to Chrysostomos. The Metropolitan not reassured by the Admiral's statement, remained full of anxiety for his people, feeling that he knew the Turks better than any British Officer. In its printing, the message given to the Press became distorted. It made no reference to the possible entry of Kemalists, and a statement that British Naval units were on their way to Smyrna was placed next to it, suggesting a continuity of the message. Dobson believed that it had been distorted in this way so as to give moral courage to those who were prepared to defend the suburbs but he deplored its result which was abandonment of any resistance with the false reliance on the expected arrival of British transports.

Approaching Smyrna that morning, the Holtons saw evidence of hasty preparations for departure. At the British Consulate, which was full of people making enquiries, they saw Kate's brother, Arthur, getting his papers ready, though he was uncertain whether he ought to leave. Once back at their home near the International College, Kate was called on by Arthur, her sister Ethel and mother, to see if she would join them in leaving for Cyprus the following afternoon. Kate had decided to stay, but assured her brother that he was doing the right thing as he had been despondent about business and uneasy at the prospect of leaving their mother and sister alone in Boudjah each day. In deciding whether she should leave with her young son, she and Francis chose to act in accordance with the American families at this stage and stay.

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the archbishop that I had shown the telegram to him, and that he was prepared to do all in his power to afford protection to all sections of the community. I do not believe that the admiral, any more than the rest of us, foresaw how utterly the fears of Chrysostomos were to be justified by subsequent events." Dobson, Report on Smyrna.

35 Dobson briefly mentioned this defence league in a letter to his archdeacon. "The Microasiatic movement is quite real and has the support of the best elements of the Greek population and also of the Church." Dobson to Philpott, Letter. See also Victoria Solomonidis, "Greece in Asia Minor: the Greek administration of the Vilayet of Aidin, 1919-1922" (Ph.D. dissertation, King's College London, 1984), 226-238.

Grace Williamson described the view from the Nursing Home windows with trains running day and night and refugees from all over the country coming into Smyrna. As news got worse, nervousness intensified. Charles Dobson tried to address the disquiet by encouraging his congregation to help these people by keeping a British presence at Smyrna rather than causing even greater alarm by leaving. “But dear me” said Grace, “what a poor lot we all are, ever so many have already gone & shown how terrified they are.” The Nursing Home was extra busy with babies and other medical cases but from early on Wednesday, whole families arrived, ready to embark on SS *Mingary* as soon as orders were given. There was still great confusion among them over whether to leave. Grace had visited Bournabat with Beatrix de Candolle<sup>36</sup> to get an idea of how many were leaving and found that people were very undecided. If they didn’t personally experience horrific events, they felt safe. Ex-army officers were keen to send women and children away, but Grace thought this only stoked fear. The Greeks, seeing the British take fright, were panicking and they all wanted to leave, she thought. The authorities appeared to give an order to leave, but those leaving everything behind were filled with dread by a notice from the Admiral and Consul-General. It stated that this opportunity for passage was only granted on the understanding that it was at their own desire. HM Government would not be responsible for the maintenance of individuals or families once arrived on British territory and they would not be entitled to claim compensation against the Government for loss or damage to property sustained in consequence of their departure. Grace noted that hundreds went down to Smyrna but, on seeing the notice, returned to their homes. She expressed disdain for those British who chose to leave, saying that they had made fools of themselves, whereas those who remained showed common sense. However, she seemed relieved that her position gave her a strong reason to stay, thus dodging the dilemma undergone by others. “With us there is no choice I am thankful to say. We have to stick by the clinic and our patients.”<sup>37</sup> There was a general understanding that Levantines had benefited

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36 Beatrix de Candolle (1864–1942), wife of General Manager of the Ottoman Railway Company, Raymond de Candolle.

37 Williamson, Diary 1922.

during the war and if there was any truth in this belief, it may have contributed to a sense of complacency in 1922.<sup>38</sup>

*SS Mingary* departed for Famagusta on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> with only 95 passengers: 15 men, 43 women and 27 children who were nearly all British. Cypriots and Maltese were unwilling to leave as they had everything to lose by quitting Smyrna and early that morning Harry Lamb cabled the Foreign Office urgently requesting an increase in relief for destitute British subjects, given the imminent shortage of food and inevitable price increases.<sup>39</sup> Brock surmised that British subjects were reassured by the rumour that Allied Powers would occupy the city and by the French and Italians letting it be known that they would not leave on any account. He soon realised that this confidence was not shared by everyone as refugees continued to pour into Smyrna and the Ottoman Bank placed its treasure on board *Iron Duke* for safe keeping.

Next morning, British marines arranged onshore accommodation in the gasworks at the Point and the Oriental Carpet Factory on the Quay. Stergiadis unexpectedly appeared on *Iron Duke* with news that Turkish irregulars had been reported twenty miles away. Greek troops, lately arrived from Thrace to repel any immediate advance on the city, were not to be relied upon as there was low morale in Greek regiments. Greek military and civil staff might leave at any moment, creating a critical interregnum between their departure and the arrival of Turkish regulars.<sup>40</sup> Stergiadis agreed that his presence in the city had a calming effect on the Greek populace and he told Brock he was willing to remain as long as possible, provided he could eventually embark in a British man-of-war.<sup>41</sup>

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38 "More Levantines made pots of money during the war by staying here." Warner, Letter.

39 Lamb to Foreign Office, telegram, 6 September 1922, TNA: FO 369/1817. This plea from Lamb triggered a backlog of earlier requests dating from March and an internal memo to expedite a response, "Poor old Lamb is having such a miserable time at Smyrna that every question which can be solved speedily must relieve his mind considerably." Oliphant, memo, 10 September 1922, TNA: FO 369/1817.

40 Brock, Report of Proceedings at Smyrna.

41 Referring to duties carried out on 10 September, Lieutenant-Commander Warner briefly mentioned the removal of the Greek High Commissioner. "We began by shipping off old Sterghiades in a Destroyer." Warner, Letter.

That night, Henry Locke was surprised to find his wife and daughter waiting with two bags at the door of his house in the Point district, ready to board a ship at the gasworks. He was unwilling to leave, believing there was little danger, but he hastily packed a few things while the others anxiously waited. At the last moment, searching in the dark, he managed to find a few shares to put in his pocket.

At Paradise, the Holtons were suddenly woken with news of a special train with an armed guard to take all British from Boudjah down to the Point. They were plunged into confusion over whether to join the train. Consulting Maclachlan, they decided to continue to act in accordance with American families and stay. The train came to Paradise at 2 a.m. with Francis's parents and other friends, none of whom had any idea where they would be sleeping that night, so Francis brought them to the college.<sup>42</sup>

Sydney Gall remained at Paradise that night. His wife, Winifred, had already left for Greece with their son, David. On Friday Sydney shut up his house and took a train to Smyrna where he gave his keys for safekeeping to Vice-Consul Urquhart and boarded SS *Antioch*, which was holding many British for safety. Among them were the Anglican Chaplains of Bournabat and Boudjah, Reverend Lucius Fry and Reverend Robert Ashe, respectively. Ashe, who was unwell, had to be carried on board.<sup>43</sup> Henry Locke, saw Charles Dobson that evening and asked him when he would be leaving. According to Locke, Charles answered that as a priest he would stop till the last.<sup>44</sup>

Greek forces continued to evacuate on Thursday night and throughout the day on Friday. A message that evening from the Allied High Commissioners at Constantinople gave authority to the Allied Admirals and Consuls-General at Smyrna to do all they could towards surrendering the city in an orderly manner to the Turkish army.<sup>45</sup>

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42 Kate and Francis Holton, Journal.

43 Sydney Gall, employed by MacAndrews and Forbes, exporters of liquorice. Gall, Letter to his wife, Winifred, from HS *Maine* off Mitylene, 12 September 1922, précis by Jane Spooner, Levantine Heritage Foundation, Recollections (web page), accessed 5 March 2023, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/testi89.htm>.

44 Locke, Letter.

45 Brock, Report of Proceedings at Smyrna.

Returning home from a visit to the Consulate on Saturday morning, Dobson saw a body of mounted Turkish troops arrive, causing both excitement and great fear among others in the streets. Once home, he found that the occupants of the Nursing Home were endangered by the presence of a Greek naval rating who was seeking refuge there. Realising it was impossible for this man to willingly surrender to a Turkish officer, he dressed him in one of his own clerical suits, turning him out in this disguise.

While taking photographs of the arrival of further troops near some wharves at the Point, Dobson found corpses among the debris left by the embarking Greek army. He was threatened at gunpoint by two Turkish cavalrymen who demanded he take their photograph and was relieved when a Turkish railway employee stopped them by declaring that he was English.<sup>46</sup> Through the shutters of the Nursing Home, he, along with Eleni and Grace witnessed a Turkish civilian mount a horse without a saddle and proceed to rob refugees in the station square, pricking them with a sabre.

Grace confided in her diary that everyone was inwardly delighted to have the Turks back again. Charles felt relief that some proper authority had come to take charge of the city.<sup>47</sup> He considered that the Turks' entry seemed to have been accomplished with little bloodshed in the Point district, qualifying this as the opinion of a man with a close experience of actual war.<sup>48</sup> But all through the night they heard sporadic bursts of rifle fire.

On Sunday the station square was swept, the rubbish filling a big cart ten times over. Dobson set about collecting and burying the dead he had seen and he found an Orthodox priest to perform the rites. A Turkish policeman, posted opposite his church, helped by commandeering a cart and forcing two or three refugees to go with them. They found the bodies and put them in the cart, covering it with the church flag, before burying them at the nearby Orthodox cemetery. Later, seeing more Turkish troops coming in, Charles asked whether they had destroyed some horses with broken

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46 Dobson, Defendants' Evidence.

47 Dobson, Smyrna Holocaust.

48 Dobson's coolness was noted in a description of the fighting of Aug 30, 1918, and the action at Bapaume that won him the Military Cross: "The padre was one of the few Main Body men still surviving and had had a long war experience. He was well known for his courage and *sang-froid*." O. E. Burton, *The Auckland Regiment N.Z.E.F., 1914-18* p 239 (Auckland: Whitcombe and Tombs Ltd., 1922.)

legs out by the harbour. The officer promised he would look into it. This cooperation in the clean-up around the Point that day demonstrates reason for the hope that the situation would soon normalise.

However, Harry Lamb had a “very unsatisfactory” conversation with General Nouredin that day so Brock went to see for himself. Nouredin reassured him that he intended to preserve order and that there categorically was not a state of war between Britain and the Angora Government.<sup>49</sup> That evening, Mustapha Kemal arrived at Cordelio.<sup>50</sup>

Pressure was increasing at the Nursing Home. During the day, Grace had counted over thirty-five adults, with four children and nine infants. By the evening, there were fifty-one. Early on Monday, Charles accompanied her to the Consulate to find extra food for the Home. Crowds were clamouring to get inside, but there were Turkish guards outside, and British marines inside the gate. One of the Consulate staff found a grocery store key which had been deposited there and sent a kavass with them to open it. Charles kept the crowd out while Grace found what she needed inside.

American marines guarded the college at Paradise. Subsequent to the arrival of the Turks, the gates were opened for refugees and a Turkish guard was added outside the campus gate. On Monday, this Turkish guard was needed elsewhere but past good relations meant Maclachlan felt able to visit Nouredin who promised a fresh guard would be sent.<sup>51</sup> That afternoon, looting was reported near the college and Maclachlan took the American sergeant and five marines in a car to dispel the thieves. He was severely beaten by the looters and narrowly avoided being shot. The replacement Turkish guard arrived late that night and Maclachlan admitted it had been foolish to weaken the American guard whose sole purpose was to protect the college.

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49 Nouredin Pasha (1873–1932) had been Deputy Governor of Aidin Vilayet in 1918, subsequently also commander of XVII Corps based at Smyrna.

50 Brock, Report of Proceedings at Smyrna.

51 “I was in some doubt as to whether he would remember me, but the doubt was soon dispelled; for on entering his reception room he came across the floor to greet me in the most cordial manner, and at once recalled some of our experiences together when he was Military Governor of Smyrna, nearly four years previously. He followed this up with some pleasant banter about the last battle of the Great War having been fought at Paradise.” Maclachlan, *Potpourri of Sidelights*.

In the afternoon, Harry Lamb brought the elderly Dr. Murphy and his wife,<sup>52</sup> and their daughters to the Nursing Home. They had been attacked in their home at Bournabat by Turkish soldiers. Later, Charles went to visit the American Consulate, getting a lift into town with Lamb. Returning just before curfew, he came upon an abandoned cart standing in an open space. He pulled aside a rough matting to reveal the bodies of women and babies, and a young girl. They had all been shot. The girl had been shot through both breasts and Charles saw that she had been raped.

Outside the Nursing Home it was a very wild night, full of shooting. Charles and Eleni, having attempted sleep, got up in the middle of the night and dressed themselves. Until this moment, Charles had been trying to shield Eleni from the precariousness of their situation, living there with their two small children. As he put it, “the firing got so bad that I dropped telling her lies, and said we must get up and be prepared for anything.”<sup>53</sup>

Sydney Gall remarked that the *Antioch* was filling with more British residents from the city and its suburbs, including some Maltese. However, Admiral Brock noted that comparatively few Maltese and Cypriots had embarked and he considered they were in little danger so long as order was maintained. By that evening, reports of looting, shooting and rape in the suburbs were reaching the ship and in this way, some heard about the pillage of their own homes. They were then told that British men would be transferred to join women and children on *HS Maine*. Some consular and railway staff were denied permission to leave.<sup>54</sup>

*HS Maine* was dispatched to Malta on the morning of Tuesday the 12<sup>th</sup> carrying 479 passengers. Among them were Henry, Mina and Lizzie Locke and Sydney Gall, Chaplains Fry and Ashe, and Lady and Miss Lamb. The original intention of this sailing was to get people away from Smyrna during this critical period and it was supposed that those who wished to would be able to take passage back when *Maine* next returned to Smyrna.

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52 Lieutenant-Colonel Patrick Murphy (1843–1922), a retired officer of the Anglo-Indian Medical Service and

Helen (McCraith) Murphy who was born about 1850 in Smyrna.

53 Dobson, Defendants' Evidence.

54 Gall, Letter.

Harry Lamb, wanting to investigate reports of a looted house on the far side of the city, was barred from driving through the Armenian quarter and was turned back from every street by Turkish guards. Meanwhile, when Dobson met with Vice-Consul Hole in the Consulate garden, their peace was shattered by an Armenian falling from the roof in his attempt to escape Turkish soldiers who were hunting him. A hunt for Armenians was in full swing now and near the Consulate Charles saw that many were being rounded up and roped into lines.

Later, Charles met Raymond de Candolle in his office at the station. They drew up a list of British subjects, including Maltese, who would need to be informed should it be decided they would have to leave.

A special train for more British from Boudjah and Paradise was organised for that afternoon and Mr Holton senior urged Francis and Kate to join him on it. Francis replied that Kate and the baby would be there, but he would remain behind. Marianthi, their servant, was heart-broken in saying goodbye to Kate and the baby. Kate saw evidence of carnage at Caravan Bridge, which was littered with rags and bedding, a dead woman lying on the deserted platform. At the Point station all the railway staff wore fezzes, and Dobson was there to meet them. The elder Holtons were put up at the de Candolle's, while Charles took others to the now-empty vicarage for the night. Kate was taken to a house adjacent to the vicarage where she sleeplessly listened to the sound of single shots fired throughout the night.<sup>55</sup>

At 11:45 Lamb urgently cabled the Foreign Office for instructions. Should he order the embarkation of the British? Earlier he had "more or less fortuitously" encountered Kemal who asked him to define his capacity at Smyrna. When Lamb replied that he was the representative of the High Commissioner at Constantinople, Kemal retorted that his government considered itself in a state of war with Britain and therefore it did not recognise the High Commissioner at Constantinople or Lamb himself as his representative. Declaring that he would be justified in interning all British subjects, Kemal went on to say that he did not intend to do so, and the British were free to leave if they liked. Lamb then spoke with the Civil Governor who told him that he need not worry about their safety before Wednesday night.

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55 Kate and Francis Holton, *Journal*.

Grace thought of those who were staying in the empty vicarage, confiding to her diary, "If it is war, they will have to go to the first ship that can take them, and oh the horror of travelling as a refugee. How I cling to my home and my own room."

Early on Wednesday Lamb instructed Dobson to find the remaining British and Maltese on his list and tell them to get to the Consulate before six o'clock to embark. His search took him towards the heart of the town and what he witnessed there of looting, severely injured people lying in the streets and crowds running out in panic, showed him that the Turkish soldiers were thoroughly out of hand. Charles began to fear that they had left their own evacuation too late.

Lamb attempted to persuade the Williamsons to leave, but they refused. The ships were only taking British subjects and the sisters were adamant that they would not abandon their patients and staff who included Greeks and Armenians, and possibly Turks.<sup>56</sup> Alithea considered that they had no choice but to stay with their patients and felt sure that, as nurses, they would not be molested.<sup>57</sup>

At Paradise, Francis found a message from Lamb advising all British to leave or remain at their own risk. Maclachlan still intended to stay but advised Francis to think independently with regard to his family. Francis struggled and tried to weigh things up by consulting with his friends. After talking with Cass Reed, Maclachlan's deputy,<sup>58</sup> Francis thought he would go down to the Consulate to see how urgent the situation really was. He would decide at that moment whether to leave and, if things did not seem too bad, he would return to the college. He counted out some money which was to be given to Marianthi if he did not return. Francis was so distracted that he left with some money, but no change of clothing of any kind.

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56 I. N. Duncan Wallace, describing the actions of his father, Duncan Gardner Wallace, a naval officer with extensive knowledge and consular experience of Smyrna, claims that the Williamsons' patients included Turkish and Greek wounded at that time. See I. N. Duncan Wallace, "Evacuation of Smyrna (Izmir) Turkey, 1922," *Asian Affairs* 34, no. 1 (2003), 54–57.

57 Whittall, Letter to Jack.

58 Cass Arthur Reed (1884–1949) married Alexander Maclachlan's daughter, Rosalind, in 1915.

Once at the Consulate, Francis was still undecided. Duty compelled him to return, while the thought of Kate in a far-off country with their child, trying to scrape by without him, tugged him in the other direction. Lamb supposed that, because his family was leaving, Francis should go too. His father told him there might be war, and Francis contemplated the threat of internment under the Turks. He could find no real purpose to be served by his remaining and, at last, decided to leave. At 5.30, they were all about to pass through to the Quay, when a message from Nouredin came, offering a guard for the railway if its staff would stay in Smyrna. The de Candolles were overjoyed and went back with about a dozen staff, Mr and Mrs Holton senior included. Francis argued against this but, as a senior member of staff, his father felt obliged to return.<sup>59</sup> Once back at the station, Beatrix de Candolle crossed over to the Nursing Home to inform them all that Kemal had guaranteed her husband and his staff perfect safety if they carried on with their duties.<sup>60</sup> Meanwhile, Francis and Kate went through to the Quay with their child and were rowed out to the *Bavarian*.

Dobson had difficulty in arranging passage for his baby Rosemary's nurse, Chrysanthi Valkaniotes and her daughter, Irene. As Greeks, they were not entitled to leave by a British ship, but he persuaded the officer to allow them through by making the shocking claim that Irene was his own child. His first sight of a fire was from the pinnacle which took him and his family to the *Bavarian*. Later, from the deck he saw that there were thinner fires in other places and throughout the night he was able to mark their progress, snatching glimpses between helping refugees.

From the *Iron Duke* Brock watched the progress of the fire and the crowds of people on the quayside. He was unwilling to send help for them, arguing that for every person they might help on to a barge, many others would be hurt or killed in the inevitable crush. Small, overloaded boats managed to get alongside *Iron Duke* and these refugees were allowed to board. At last, Brock changed his mind and signalled to send all boats to the shore,

59 Kate and Francis Holton, Journal.

60 "About 6 p.m. a knock at the door – the General Manager's wife came in radiant to say that Kemal had guaranteed the Manager and his staff perfect safety if they would go back and resume their duties and they had all returned. The relief this was to us all was so intense that our spirits went up with a bound and we were so happy for a while." Whittall, Letter to Jack.

permitting those they saved to be taken temporarily onto British ships, whatever their nationality. Lieutenant-Commander Warner was among them on one of the barges. Two thousand were rescued, "a mere cipher of the total," he said, adding, "it is a relief to feel we just did something."<sup>61</sup>

When first aware of the fire, the Williamsons felt sure that marines would be called to put it out. But they watched its approach with growing anxiety and the night was punctuated with disturbing events: Dr. Murphy died and an Armenian came and made the desperate decision to take his sick wife to try and board an Italian ship. Around 3 a.m. two British sailors came with fifty men and some stretchers, with orders to evacuate the Nursing Home. The sisters begged that Leila's son, Bill, the Verger at St John's, might be fetched from the church, but this could not be risked.<sup>62</sup> A guard formed by bluejackets carrying oars was drawn around them all. Patients, including newly confined mothers, were put on stretchers within this protected space, the babies were carried by sailors, and they were all marched to the sea front. As they made their way, Grace saw the Armenian and his wife. "They made signs to me, but I could do nothing."

The fire still burned fiercely when dawn broke on the 14<sup>th</sup>. Francis and Kate were relieved to learn that Mr and Mrs Holton were on board the *Iron Duke*, about to be transferred to the *Bavarian*. After an anxious time at the station, plotting how to escape the fire, they had been guided to the *Iron Duke* by British marines with the rest of the staff and those from the Nursing Home.

By four o'clock over one thousand British, Cypriot and Maltese refugees had departed Smyrna. SS *Antioch* took 200 to Famagusta, including Grace, Alithea and Leila. The *Bavarian* sailed for Malta with the Dobsons and Holtons among the 850 refugees onboard. *Karnak* sailed for Piraeus with 2,000 mostly Greek and Armenian refugees who had been rescued from the fire, and when she was found to be full, around 300 were embarked on a Swedish vessel, *Sulina*, bound for Salonika. These merchant ships were followed out of the harbour by HMS *Iron Duke*, carrying

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61 Warner, Letter.

62 When Grace briefly returned to Smyrna in October, she left money with Vice-Consul Urquhart for her nephew, William Lewis, who was still alive and at the church house. Williamson, Brief Return.

Lieutenant-Commander Warner and Admiral Brock, bound for Chanak and Constantinople, where, as Brock coolly stated in his report, “my presence was required in consequence of the development of the Near Eastern crisis.” Also on board was Vice-Consul Hole, and other staff, with the consular archives. Rear-Admiral Tyrwhitt remained as SNO at Smyrna.

Since his severe beating, Maclachlan had been laid up at the International College and he was resolved to remain there along with his wife. From his bed he could see the column of smoke rising in the direction of Smyrna on Wednesday afternoon, and all night his room was lit by the ghastly glow above the city. The glare from the still-burning city lit the campus throughout a second night. On Friday, 15 September, Commander Rhodes of USS *Litchfield* arrived with orders to take Maclachlan and Rose to the city. Cass Reed advised compliance and Maclachlan was taken to HMS *King George V* which suited him well with its superior hospital and Malta as its destination.<sup>63</sup>

British refugees continued to appear on *King George V* on 16 September, having been persuaded to go by Lamb. SS *Elpiniki* left for Piraeus, carrying forty-two British, sixteen Greeks and one Armenian child. *King George V* sailed for Malta with 130 British, Cypriot and Maltese refugees, carrying the Maclachlans and Beatrix de Candolle. In order to prevent the railway becoming derelict in law, Raymond de Candolle volunteered to stay, living onboard Tyrwhitt’s cruiser, *Cardiff*, permission to accommodate Beatrix having been denied. He planned to go to Constantinople once he had negotiated the security of the railway with Kemal.<sup>64</sup>

Rear-Admiral Tyrwhitt reported that it was now believed that 2,000 Armenians had been killed and that men were massacred in the Armenian quarter before the fire. Since then, large numbers had been shot or drowned, and others died of exhaustion and starvation. It was known that corpses were being destroyed by lime and fire in the burnt area and these must have died since the fire. The number of floating corpses increased daily.<sup>65</sup>

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63 Maclachlan, *Potpourri of Sidelights*.

64 Beatrix de Candolle, letter written on board HMS *King George V*, 16 September 1922, transcribed in Philippe Bieler, *Raymond de Candolle: From Railway to Oil 1888-1922* (Charleston: Fonthill Media, 2020).

65 Brock, Report of Proceedings at Smyrna.

Lamb had sent the rest of the Consulate staff to Malta, leaving only Vice-Consul Urquhart with him on board *Cardiff* and they intended to leave for Constantinople once they were certain that no more British subjects remained. In view of surviving important interests and property that needed watching, it was not desirable to abandon Smyrna before it became unavoidable. Total abandonment could be regarded by the Turks as an indication of hostile intent. He proposed that Urquhart should be left in unofficial charge as long as a naval unit was retained at Smyrna.

The *Bavarian* docked at Malta on Sunday the 17<sup>th</sup> and the refugees joined others who had arrived with *HS Maine* two days earlier, the majority of whom were housed at the Lazaretto Hospital. In time more arrived with *King George V*. Over 160 more British were got out of Smyrna later in the month to be sent to Piraeus along with thousands of Greek refugees, and from there onwards to Malta or elsewhere. Those with access to funds went to hotels.

The Bishop of Gibraltar, John Greig,<sup>66</sup> arrived at Malta on 28 September. He listened to the accounts of the three Smyrna chaplains and they drew up two statements with him: one on the development of, and responsibility for the crisis in Smyrna; the second, a public appeal for help for a number of people who had been ruined by events there. The chaplains were accompanied by other men who knew Smyrna well, among them Herbert Whittall<sup>67</sup> and Robert Hadkinson.<sup>68</sup> Greig visited the Lazaretto where he was especially struck by the older men who had worked all their lives in one occupation but now, along with their firm, had lost everything.<sup>69</sup>

At Smyrna, meanwhile, Kemal had given permission for the evacuation of refugees, excluding men of military age, until the deadline of 30 September, and it was rumoured that Nouredin threatened that any remaining after that date would be massacred. Lamb and Urquhart transferred from *Cardiff* to *Curacoa* on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. Later in the day, *Curacoa* had to suddenly raise steam and proceed to Chanak. Thus, Lamb left Smyrna

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66 John Harold Greig (1865–1926) was appointed Bishop of Gibraltar in January 1921.

67 Herbert Octavious Whittall (1858–1924), born at Bournabat.

68 Robert Hadkinson (1840–1924), born at Smyrna.

69 John Greig, "The Bishop's Journal," 28–30 September, *Gibraltar Diocesan Gazette* (November 1922), 15–19.

without being able to give notice and he was transferred to another ship to be taken to Constantinople.

The Allies and Americans were granted an extension for evacuation until 15 October though the proclamation for this change was not put out until the original deadline, meaning the Turkish authorities-maintained pressure to hasten the procedure. Left in charge, Vice-Consul Urquhart reported over 180,000 refugees had been evacuated under the supervision of British and American warships by the 29<sup>th</sup>, and this was added to by about 30,000 a day.

Noureddin proclaimed that all abandoned moveable property in Smyrna would be seized and the authorities promised to delay this if owners removed their goods quickly. But, as Urquhart reported, difficulties with labour and transport made wholesale confiscation of British property likely. Deserted warehouses were open to seizure without their owners' presence and guarding British properties was increasingly difficult as kavasses were leaving from fear or lack of wages. Messrs Whittall and Paterson proposed sending a small vessel to remove their valuable goods but it was impossible for the SNO to arrange this on behalf of absent owners. Turkish officials were openly happy at the departure of Greeks and the disappearance of Armenians but bemoaned the absence of the British and their capital. Hoping to guarantee the safety of British property that was not burnt or looted, Urquhart encouraged them to expect a return of British people as soon as life and property could be considered safe. Urquhart suggested that, should negotiations with Kemal make a peaceful settlement likely, British subjects might be encouraged to return to Smyrna. While current uncertainty continued, their presence would only burden the SNO who felt responsible for their evacuation if hostilities became unavoidable.

The town's streets were cleared of belongings abandoned by refugees and more bodies were collected and burnt. Dangerous ruins were blown up while Orthodox churches were systematically razed. The Ottoman-Aidin Railway, the British Hospital and the Williamson clinic, as well as various private houses were requisitioned. The outlook for European traders at Smyrna looked bleak and Urquhart thought that most would settle elsewhere for some years at least. On October 13<sup>th</sup>, hearing that the British

Cemetery at Bournabat had been vandalised, Urquhart went to investigate, finding evidence of extensive damage to tombstones and that many graves had been horribly defiled. Several British wives wanted to return but Urquhart considered this would be highly undesirable for some time. He believed that men with property should return at once, saying, "There is little security for property in the presence of owners; in their absence, none."<sup>70</sup>

In Malta, Herbert Whittall was disturbed by news of the smashed monuments in the Bournabat cemetery. This showed contempt for everything British of the past, and for the future, he thought. A cable from Urquhart said that Turks were not unfriendly towards the British; that they could return to look after their properties, but Herbert wondered if this might be a trick to lure some people back; if negotiations did not work out, they could be used as hostages.<sup>71</sup>

Henry Locke and his family were finding living hard in the Lazaretto with little money. They had been well received at first by the Maltese authorities but were put on short rations in late September and the British government showed no sign yet of what they might do with refugees from Smyrna. Having left suddenly with only the summer things they were wearing, they were waiting for new supplies of clothing. Henry had looked for work in Malta but there was none. They declined an offer to go to England as all their possessions were in Smyrna and they hoped to pick up the remnants as soon as it was safe. He tried to cheer his family, telling them things would be better than they supposed. But the whole of Frank Street, where his shop had been situated, was burnt and he had no doubt that their house at the Point had been looted.<sup>72</sup>

In late October Robert Hadkinson wrote to F. S. McVittie, Secretary of the Smyrna Refugees Committee in London. At the Lazaretto, vexatious treatment had been endured for more than a month with poor food and indecent housing where several families were grouped in single rooms. A daily allowance of 5/- was loaned for each person and families had now taken on lodgings, even paying months in advance. Two days later, they

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70 Urquhart, Reports to Rumbold.

71 H. O. Whittall letter to "Sydney", 23 October 1922, TNA: FO 369/1817.

72 Locke, Letter.

were warned against engaging lodgings and feared the allowance would be withdrawn. The Governor of Malta, Lord Plumer, visited the Lazaretto and was guided into two of the best rooms. He did not speak with any of the refugees individually but advised them all to be thankful they had saved their skins. When asked whether the allowance would be granted as promised, Plumer brusquely replied that it would not. They were then informed that they would shortly be moved to different quarters where men would be lodged separately from women.<sup>73</sup> Reverend Ashe told Lord Plumer that those who had escaped Smyrna and its horror needed no reminder, even from Lord Plumer, of the duty of gratitude but instead they had hoped for assurance that the Government's word would be honoured.<sup>74</sup> Herbert Whittall noted that the contractors for food at the Lazaretto were suspected of making money out of the refugees.<sup>75</sup>

Brock requested a report for Plumer's information from the SNO and Vice-Consul on the question of the return of British subjects to Smyrna, with details of housing, means of livelihood and other necessities. Plumer hoped to clear a large number of refugees of the employé class from Malta. Urquhart had only recently reported that no one without means would be able to support themselves and anyone who wanted to leave Smyrna had to get permission at their own expense from the Angora government if they intended to return subsequently.

In Cyprus, Grace had heard that heads of Smyrna's firms were invited to return to see to their properties. She arrived at Smyrna on 25 October 25, full of hopes that the Nursing Home was in one piece and still not commandeered by soldiers. She was granted permission to land by a gracious Kemalist who told her to let friends who had houses know that they should return to them. But once she was ashore, she was arrested and dragged from one police station to another without being allowed to contact anyone. She was befriended by two young prisoners who managed to get a note out to Urquhart the next day and he immediately set out to find her. She had missed his cable to Cyprus, telling people not to return and that

73 Hadkinson to McVittie, letter, 24 October 1922, TNA: FO 369/1817.

74 Ashe to Plumer, letter, 25 October 1922, Guildhall Library; Correspondence between the Diocese and Smyrna 1883-1931 and 1952, G.L. Ms. 32699/521.

75 H. O. Whittall letter to "Sydney", 25 October 1922. TNA: FO 369/1817.

the Nursing Home had already been occupied. At the last moment, Grace was able to board the ship she had arrived by and sailed on to Constantinople. From there she planned to go to Cairo where she hoped to make some money. She was penniless and had borrowed money for the voyage from a butcher boy who had fled to Cyprus with her.<sup>76</sup>

Having recovered from his injuries, Alexander Maclachlan returned to Paradise in early November. He had a plan which, with the Angora government's cooperation and the return from a concentration camp of Armenian agricultural students, would take over land formerly farmed by Greeks.<sup>77</sup>

On 1 November, the Grand National Assembly abolished the Sultanate and Mehmet VI was expelled to Malta. British soldiers were stabbed during riots in Constantinople on 7 November, and two Turkish police officers were arrested. At Smyrna, Urquhart ordered all British subjects to register with the Consulate. Nineteen who had returned after the fire and forty-six Maltese registered. Now that Smyrna was no longer the main place of contact between Kemalists and Europe, Urquhart waited in trepidation for the local response to recent events in Constantinople and the authorities took measures regarding foreigners in Smyrna giving no warning as to what these measures would be. Armed sentries were posted along the Quay, refusing permission to land or leave except through customs. Urquhart and the SNO saw how the British risked being detained in the event of a state of siege in Constantinople, so they prepared for a secret evacuation, trying to give everyone a chance of leaving. Of the nineteen registered British, five refused to leave their interests as they had special guarantees for their safety from the Turks or were confident that they would be able to leave later in secret. Eleven were taken off under cover of darkness and three others left openly as they had permits, Alexander Maclachlan being one of the latter. Many Maltese were unable or did not wish to leave and it was impossible to order them to do so; any sudden excitement would have brought unwanted attention, possibly preventing the evacuation of others. Every argument was used to persuade them, and twenty of these people did leave. Urquhart got permission to embark them by representing them

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<sup>76</sup> Williamson to McVittie, letter.

<sup>77</sup> Maclachlan, *Potpourri of Sidelights*.

as destitute and they sailed on 15 November. Besides the five who refused, Urquhart reported a few elderly people of British extraction who, before the fire, could not be persuaded to leave Smyrna; they were known Turcophiles who were able to support themselves. The secret evacuation of those without permits was carried out with great skill by boats from HMS *Curaçoa*, leaving no trace of how it was done or who did it.

An atmosphere of unease continued among all nationalities in Smyrna and Urquhart reported that there seemed to be competition among officials and civilians to be more “Kemalist than Kemal” making life especially difficult to those considered to be enemies. The military went to the houses formerly owned by Greeks and Armenians to order tenants out at short notice in a brutal manner. Jews in particular suffered this treatment and soldiers openly threatened that their turn would come. Urquhart, in the matter-of-fact tone of consular reports, stated on 15 November that there did not seem to be much to be gained by British subjects in Smyrna.

## Epilogue

Sir Harry Lamb retired in 1922. Before Lamb’s sudden departure from Smyrna, Sir H. Rumbold had written from Constantinople to a friend. “I am told that poor old Lamb, who is quite broken by his daughter’s death, behaved splendidly at Smyrna. [...] I believe he is coming here and he may write a report, which will be his swan song.”<sup>78</sup> In June 1923, Robert Urquhart was awarded the Order of the British Empire in recognition for his work at Smyrna and he was knighted in 1950. Grace Williamson was granted permission to return to Smyrna in October 1923 and was discovered there by a visitor some years later, running the “English Pension” in the old Nursing Home.<sup>79</sup> Henry Locke’s address in the Point was used by another family, Lucie Galdies and her two sons, on their return from Malta in 1923, and Henry and his family returned there some months later.<sup>80</sup> Alexander Maclachlan finally left Smyrna in 1926, retiring to Canada and

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78 Rumbold to Oliphant, TNA: FO 369/1817.

79 H. V. Morton, *In the Steps of St. Paul* (London: Rich and Cowan Ltd. 1936).

80 Joyce Cully, Return of Smyrna Refugees from Malta, 1923-1929, Levantine Heritage Foundation (website), accessed 1 March 2023, [http://www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/Return\\_of\\_Smyrna\\_refugees\\_from\\_Malta\\_1923-1929.pdf](http://www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/Return_of_Smyrna_refugees_from_Malta_1923-1929.pdf).

California. The Holtons spent a year in a Red Cross refugee camp on the island of Samos. They did not return to Smyrna and took on a farm in Sussex. However, Francis Holton senior did return, replacing de Candolle as the General Manager of the railway there.<sup>81</sup>

Charles Dobson continued with his family from Rome to a temporary post in Marseilles and then to England where he worked at St. Paul's Church which served a slum community in Middlesbrough. In 1924 he was appointed Chaplain to the British church in Lisbon. Before this was confirmed, he wrote to Lisbon asking them to let him know how things stood regarding his appointment as he had been asked to accept the post of Chaplain for the British community at Moda, Constantinople.<sup>82</sup> Evidently, his experiences at Smyrna did not deter him from contemplating a return to work among Levantines in Turkey and the Levantines themselves had not turned away from him, despite his persistence in an opinion on the cause of the fire which made claiming insurance for losses hard, if not impossible.<sup>83</sup> In September, he travelled to London to give evidence under oath in preparation for the trial and he returned again from Lisbon to appear in person that December. With no ties in Smyrna, he was able to freely describe what he had seen there, and, unlike others, he was not compelled to hide his views in order to protect his family or livelihood.

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81 Charles Blyth Holton, Levantine Heritage Foundation, Recollections (web page), accessed 1 March 2023 <http://www.levantineheritage.com/testi42.htm>.

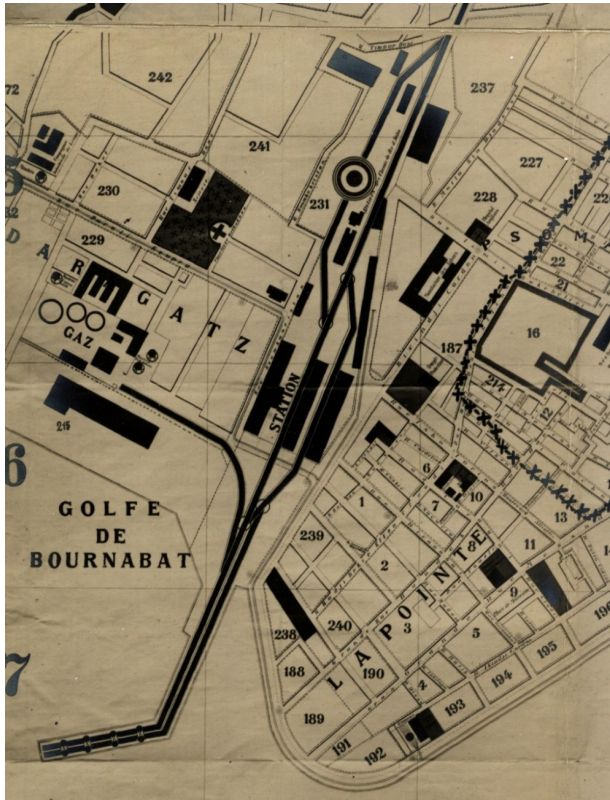
82 Charles Dobson to Cassels, letter, 29 May 1924, Archives of the British Historical Society of Portugal.

83 See also the case of Percy Hadkinson who refused, when approached by the Foreign Office, for use of his report on Smyrna. Hyslop, Brief and personal account.

## Appendix



**Figure 1.** The Nursing Home, situated opposite the Smyrna-Aidin railway station, was run by Grace Williamson. Charles Dobson and his family lived here in 1922. (*The Clinique, Smyrna, Turkey*. National Army Museum of New Zealand. Photograph Album of 24/1919 Sergeant Edmund Townley Marr, New Zealand Rifle Brigade. The album appears to be post-WW1 [1923-1924] and related to the construction and installation of war memorials in Turkey. Edmund Marr was an Architect and may have been involved in the project with the International War Graves Commission.)



**Figure 2.** Part of the Point (Alsancak) district of Smyrna is shown in this section of the map which was used in 1924 during the trial between the American Tobacco Company and the Guardian Assurance Company. When examined, Dobson explained that the Nursing Home was situated in the section of Block 6 closest to the station. Nearby, can be seen his church of St John marked *Temple Protestant*. British marines were stationed at the gasworks pier and this was one of the boarding points for merchant ships. Bodies found near the gasworks were taken by Dobson and an Orthodox priest for burial in the Orthodox Cemetery beyond the station. The added crosses on the right mark part of the burnt area of the city. (*Map of Smyrna, 1913*, courtesy of Aviva Group Archives.)

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- II -

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IDENTITIES:  
SELFHOOD AND SOCIETY

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**THE LEVANTINES OF  
ALEPPO CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE:  
CHANGING ASPECTS OF IDENTITY AND  
BELONGING AMONG A FOREIGN ELITE  
IN 19<sup>TH</sup>-CENTURY SYRIA**

Mafalda Ade\*

Investigating the topic of Levantines in Middle Eastern history, whether as communities or individuals, or more abstractly, the traces of their former presence, means dealing in the first place with cities. The specific urban environment was always a fundamental part of both their life experience and their identity. The importance of cultural, linguistic and affective bonds to their place of residence of course held true for other communities as well; for Levantines, however, they contrasted and competed with other linkages, sometimes even after several generations, to a distinct cultural background in a distant European fatherland. The merchant families of foreign origin living in Aleppo, still the third largest city of the Ottoman Empire at the time, in this sense constituted a small but fairly typical Levantine community in the nineteenth century. There was one significant aspect, however, that set them apart from the Levantines in other leading centres such as Istanbul, Izmir, Beirut, and Alexandria: Aleppo was not a port city, but was rather situated on an inland plateau over 100 km from the coast. Coming to or travelling from Aleppo was inevitably done over land, the closest port being Alexandretta (Iskenderun), at some three days' distance. This specific situation, which was fairly unique among the Levantine cities of the Empire, was a key factor, as we will attempt to demonstrate, in the closer enmeshment of their identity with that of Ottoman north Syria.

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\* Ph.D., Koç University, Turkey. Email: mafaldaade@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-7428-6254. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384855](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384855)

The following examines the community of Levantine traders in Aleppo and their families. It addresses the question if, or to what degree, they had become part of the social fabric of the city by the end of the nineteenth century. The aim here is twofold: drawing on the private archives of the Poche and Marcopoli (Antaki) families still held in Aleppo, we will try to show, primarily by way of the example of the second and third generation of the Poches, how such families retained and cultivated ties over many decades to their cultures of origin; but also how, on the other hand, they became increasingly connected to local Arab and wider Ottoman society, and even to the surrounding country and landscape of northern Syria, all of which became part of their identity and which perhaps set them apart from other Levantine communities of the Ottoman Empire. While questions of identity and belonging are of course very personal and subjective, the rich commercial, consular, and, most important, the private correspondence of members of the Poche family preserved in their archives<sup>1</sup> affords us an unparalleled view into the interior world of the Levantine community while enabling us at the same time to broach questions of their identity in the broader context of the Ottoman provincial periphery.

The first part of this contribution will give a brief outline of the size and composition of the community, and trace how both the Poche and the Marcopoli families set down their roots in Aleppo. Like most foreigners there, they were fundamentally oriented toward trade, benefitting from the city's unique international connections but increasingly also investing in local and regional trade. Working hard to establish themselves within the framework of the Levantine merchant elite and social class, both families recognized the overriding importance of obtaining consular posts in order to underscore their standing and improve their business prospects. The second section concentrates on both the Poches' real and felt ties to their European background by looking at their education, marriage patterns and material culture. While benefitting from their Austrian connections on the one side, their primary loyalty clearly remained, if not with Ottoman society per se, then with their family and communal milieu back in Aleppo. The last part focuses on the Poches' growing investment in northern Syria, particularly in terms of land ownership. While all Levantine families to

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1 See description at <https://proche-orient.uqam.ca/archives-poche-marcopoli.php>.

some extent dealt in real estate and benefitted from Ottoman legal reforms to pursue their commercial interests, the Poches took it one step further by acquiring properties in Aleppo's larger vicinity for profit-based farming projects. In addition to their relationship with an entirely different class of tenant sharecroppers, their connection to the north Syrian countryside is further exemplified by their growing involvement in the archeological study of the region. We conclude by considering how the Poches, Marcopolis and other families of Aleppo, capitalizing on their standing between the Europe and Ottoman worlds, well versed in both the law and practice of trade and invested in the hinterland, became increasingly integrated into Syrian society as such.

### The Rising Foreign Merchant Elite

Aleppo was always one of the Ottoman Empire's foremost commercial hubs. The city first began to play a key role in international trade in the last decades of Mamluk rule; after the Ottoman conquest, owing to its now central location within the Empire, its regional and inter-regional trade increased and started to thrive as well. This commercial and economic boom extended, obviously with ups and downs, until the end of the eighteenth century, when a combination of factors (the decline of the silk trade with Iran; Janissary upheaval; the Napoleonic wars) led to a significant drop in trade. Even at the best of times, however, the number of accredited foreign traders and their assistants in Aleppo never came close to matching that of Istanbul or Izmir (Smyrna); the highest number present in the city at any given time can be estimated at 150 individuals.<sup>2</sup>

Another important change became apparent concurrently in the second half of the eighteenth century. In previous times, traders and their assistants had usually stayed in the city for a limited time, British merchants in the seventeenth century, for example, generally for eight to ten years or less. They were typically employees of a "factory" or "*comptoir*," that is, the

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2 Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1964), 126, mentions 50 English factors at Aleppo for 1662, and the French consul d'Arvieux speaks of 60 French merchants for 1670, which is probably exaggerated. Cited in Paul Masson, *Histoire du commerce français dans le Levant au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: thèse présentée à la Faculté des lettres de Paris* (Paris: Hachette, 1896), 379, and Robert Paris, *Histoire du commerce de Marseille*, vol. 5 (Paris: Librairie Plon, 1957), 257.

trading post of an overseas company, and formed part of a specific trading “nation”. Living in the inner-city commercial khans (trade entrepôts and offices) in relative seclusion from the rest of the population, their lifestyle was described by contemporary travellers as solitary and uneventful. With time, however, starting in the eighteenth century, traders from Europe began to stay for much longer periods of time, marrying and settling down in the city for good. This trend became even more pronounced in the nineteenth century. These new families were of Catholic, Protestant, Anglican, Greek Orthodox as well as Jewish origin, and collectively they formed a sort of Levantine community in Aleppo. Many of them continued to live in the khans of the old city as before but adapted the living space to suit the needs of their households. Living in close proximity to one another, they shared a common lifestyle and experience as part of the town’s commercial elite.<sup>3</sup>

The number of Aleppo’s Levantine traders in the mid-nineteenth century can be estimated to around 85. A register, unique in its kind, of the Roman Catholic church in Aleppo allows us to identify around three dozen different European names, and to estimate the number of Catholic traders at 40 to 50.<sup>4</sup> The Jewish merchants, who numbered around 30 according to Tuscan and French consular sources, were mostly from Livorno and Venice and had come to Aleppo beginning in the seventeenth century. Referred to as “signores Francos” (European gentlemen) by the local Jews, they did not consider themselves “part of the Jewish community so far as... their lives and their activities were concerned; rather, they viewed themselves as an adjunct to the European colony in the city.”<sup>5</sup> As for English Anglican and Swiss and German Protestant merchants, documents from the Poche-Marcopoli Archives and other sources allow us to put their number in the mid-nineteenth century at five to seven.<sup>6</sup>

3 Mafalda Ade, *Picknick mit den Paschas; Aleppo und die levantinische Handelsfirma Fratelli Poche (1853-1880)* (Beirut: Ergon, 2013), 35. Forthcoming as Mafalda Ade, *Levantine Merchants and Ottoman Commercial Law in Aleppo: The Fratelli Poche Company (1853-1880)* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, forthcoming).

4 Archive of the Franciscan Order in Aleppo: *Libro de Battesimi Matrimoni e Morti Orientali - B[attesi]mi, M[atrimon]i, Morti e Nomi de Levantini Latini [1849]*.

5 Yaron Harel, *Intrigue and Revolution: Chief Rabbis in Aleppo, Baghdad, and Damascus 1744-1914* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2015), 33–34.

6 Poche-Marcopoli Archives, Aleppo, Fonds Poche [FP]; for example FP 1515a, FP 1517, FP 3211. See also Matthias Gründig, *Der Schah in der Schachtel: Soziale Bild-*

An illustration (sadly topical) of how this heterogenous group of European foreigners had long begun to form a community and were self-consciously part of the city's economic elite is provided by the catastrophic earthquake of 1822. Just like the rest of the population, many Levantine families were left homeless and fled to the gardens outside of the city walls to take shelter and wait for the period of aftershocks to pass. At the French consul's initiative, however, a group encompassing Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and a few local French protégés soon got together to rent one of these walled gardens, the Bustan al-Kattab, where they built around three dozen wooden huts for what they thought would be temporary housing. In the end, however, these huts were steadily improved and wound up serving as their homes for several years, in a way that the garden was transformed into a veritable "petite ville franque" complete with functioning consulates, a place where the Levantines had in effect recreated their community.<sup>7</sup>

The Poche family's history in Aleppo begins in the early nineteenth century, when Joseph Poche (1788-1858) arrived in the city on a mission to revive the business fortunes of Ignaz Zahn & Co., a Bohemian glassware exporting company. Ignaz Zahn & Co. was one of the Middle Eastern offshoots of Jos. Zahn & Co., which had been founded in 1780 in Kreibitz in what is now the Czech Republic. Opening a main office in Vienna soon afterward, the company proudly carried the epithet *Kaiserlich-königlich private Glasraffinerie und -handlung*, "private glass refinery and retailer by appointment to the emperor and king".<sup>8</sup> Joseph Poche himself was born in the same town in Bohemia, where his ancestors can be traced back to a certain Elias Poche in the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>9</sup> Elias is thought to have come

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*praktiken im Zeitalter der Carte de visite* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2016), 141, and Stefan Sigerist, *Schweizer in Asien: Kaufleute, Uhrmacher, Missionare, Eisenbahner* (Munich: Iudicum Verlag, 2017), 183–203.

- 7 Quoted in Stefan Knost, "Shaping the City: Aleppo's Foreigner Community and the Earthquake of 1822," in *Historical Disasters in Context: Science, Religion, and Politics*, eds. Andrea Janku, Gerrit Schenk and Franz Mauelshagen (New York: Routledge, 2012), 163–167.
- 8 Rüdiger Klein, "Aleppiner Handelshäuser zwischen Basar und Börse: Informationssuche und -verarbeitung im Zeichen der Inkorporation (ca. 1780-1920)," in *Aneignung und Selbstbehauptung: Antworten auf die europäische Expansion*, ed. Dietmar Rothermund (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1999), 352.
- 9 Litomeřice (Czech Republic) State Regional Archives (Státní oblastní archiv): Chřibská (Kreibitz) Church Records L-49-1 (1649-1706), 495, entry from 6 June

from the Netherlands after his ancestors had fled the northern Bretagne during the persecution of the Huguenots; origins which, however, remain to be confirmed.<sup>10</sup>

As a young man, Joseph Poche had had the opportunity, during extended stays in Istanbul and Izmir between 1805 and 1817, to not only acquire practical skills in commerce but also to learn Italian and Turkish. These experiences made him an ideal candidate for the Zahn Company to send to Aleppo in 1819, where he would finally settle down for the rest of his life. There he married the adoptive daughter of the second last Venetian consul in Aleppo, Margherita Magy (née Sola), in 1827. The couple had seven children: Maria-Teresa, Laura, Adolfo, Federico, Ferdinando, Alberto, and Guglielmo. The second Poche generation grew up in a mainly Italian-speaking home and seem to have used this language among siblings (as all their later mutual correspondence is in Italian). However, it can be assumed that with time, French became their dominant language outside of the home, through school, family friends and business partners, but also on account of their diplomatic and representative functions. We therefore find the Poche brothers' names more commonly written in their French versions: Adolphe, Frédéric, Ferdinand, Albert, and Guillaume. The third generation of Poches in Aleppo consisted of Frédéric and his wife Zoé (née Marcopoli)'s only surviving child Joseph,<sup>11</sup> as well as of Albert and his wife Eugénie (née Giustiniani)'s seven children:<sup>12</sup> Marguerite, Elvira, Olga, Marie, Rodolphe, Hilda and Adolphe Jr.

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1691; Richard Poche and Oscar Poche, *Geschichte der Familie Poche* (Linz and Vienna: n.n., 1940).

- 10 According to Françoise Cloarec in *Le temps des consuls: L'échelle d'Alep sous les Ottomans* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003), 143–144, the name Poche appears in Brittany in the seventeenth century, and a certain Adrian Poche later left Brittany to settle down in the Netherlands. Adrian's son then married in Kreibitz and had a son by the name of Joseph. Unfortunately, Cloarec provides no sources for this account. The name "Gabriel Dambidones, dict de Poche, baronnie d'Auribez" can in fact be found in Eugène Haag and Émile Haag, *La France protestante*, vol. 1, 2nd edition (Paris: Librairie Sandoz et Fischbacher, 1877), 666, where he is listed as one of 569 Protestants condemned to death in 1570. The genealogy as a whole nevertheless remains speculative.
- 11 Zoé Marcopoli was in fact Frédéric's niece, his sister Marie-Thérèse and Vincenzo Marcopoli's eldest daughter.
- 12 Albert Poche is said to have travelled to Chios to take his bride-to-be, Eugénie Giustiniani, back to Aleppo. The Giustinianis were one of the island's most illustrious families; see Cloarec, *Le temps des consuls*, 148.

The first Marcopolis in Aleppo, meanwhile, were the brothers Vincenzo, Giorgio and Nicola, descendants of a family of Genoese origin from Chios.<sup>13</sup> Vincenzo Marcopoli came to Aleppo around 1827 to take a share in the Tuscan trading firm Castelli & Co., in which his two uncles Vincenzo and Leonardo Giustiniani were involved. Giorgio arrived when Castelli & Co. was reorganized as Giustiniani & Nipoti — “Giustiniani & Nephews,” the nephews being the Marcopoli brothers. Nicola joined them around 1836. The company was rebaptized Vincenzo Marcopoli & Co. after the Giustinianis withdrew in 1850, while its Damascus branch, which was first called Leonardo Giustiniani & Nipoti and then Giustiniani & Marcopoli, became Giorgio Marcopoli & Co.<sup>14</sup> Another brother established a company in Mosul under the name of Giovanni Marcopoli & Co.

The connection between the Marcopoli and Poche families, which already existed on a social level within the community in Ignaz Poche’s time, was cemented through marital ties between Vincenzo Marcopoli and Marie-Thérèse Poche, in 1840, and Nicola Marcopoli and Laura Poche, a few years later. Professionally they began to collaborate in the 1850s, after Fratelli Poche & Co. was founded. The Marcopoli brothers had already been in business and acquired a certain renown by this time, not merely on account of their commercial affairs but also for the consular posts they held. Vincenzo had been named vice consul of the Two Sicilies in 1842, after his predecessor Illel d’Ezdra de Picciotto had gone bankrupt several times and was suspended. From there on, the Marcopolis managed to accumulate several offices: in the early 1850s Vincenzo was appointed to represent the Messageries Maritimes shipping line in Aleppo as well as the Austrian vassal state of Parma. The vice consulate of the Two Sicilies was then converted into a consulate, and around 1852-1853 Vincenzo was entrusted with the Dutch and the Swedish consulate, two posts that had previously been in the de Picciotto family as well. When Vincenzo passed away in 1855, the Swedish and

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13 The Marcopolis were a family of the “maona Giustiniani” or “Maona di Chio,” the medieval Genoese tax farming corporation that remained in Chios after the Ottoman conquest of 1566. See Klein, “Aleppiner Handelshäuser,” 353.

14 Thomas Riis, “Der Krieg der Konsuln oder Prestige in Aleppo im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Studia Eurasiatica. Kieler Festschrift für Hermann Kulke zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Stephan Conermann and Jan Kusber (Hamburg: EB-Verlag, 2003), 391–392, 396; Klein, “Aleppiner Handelshäuser,” 358.

Sicilian consulates were transferred to Nicolas, who was also appointed as Portuguese vice consul in Aleppo. Giorgio in Damascus became Sardinian vice consul, Giovanni in Mosul Sicilian and Sardinian vice consul and, after Italian unification, consul general of the Kingdom of Italy.<sup>15</sup>

Especially in its early years, the Fratelli Poche & Co. capitalized on the stature the Marcopoli had acquired by the end of the 1850s. Each time the Poches contacted prospective business partners in Mediterranean or mainland European centres, to offer their import-export services and try and build their network, they would invoke their in-laws' credentials. They also benefitted from their partnership with the Marcopoli in actual trade, particularly in the purchase of regional goods such as wool from Mosul which they obtained through Giovanni Marcopoli & Co. When one of the brothers set up the sister company Ferdinand Poche & Co. in Manchester in 1870, this was an important boost for the main company back in Aleppo and a sign that they had finally overcome the first decade of hardship.

The Poche brothers of the second generation had been unsuccessful in obtaining consular appointments in the 1850s and 1860s, but in the 1870s, Frédéric's standing and fortune was finally deemed sufficient for him to be offered honorary diplomatic posts. He was appointed vice consul of the U.S. in 1873; three years later he was entrusted with the management of the imperial Russian consulate and finally, in 1886, with the post of Belgian consul in Aleppo.<sup>16</sup> After Frédéric the consulate was passed on first to his son Joseph (from 1912 to 1965) and then to Albert's son Adolphe Jr. (1965 to 1987); through the latter's daughter's line it has remained in the family until recently. Albert himself served as consul of the Netherlands (1895-1929) a post transferred after his death to his son Rodolphe (1929 to 1969). Guillaume, finally, the youngest sibling of the second Poche generation, was attributed the consular representation of Czechoslovakia for a few years (1926-1931). After his death his nephew Rodolphe took over as consul (1932 to 1951).<sup>17</sup>

15 Riis, "Der Krieg der Konsuln," 397–398, 403–404.

16 Poche-Marcopoli Archives: Fonds Marcopoli [FM] 8048, 3 November 1876; FM 8048, 13 December 1888; see also Nicolas Jodoin, "Les intérêts belges dans la province ottomane d'Alep selon la correspondance des consuls Picciotto et Poche (1855–1914)," M.A. thesis, Université du Québec à Montréal, 2014.

17 Adolphe Poche Jr's only child, Jenny (Eugénie) Poche (d. 2015), was married to Georges Marrache. Their eldest son, Basile Marrache, was acting honorary consul of Belgium in Aleppo until the consulate was closed in consequence of the civil war.

Even if such consular posts were mostly honorary, the social status they conveyed was still important enough for them to be very attractive, particularly as Levantine traders in Aleppo increasingly entered into the regional trade in smaller towns of the interior in the second half of the nineteenth century. An indication of how important this business was becoming is provided by a report by the French consul Edouard Grasset in 1855, where he urges the “Direction des consulats et affaires commerciales” to establish new legations in Urfa, Diyarbekir and Antioch in order to support merchants who were trying set themselves up in the area. The Europeans, according to Grasset, were facing new competition, that of the “indigenous rayas” (*reaya*; meaning Christian subjects), and had therefore recognized the importance of “penetrating into the interior to offer European wares first-hand, and by the same token to buy the products of these regions.”<sup>18</sup> The commercial correspondence of the Fratelli Poche & Co. allows us to trace how the company started to expand here in the late 1860s and grow their network all through the 1870s. The growing number of trade deals with small local merchants obviously entailed a growing number of financial transactions. Since credit sales were the most common way of purchasing goods, the collection of outstanding payments became a constant headache for the Poches. If debtors were unwilling to pay, and threats or mediation did not succeed in recovering the amounts due, the next step would often be to appeal to the Ottoman authorities. In this regard, having the title of consul gave the Poches more authority and weight when dealing with debts or other kinds of commercial disputes, and gave them easier access to intervention from the embassy in Constantinople if necessary. There are many examples of the Poches sending letters to one or another *vali* or *mutasarrif* (governor or deputy governor) in the region, in which they invariably underline their diplomatic status, requesting that debtors be either brought before the local commercial tribunal or arrested and sent to Aleppo for trial. But the consular titles also meant that they were part of the city’s societal elite and could expect to regularly meet Ottoman officers, pashas or even the governor personally, on official and sometimes even private occasions.<sup>19</sup>

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18 Centre d’Archives Diplomatiques de Nantes [CADN]: Alep-Consulat, Série A 17, Édouard Grasset to Direction des Consulats et Affaires Commerciales, 14 January 1855.

19 Ade, *Picknick*, 86–95, 113–133, 203–220.

The foreign merchant elite of Aleppo in the nineteenth century was of multiple ethnic and confessional origins, but all shared traits that set them apart from the rest of local society and to some extent from similar Levantine communities in the rest of the Ottoman Empire: a shared and predominantly introverted lifestyle in and around the medieval khans of the old city; close family relations predicated on intra-group marriage and business partnerships; and a consciousness of their elite “expat” status which they sought to advance through the obtention of honorary consulships, and which would in turn serve an important role in their business ventures increasingly oriented toward inland and regional trade. The very success of families such as the Poches and the Marcopolis essentially depended on how they were able to juggle their foreign identity and their increasingly close association with the city and its hinterland.

### The Austrian Connection

The question of how strong the ties to a distant fatherland stayed in the second, third and even fourth generation of Levantines in Aleppo, and how these ties were manifested, is difficult to answer. Many were of course of disparate origins, and so lacked a larger community within which their traditions, cultural peculiarities or even language could be preserved. While Joseph Poche was for example from a German-speaking background, already the second generation barely knew the language. Joseph’s wife Margherita (née Sola) being partly of Italian, partly of Arab Christian background, all five sons were fluent in Italian as well as French, as can be seen from their correspondence, and also knew spoken Arabic and some Turkish.<sup>20</sup> They received a western, Catholic, education from monks of the Franciscan Terra Santa custody established in the al-Shaybani khan in Aleppo, but were in constant contact with Arabic speakers and Ottoman functionaries on account of their professional activities. The very khans where they inhabited the upper floors continued to function as commercial shops and warehouses on the ground floor. Far from living cut off from local society, foreign traders on a daily basis shared the same space with Christian, Jewish and Muslim Aleppines.<sup>21</sup>

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20 Comment by Frédéric Poche about his language competencies. Less is known of the two Poche sisters, who did not receive a formal education.

21 Knost, “Shaping the City,” 160–161; Klein, “Aleppiner Handelshäuser,” 355.

Two vignettes from the Poche family annals give insight, each from a different angle, into their ambivalent sense of belonging between the European fatherland and their Ottoman Syrian home. The second generation's very tangible link to Austria surfaced unexpectedly in 1857, just before Joseph Poche's death, when the eldest of the five sons, Adolphe, received notification that he was being conscripted into the Austrian army. Not wishing to pay the considerable fee demanded in return for exemption, Adolphe sought the good offices of the consul general in Beirut, pointing out that he was born in Aleppo and should therefore not be conscripted, in addition to the fact that his father was very ill, and he had to provide for him and the rest of the family. The first argument does not seem to have carried any weight, since his brother Frédéric was conscripted too a year later. The second argument, on the other hand, which he apparently took from a French book of law, seems to have been accepted. Adolphe was finally exempted from service—unlike Frédéric the following year. Interestingly, he appears to have contemplated, however briefly, sacrificing his Austrian nationality in order not to serve, as suggested in a private letter to a colleague in Beirut: reflecting on the possible consequences of refusing both service and payment, Adolphe claims he could always obtain the protection of another foreign power through his brother-in-law Nicola Marcopoli, who held the Spanish consulate. He does admit at the end of the same letter, however, that he did not wish to lose his original nationality, to which he was “very much attached.”<sup>22</sup> Frédéric's voice was even more dramatic when it was his turn a year later: in a letter to a family friend, he states that “for nothing on earth” would he want to “lose the nationality that was conferred to me by my forefathers.”<sup>23</sup> He thus paid the very considerable amount 1500 guilders, at a time when the Fratelli Poche company was barely able to make ends meet.

Four years later, in the fall of 1862, Frédéric embarked on a trip to Europe to foster trade contacts in France, Belgium and Switzerland, but which also took him to Manchester, the Great London Exposition, and in early 1863, to Vienna. His mission there was to restoke family ties, but he also seized the opportunity to ask for an audience with His Majesty Franz Joseph,

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22 FP 3068:11-13, 28 August 1857.

23 FP 3070:159b-160, 11 September 1858.

Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary.<sup>24</sup> It is to his niece and future wife Zoé that Frédéric relates the febrile moment he was brought in front of the Emperor and allowed to speak: “The desire to see a country that I know only by reputation has brought me here, and I am the echo of a mother who implores grace for her two children Albert and Guillaume.” The Emperor in turn asked Frédéric about the birthplace of his brothers, and then advised him to formulate a petition to secure their exemption from military service, to which he assures him he would, if at all feasible, respond favourably.<sup>25</sup>

The second vignette dates from the same trip to Vienna in 1863, where Frédéric was the guest of nobler cousins, the Baroness Leopoldine von Wehli and Eugen and Richard von Poche. It is possible that this visit was already intended to search for suitable partners for his four as yet unmarried brothers. While nothing became of that immediately, Frédéric kept in touch with his relatives for many years, never leaving out an occasion to remind them of their promise of a return visit. From the very cordial correspondence with Leopoldine, addressed consistently as “Madame la Baronne et bien chère Cousine,” we hear in April 1875 that Richard von Poche did finally visit his relatives in Aleppo, if only for a short time, promising to return two years later with his brother Eugène.<sup>26</sup>

When Adolphe left to tour Europe in 1873, his aim was similar to that of Frédéric a decade earlier. He travelled to different places on business, spent some time with his brother Ferdinand in Manchester and hoped to attend the World’s Fair in Vienna later that year. In December, Frédéric wrote to his cousin the baroness, asking her to look after Adolphe once he reached Austria and help him find a “partie convenable” before returning to Aleppo. Adolphe was both very shy and not exactly young anymore, according to Frédéric, and while he certainly preferred an Austrian woman to any other, he would be ready to “look elsewhere” if necessary.<sup>27</sup> In Vienna Adolphe would have been in very good hands, as the traditional ball season was soon to open and the socially active baroness had in fact taken

24 Already the year before, Adolphe and Frédéric had written to Ignaz Zahn in Vienna asking him to enquire about their degree of relationship to a certain Adolph Ritter von Poche, governor of Moravia. See FP 3068:141-143, 7 June 1862.

25 FP 3203: [March] 1863.

26 FP 3080 : 75-77, 30 April 1875.

27 FP 3079:444-441, 13 December 1873.

over the patronage of the *Studentenball* (students' ball) that year.<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately lady luck did not smile on Adolphe: he had been the victim of an accident in Brussels shortly before which had almost cost him his life, where he was run over by a wagon (or carriage) and had his right arm "crushed and mutilated."<sup>29</sup> He was only able to return home to Aleppo in late 1874—still unmarried. In his stead it was Ferdinand from Manchester who came to visit the cousins in Vienna the same year. According once again to Frédéric, his brother met and became fond of a young lady, an "interview" was arranged ... but the story ended there.<sup>30</sup> Many years later, in 1892, Ferdinand nevertheless married the Austrian baroness Alberta von Knebel; whether with or without the mediation of his cousin in Vienna is unknown.<sup>31</sup>

In the end, two of the five brothers, Adolphe and Guillaume, never got married, while Albert took Eugénie Giustiniani from the famous Levantine family of Chios (and relatives of the Marcopoli) as his wife. They had seven children who, together with Frédéric and Zoé's son Joseph, represent the third generation of Poches in Aleppo. This generation again married mostly within their close circle of Levantine friends and with European foreigners. Only Albert and Eugénie's third daughter Olga brought about a new tie with the local Christian Arab elite by marrying into the banker family As-souad (Aswad). The fourth Poche generation was born during the French Mandate over Syria. The descendants of Vincenzo and Nicola Marcopoli, who were of course married to the Poche sisters Marie-Thérèse and Laura, provide a similar picture. Vincenzo and Marie-Thérèse's three daughters and one son found partners within the immediate circle of Levantines in Aleppo; of Nicola and Laura's ten children, or at least those who survived to adulthood, four married within the Poche and Marcopoli family and two sons found partners among the Christian commercial elite (the Raad and Salem families) toward the end of the 19th century.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the few

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28 *Wiener Salonblatt* 5, no. 5 (1 February 1874), 59, <https://anno.onb.ac.at/cgi-content/anno?aid=wsb&datum=18740201&seite=11&zoom=39>.

29 FP 3080:54-44, 13 March 1875; FP 3079:62-61, 19 September 1874.

30 FP 3079:134-136, 16 July 1874.

31 Daughter of Albert Freiherr Knebel von Treuenschwert and Henriette Freiin Knebel von Treuenschwert, née de Courcy. FP 3202, obituaries from 25 November 1895 and 1 July 1906.

32 FM 9000, Alfredo Girardi, Marcopoli family tree, 15 October 1980.

Swiss and German merchants in Aleppo brought wives with them or sent for ones from back home, but in the late 19th century began to marry into local Christian families. This was not always well seen by the community, however, for example when the Swiss merchant Jacques Streiff chose Eugénie Nacouz as his wife in 1913.<sup>33</sup>

If the marriage patterns of the Poche and Marcopoli families were typical for Levantine families in Aleppo in this period, the same can be said for other aspects of their daily life as well. Many families of foreign origin lived, as already indicated, in one of roughly a dozen khans located in the old part of town. Unlike khans or caravanserais built along trade roads, which were generally isolated buildings, the inner-city khans were “woven into the fabric of the suq.”<sup>34</sup> A khan was usually a two-storey building around a central inner courtyard and had always been dedicated to commerce. Initially the ground floor housed storerooms and offices, sometimes even stables, while on the second floor, merchants could find lodging. The access to the rooms was from an open gallery. The entrance to the building as such was signalled by a monumental portal and in some cases by a dome or crossing with skylight openings. The exterior walls of a khan were usually lined with shops. To access it, one thus had to pass shops and the portal to find the open space of the inner courtyard, which Venetian traders in Aleppo in previous centuries equated with a *piazza* or *campo*, where “the Frankish merchants gather in the mornings to stroll and to do their business, since that place serves as the public square.”<sup>35</sup> With time, these khans were adapted to house whole trading nations and consulates, and later, Levantine merchants and their families. To transform the living quarters into actual domestic space, structural modifications were therefore made over time: room divisions were altered and some rooms enlarged; formerly semi-public access corridors were closed off and fitted with bay windows looking out over the court; in some cases stairways were added to provide direct access from the courtyard to individual apartments.<sup>36</sup>

33 Sigerist, *Schweizer*, 197.

34 Michele Lamprakos, “Life in the Khans: The Venetians in Early Ottoman Aleppo,” *Muqarnas* 34 (2017), 127.

35 *Ibid.*

36 Jean-Claude David and Thierry Grandin, “L’habitat permanent des grands commerçants dans les khans d’Alep à l’époque ottomane,” in *Les villes dans l’Empire otto-*

In addition to such structural changes, the apartment interiors were furnished and decorated very differently than in the past, usually in a combination of western and oriental styles, in both the more official reception areas but also in the family's personal quarters, kitchen, etc. Note, for example, the distinctive mixture of European tables and chairs and Middle Eastern upholstery and decorative elements in a photo by Albert Poche of what is likely the salon of the Marcopoli family in the Khan al-'Ulabiyya [Figure 1].



**Figure 1.** Salon of the Marcopoli family, Khan al-'Ulabiyya (?).  
Collection Albert Poche, undated (after 1863).

Besides furniture, all sorts of other personal effects, clothes and consumer items were regularly brought from Europe that illustrate the Levantines' mixed fashions and sense of belonging. During his trip in 1863, for example, Frédéric sent home a package with scarves and hats from Paris and a photo album, while Adolphe ordered tailor-made suits from him from Vienna.<sup>37</sup> Photography itself appears to have become a key feature of Levantine sensibility in Aleppo and elsewhere. Albert Poche imported what is thought to have been the first camera in Syria, a Voigtländer &

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*man: activités et sociétés* vol 2, ed. Daniel Panzac (Paris: Éditions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1994), 95–97. See also Alexander Russell: *The Natural History of Aleppo* vol. 1 (London: A. Millar, 1856), 19–20.

37 FP 3068:126-9, 4 April 1863.

Sohn, from Vienna in 1863.<sup>38</sup> His photographs not only provide a glimpse into the Europeans' material surroundings and allow us to visually encounter numerous family members including those who did not leave much of a trace in the written archives, other pictures bear witness to what the city and immediate outskirts looked like at the threshold to the twentieth century. Several of Albert's photos show family or group excursions to the countryside; he himself accompanied the Marquis de Vogüé, the French ambassador to Austria and later the Ottoman Empire and an amateur archeologist, on an expedition to the Byzantine monastery complex of Saint Simeon the Stylite northwest of Aleppo, which he documented photographically for the first time.<sup>39</sup>



**Figure 2.** The five sisters (left to right) Marguerite, Elvira, Olga, Marie and Hilda Poche. Collection Albert Poche, undated (ca. 1900-1915).

As much as we know about the material aspects of Levantine life, the composition of families and even some of their more important social events, little do we really know about day-to-day life. The inner-city khans as living space for merchant families brought together two opposite facets of their presence: on the one hand, isolation; and on the other, interaction.

38 Jenny Poche-Marrache, *Les photos de mon grand-père* (Aleppo: n.n., 2006), 8.

39 Melchior de Vogüé, *Syrie centrale: architecture civile et religieuse du Ier au VIIe siècle* (Paris: J. Baudry, 1865-1877), 133; Cloarec, *Le temps des consuls*, 148.

As loci of commerce, the khans embodied places of exchange not only of goods, but also socially and culturally.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, these spaces had for centuries represented the rather limited radius of the better part of the city's foreign merchant elite. What from today's standpoint might be seen as kind of a Levantine ghetto, some have called the locality of an international merchant elite or "khan aristocracy".<sup>41</sup>

The khan aristocracy was, of course, a fluctuating group. Some families left, others arrived; occasionally visitors or travellers came by to stay for a while, as did other Levantine merchants from the region as well as missionaries and consuls or consular agents on their way to a post further away in the Ottoman provinces. Letters from the Poche brothers to merchants in smaller regional centres such as Urfa and Diyarbekir on commercial matters sometimes mention social events within the Levantine community of Aleppo: marriages or deaths, visitors, official occasions such as the arrival of a new Ottoman governor or a new French or British consul, dinners, parties and picnicks. When the Poche brothers encouraged a friend from Urfa to visit Aleppo in November 1857, for instance, they made sure to point out that "notre société se trouve en ce moment au grand complet, et l'on se promet monts et merveilles, pour cette saison[.]"<sup>42</sup>

The German botanist Carl Haussknecht came through Aleppo twice in the course of his plant collection expeditions, in 1865 and again in 1867, and was quickly introduced to many of the city's most prominent Levantine consuls and merchants. He had arrived with a recommendation letter addressed to the physician Theodor Bischoff, and in no time met the Prussian consul de Picciotto, the German consul and merchant Johann Jakob Zollinger, the merchants Daniel Streiff and Guido Hülse, the Poche brothers and other Levantines. Whom he met during his stay is revealed not only through his diary but also a by a unique collection of *cartes de visite* (calling

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40 Lamprakos calls attention to how khans or buildings with a similar orientation, which over history and geography were designated by different names, epitomize "the Braudelian idea of an integrated Mediterranean," see "Life in the Khans," 128. See also: Olivia Remie Constable, *Housing the Stranger in the Mediterranean World: Lodging, Trade, and Travel in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

41 Ade, *Picknick*, 50–54.

42 Idem, 98.

cards).<sup>43</sup> The technique and practice of small-format portrait photography (sometimes with a multiple lens camera) for *cartes de visite* had spread rapidly from Paris across the globe by the end of the 1850s, and Albert Poche visibly adopted this style as well. As individualized mementos these *cartes de visite* in their own way can document “personal encounters and social processes,”<sup>44</sup> bearing witness to particular moments in a traveller’s life and sometimes even more: among Haussknecht’s calling cards from Aleppo is one portraying Ferdinand Poche, on whose reverse we find a handwritten note that provides the date it was handed out (20 April 1865) and a few words of friendship: “Souvenir d’Amitié à Mr. le Dr. Haussknecht,” in addition to Ferdinand’s birth date (6 November 1839).<sup>45</sup>

It is not surprising that travellers from Europe and other visitors were well received and quickly integrated into the Levantine society of Aleppo. One question that remains, however, is how much interaction the Levantine families really had with local communities. For the male family members, one can assume that their professional activities brought them into contact with a variety of people, but how much did they interact socially with them? It proves even more difficult to answer this question in relation to female family members and children. Here, travel accounts as well as personal correspondence may give some glimpses into everyday life. The Swiss Pauline Weber’s letters home from Aleppo constitute one rather rare example. Pauline knew her future husband only through a few letters and a photo when she left Zurich thinking they would be back within a few years’ time (it was to be nine years before her first visit home). When she settled down in the north Syrian city, but her piano had been left behind somewhere along the way, she suffered from the inactivity to which she felt “condemned”. Only after the birth of her first child (and seven more to come), the boredom appeared resolved. She and her husband regularly socialized with the other Swiss families in Aleppo, sometimes for a game of *jass* (the traditional Swiss card game), for a picknick in the outskirts of the city or to enjoy an evening of music. Felix Weber, in a series of accounts on his life in the Near East, writes that the foreign women of Aleppo mostly stayed amongst themselves

43 Matthias Gründig, *Der Schah in der Schachtel: Soziale Bildpraktiken im Zeitalter der Carte de visite* (Marburg: Jonas Verlag, 2016), 141–142.

44 *Ibid.*, 7.

45 *Ibid.*, 51–52.

and did not otherwise socialize with local women. His own wife did not fancy going to a hammam, one of the key places women could meet outside of their house, even if she recognized that a “steam bath” had beneficial qualities. The diary of young Daniel and Harry Streiff, on the other hand, provides a different perspective. The Streiff boys recount how they and other Swiss children were indeed in contact with locals, picked up Arabic by playing with the neighbourhood kids, and even learned how to make camels kneel when caravans came to unload in the khans.<sup>46</sup>

The Austrian traveller Countess Pauline von Nostitz, who accompanied her doctor husband on a trip to India in 1835, especially recalled the music played by members of the Levantine community in Aleppo. She and her husband were guests of the de Picciottos, but also met several other Levantine families, in particular the Poches. While visiting their home, they attended an improvised concert in which the music director in Ibrahim Pasha’s service as well as Joseph Poche and two other Bohemians played music until late into the night. For the countess, this episode showed just how much Joseph Poche had remained Bohemian.<sup>47</sup>

The Poches’ European, specifically Austrian, connections remained both practically and affectively very important even for members of the second and third generation who had never visited the fatherland and no longer spoke German. Not only in terms of consular protection but also in dress, hairstyle, home decorum (to which one could add musical taste), marriage preferences and performance of (upper) middle class modernity, the Poches, like the Marcopolis and other Levantine families, certainly had a clear advantage, but no doubt also a real emotional disposition, to cleaving to their European origins. This disposition, on the other hand, did not extend so far as to agreeing to military service or other obligations, in regard to which at least Adolphe literally declared the different nationalities available to him as being interchangeable. With the exception of Ferdinand in Manchester, all the siblings of the second and third generation furthermore stayed in Aleppo, the fashions, connections and other accoutrements of western culture they brought back with them ultimately serving to cement their position within, not turn their back on, Syrian society.

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46 Sigerist, *Schweizer*, 189, 196.

47 Ade, *Picknick*, 58.

## “The Law of the Land”: From the Old City to the Countryside

Frédéric and Adolphe Poche, who together oversaw the trading company, but doubtless also their brothers Ferdinand, Albert, and Guillaume, were well versed in the art of book-keeping, in payment operations and the intricacies of commercial law, but they were at the same time constantly confronted with the snags of trade in practice. Their library contained numerous legal manuals and law codes, including the Ottoman *Code de Commerce*; their commercial correspondence in the archive, on the other hand, brings to the fore their knowledge of local custom. And they had access to the expertise of their relatives, the Marcopoli brothers. Like other Levantines of Aleppo, their very success depended on their broad base of knowledge in all things legal and commercial in the Ottoman Syrian context.

This knowledge of course extended to the changing paradigms of property ownership both in and beyond the city. As mentioned above, foreign residents in Aleppo were lodged from early on in the khans of the old city, which they began to transform as they and their families settled in for good. They could, however, never own these apartments by law, even after the reformist state laid down specific regulations governing real estate ownership by non-Ottoman subjects in 1867.<sup>48</sup> To wit, the khans of Aleppo were not an ordinary kind of property but generally part of an Islamic pious foundation (*waqf*), and therefore inalienable. Basically, the Levantine families only held rental contracts for the use of these facilities. In practice, however, they dealt with them as if they had de facto ownership rights, buying, selling and even mortgaging *waqf* property. What made this possible was a legal device, the *raqaba* deed or contract, which, distinct from the actual rental contract, listed all the expenses a tenant had invested in a specific *waqf* property. Apart from regular maintenance, these expenses could cover renovations or transformation work done to a structure, but were in any case subject to the prior agreement of the *waqf* administrator (*mutawalli*).

48 See George Young, *Corps de droit ottoman: recueil des codes, lois, règlements, ordonnances et actes les plus importants du droit intérieur, et d'études sur le droit coutumier de l'Empire ottoman* vol. 5 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1906) 335–341; Edouard Philippe Engelhardt, *La Turquie et le Tanzimat, ou histoire des réformes dans L'Empire ottoman depuis 1826 jusqu'à nos jours*, vol. 1 (Paris: A. Cotillon et Cie., 1882), 211–214.

Technically these expenditures had to be reimbursed to the tenant before he would have to vacate the premises at the end of the rental agreement.<sup>49</sup>

But there was another factor which was to have major repercussions for the city's buildings: as recent events have reminded us only too well, the entire region lies in an active fault zone, and Aleppo (as well as other cities including Antakya) witnessed one of the worst earthquakes in its history in August 1822, as already mentioned above, possibly the strongest since the fourteenth century and with aftershocks lasting for close to two and a half years.<sup>50</sup> According to contemporary observers, between a third and a quarter of Aleppo's buildings, an estimated 40,000 buildings in total including many khans, were damaged or destroyed.<sup>51</sup> The costs for the necessary repairs could not be paid by the *waqf* foundations and were therefore frequently provided by the khan tenants, once they decided to move back into the city centre, in some cases as late as five years after the earthquake. This, in turn, gave them the assurance that their usual short-term rental contract would be automatically extended, and in fact could not be ended, so long as the expenditures they had incurred for repairs, as detailed in the *raqaba* contract, was not reimbursed by the endowment. The tenant could also "sell" the debt he was owed by signing over the *raqaba* to a new tenant, thus in effect exercising a right of ownership over the property.<sup>52</sup>

The Poche family held such a *raqaba* contract for their apartment in the Khan al-Nahhasin. They had for a long time also rented out several rooms that were not directly connected to their apartment to the Pons family, a famous Levantine merchant family of French origin, who held an apartment with a *raqaba* agreement in the same khan. A first dispute arose in 1858, when the Pons decided to "sell" their apartment (that is, the

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49 The *raqaba* in Aleppo corresponded to *hikr* or *mursad* contracts in other cities. See Gabriel Baer, "Hikr," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., supplement, 368-370; Randi Deguilhem, "The Loan of Mursad on Waqf Properties," in *A Way Prepared: Essays on Islamic Culture in Honor of Richard Bayly Winder*, eds. Farhad Kazemi and R.D. McChesney (New York: New York University Press, 1988), 68-79.

50 Nicholas N. Ambraseys, "Temporary seismic quiescence: SE Turkey," *Geophysical Journal International* 96, no. 2 (February 1989), 313, 319.

51 According to the French consul Mathieu Lesseps, "Aleppo does not exist anymore, in its place is a heap of ruins. A terrible earthquake has erased it from the list of cities." Cited in Knost, "Shaping the City," 161-162; Ambraseys, "Temporary seismic quiescence," 321.

52 Discussed in detail in Knost, "Shaping the City."

*raqaba*) to the de Picciottos, a Jewish Austro-Hungarian family (and thus rivals of the Poches for consular offices) but forgot that these three rooms were actually under the Poches' lease. This dispute was resolved, after considerable back-and-forth, but a few years later the same *raqaba* contract was sold again, to the British protégé Sasson Gabbai, who was once again not aware that the rooms were not actually part of the apartment. Interestingly, already in 1859, Adolphe Poche had suggested that the case be decided by Muslim jurists "according to the law of the land [les lois du pays]" before the Austro-Hungarian consul general in Beirut stepped in and impressed an amicable solution. The second time, in 1867, it was Marguerite Poche, Adolphe's mother, who insisted the case be submitted to the newly created Ottoman civil (*nizamiye*) court. In a letter to the Ottoman *vali* (governor), she in fact expresses her outrage that Gabbai would "have the audacity" to suggest such disputes were commonly brought before a consular court in Aleppo ("where on earth has he found such a thing?"), arguing instead that the foreign consulates consistently instructed their protégés to seek out Ottoman courts in matters of *waqf* property.<sup>53</sup>

While we do not know how the case was resolved, what it shows is that the Poches were happy to accept the jurisdiction of an Ottoman court, where their nationality would not have been of any influence and they and their opponents would have been treated as Ottoman subjects. They probably knew their position to be the stronger, based on their longstanding acquaintance with Ottoman and indeed Islamic law, as compared to Gabbai, who does not appear to have lived in Aleppo for as long and whose understanding of the law Marguerite openly mocked.

This intimate knowledge of commerce, law and real estate in the region would also be an important factor when the Poches began, in addition to their continuing trade activities, to invest in commercial agriculture and acquire title to a number of villages in northern Syria in the 1880s. The phenomenon of urban-based merchants advancing funds to peasants for their produce, profiting from the increased security in the countryside in the late nineteenth century to purchase (or foreclose on) rural properties for the purposes of commercial farming, raising the land's productivity while displacing

53 FP 3068:85-86, Adolphe Poche to Alexandre Pons; 12 March 1859; FP 3068:475-485, Marguerite Poche to Cevdet Paşa, *vali* of Aleppo, 12 April 1867.

the older indigenous elites, and contributing thereby to advance the state's own interests as it asserted control over the rural periphery, is well documented in other areas of greater Syria too.<sup>54</sup> Around Aleppo, different trader families including the Marcopolis also invested in commercial agriculture in this time.<sup>55</sup> The Poches' first land acquisitions were made at Tall Tutun some 70 km east of Aleppo by the Euphrates; later, at the very beginning of the twentieth century, more purchases were made around al-Bab and Idlib. The task of overseeing the lands fell to Frédéric Poche and later to his son Joseph.<sup>56</sup> Even if they employed local administrators to direct farming operations and did not often visit the local villages themselves, the Poches nonetheless knew the region well. Guillaume, for his part, is said in 1907 to have been able to identify villages that were not yet listed on the "best maps" of the time.<sup>57</sup>

However, the Poches' ownership of three groups of land in the east brought some unforeseen troubles only a few years after they started having them cultivated. In 1887, Sultan Abdülhamid II himself purchased, as part of the *liste civile* (the crown's private property holdings), a vast estate surrounding the Poches' lands at Tall Tutun, effectively annexing them. The ensuing tug-of-war between Frédéric and the Ottoman state and palace would last for fifteen years and require endless patience, efforts, negotiation, and diplomatic finesse, on the part of the Austro-Hungarian ambassador in Istanbul, before it was settled in the Poches' favour. In the first instance, when Frédéric was still under the impression the error could be cleared up on the provincial level, he and Adolphe went to conduct an official survey of the lands with an engineer of the *liste civile*. When this did not produce any results, Frédéric had to travel to Istanbul several times to see to the case personally, without which he would not stand a chance. During his prolonged stays in the capital, he would usually reside in the (predominantly Christian) suburb-village of San Stefano (Yeşilköy), and, as far as can be gathered from the diary he kept regarding the case, without significant

54 Eugene Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 95–121.

55 FM 5325a; FM 5327; FM 5330.

56 Miriam Kubina, "Österreich im Orient: F. Poche im Rechtsstreit egen den Sultan (1887-1902)," (Wissenschaftliche Staatsexamensarbeit im Fach Geschichte, University of Heidelberg, 2005), ch. 4; Jenny Poche-Marrache, *Famille Poche: Une Ville, une Famille, une Maison: Souvenirs de Jenny Poche Marrache* (Aleppo: n.n., n.d. [ca. 2003]), 9.

57 Franz Cumont, *Études Syriennes* (Paris : Auguste Picard, 1917), 29.

social contacts. Unlike in Aleppo, here he also had to take recourse to dragomans (translators) for his representations before the authorities.<sup>58</sup>

On the whole it appears very unlikely that Frédéric would obtain justice. The palace of Abdülhamid aggressively acquired numerous rural properties in Syria and Iraq in these years, often by usurpation or outright expropriation, and informed observers considered that “lawsuits against the *Liste civile* of His Majesty... are impossible. One shouldn’t even dream of it.”<sup>59</sup> The Austrian ambassador Baron de Calice, whose intervention Frédéric sought, was equally pessimistic, although he noted that the *liste civile*’s “procedures” usually only targeted Ottoman subjects, who were completely defenceless. In the end, his good offices achieved the impossible, and the Poches, as Austro-Hungarian subjects, received compensatory payment in 1903, a result noted with satisfaction even by the French ambassador in Istanbul.<sup>60</sup>



**Figure 3.** Countryside. Far right: Rodolphe Poche; middle: two sisters of the third generation. Collection Albert Poche, undated (around 1905).

58 Kubina, “Österreich im Orient,” ch. 7 (“Istanbulaufenthalt”).

59 Charles Hecquard, *L’Empire ottoman: La Turquie sous Abdul-Hamid II. Exposé fidèle de la gérance d’un empire pendant un quart de siècle: 31 août 1876 – 1er septembre 1900* (Brussels: Henri Lamertin, 1901), 271–272. On the establishment of Abdülhamid’s private *saniyya* estates in Iraq, see Albertine Jwaideh, “The *Sanniya* Lands of Sultan Abdul Hamid II in Iraq,” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies in Honor of Hamilton A.R. Gibb*, ed. George Makdisi (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1965), 330–331.

60 Hecquard, *L’empire Ottoman*, 271–272; Kubina, “Österreich im Orient,” 40.

The economic success of the Poches and other Levantine families of Aleppo thus depended on their knowledge of both the law of the land and the lay of the land, particularly as they diversified into regional trade, rural landholding, and commercial agriculture. We have already seen that the Fratelli Poche & Co. built up an extensive network of business contacts and local middlemen in the Syrian interior, and occasionally received peasant delegations from their farms or important tribal figures in the city.<sup>61</sup> Though rarely necessary, the brothers did not hesitate either to travel in the country to take care of business themselves. One of the best examples dates from 1863, when Albert Poche was sent to Urfa to purchase wool from the tribes and dispatch it to Aleppo on behalf of the company. While not successful in the end, the fact that he undertook this three-month mission, at barely 21 years of age, suggests a high degree of confidence and intimacy with the region on both his and the family's part.<sup>62</sup>

As the Fratelli Poche & Co. turned increasingly toward the interior for trade in the second half of the nineteenth century, we also see members of the family travelling more into the countryside not just on business but also for pleasure, and in particular out of a growing scholarly curiosity. Leaving the city to enjoy some time in nature or explore Syria's rich historical heritage was of course nothing new for Aleppo's Levantine elite. Already in the late seventeenth century, the English physician and naturalist Alexander Russell, who spent fourteen years at the factory in Aleppo, reported that "all the English, and some of the others, keep horses, and ride out for an hour or two of an afternoon three or four times a-week," and dine under tents or go hunting when the season permits;<sup>63</sup> Anglican chaplains in Aleppo around the same period were known for making regular excursions to visit Palmyra and other sites of antiquity.<sup>64</sup> We do not have many references in the

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61 Azad Ahmad Ali, "Le rôle politique des tribus kurdes Milli et de la famille d'Ibrahim Pacha à l'ouest du Kurdistan et au nord du Bilad al-Cham (1878-1908)," in *Alep et ses territoires : Fabrique et politique d'une ville, 1868-2011*, eds. Jean-Claude David and Thierry Boissière (Beirut, Damascus: Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2014), 72, 75.

62 FP 3068:256-259, 270-271 and 278-279, 4 and 25 April, 16 May 1863, letters from Adolphe Poche to Albert Poche, and 348-349, 14 May 1864, letter from Adolphe Poche to Armand Martin.

63 Russell, *The Natural History*, 135.

64 Simon Mills, "The English Chaplains at Aleppo," *Council for British Research in the Levant Bulletin* 6 (2011): 13-20.

correspondence to members of the Poche or Marcopoli families visiting historical sites in the nineteenth century, although Albert Poche, as already stated, was the first to photograph the Byzantine monastery of Saint-Simeon. Rodolphe Poche of the third generation, for his part, writes in a biographical note in 1927 that the family's rural estates to the south of Aleppo were located on the sites of ancient cities from the early days of Christianity, and that it would not take very much digging to lay them bare.<sup>65</sup> The family's estates to the east of Aleppo near the Euphrates and the heartland of ancient Mesopotamia were certainly no less rich in archeological remains. Local peasants in north Syria were aware they could sell whatever artefacts and coins they came across to the Europeans in the city; with their landholdings the Poches had direct access to such finds.<sup>66</sup>

An acute interest in the region's antiquities was already demonstrated by Guillaume Poche of the second generation. In his biographical note, his nephew Rodolphe relates how Guillaume assembled an important collection of ancient pottery, terracotta, faïence, glass objects, cylinder seals and coins;<sup>67</sup> he is furthermore said to have for a while studied archeology by correspondence.<sup>68</sup> From Franz Cumont, the famous Belgian archeologist who visited Syria in 1907, we also learn that Guillaume had in his possession at least two bas-reliefs as well as a marble block with Greek inscriptions. Perhaps more interesting, Cumont reports that "at a collector's in Aleppo, I saw a large find of coins from Tell-Batnân [3 km northeast of al-Bab, where the Poches owned property], more than three thousand pieces of [Roman mintages]". He also indicates that he deposited several of these coins in the *Cabinet des médailles* in Brussels, as a gift from Guillaume Poche (who was obviously the collector he was referring to).<sup>69</sup>

65 FP 3232, 6 August 1927.

66 Poche-Marrache, *Famille Poche*, 24.

67 FP 3232, Aleppo, 6 August 1927, Rodolphe Poche to Baron Max von Oppenheim. The collection was kept in the family home in the Khan al-Nahhasin until the khan was looted during the civil war in 2013. According to Thierry Grandin, however, the collection was saved during a rescue mission; see Thierry Grandin, "Alep: espoirs et désillusions," in *Actes du colloque Ila Souria 1.0. Syrie: reconstructions, immatérielles et matérielles? Institut du monde arabe, Paris. 08, 09 et 10 octobre 2013*, eds. Irène Labeyrie and Claude Yacoub (Paris: Association Ila Souria, 2014), 46.

68 Poche-Marrache, *Famille Poche*, 24.

69 Cumont, *Études*, 21-22, 317, 321-322. One of the bas-reliefs is reproduced here.

The sons of the third Poche generation attended the newly founded Franciscan school of St Antoine of Padua; Adolphe Jr (1895-1987) in particular went on to study medicine in Beirut and later completed his studies in Vienna and Paris before returning to Aleppo after World War I to practice. He became known not only as a physician and consul, but also for his humanitarian and social involvement, gave public lectures on medical and historical topics, wrote journal articles, and received a number of honorific titles.<sup>70</sup> Rodolphe (1889- 1967), for his part, did not go to university but lived for a number of years with his maternal uncle, the Marquis de Giustiniani, in Lisbon. After his return to Aleppo and two unhappy relationships, he is said to have withdrawn into himself, but nevertheless pursued his office as Dutch consul as well as his archeological interests.<sup>71</sup> For this generation of Levantines, the city of Aleppo in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century had relatively little to offer by way of cultural and intellectual stimulation. Nonetheless, inspired by their uncle Guillaume as well as their cousins François (Francesco) and Henri Marcopoli, who were likewise known to possess an impressive collection of ancient cylinder seals and other artefacts,<sup>72</sup> it is natural that the younger generation of Poches would also turn to the study of Syria's past and seek to enlarge the family's holdings in archeological objects and coins. According to Luc Smolderen, a former diplomat and president of the Société Royale de Numismatique de Belgique, of which Adolphe also was a member, at the time of his death in 1987 the coin collection contained 676 pieces and represented "one of the most important of the Middle East." Smolderen had had the opportunity to see the collection with his own eyes before it fell prey in 1976 to a spectacular heist at the branch of the Banco di Roma in Beirut, where it had been taken for safekeeping.<sup>73</sup>

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70 Poche-Marrache, *Famille Poche*, 38; Ade, *Picknick*, 64-65.

71 Cloarec, *Le temps des consuls*, 150; Poche-Marrache, *Famille Poche*, 31.

72 FM 9000, A. A. Girardi, 15 October 1980, Marcopoli family tree. A description of the family's cylinder seal collection is provided by Béatrice Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern Cylinder Seals from the Marcopoli Collection* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

73 Ninety-one of the 676 coins resurfaced and were donated to the Vatican Museums in 2003. See Samuele Ranucci and Simona Artusi, "La collezione di monete di Adolphe Poche nei Musei Vaticani: non tutto è perduto," in *Bollettino dei monumenti musei e gallerie pontificie* 31-2013 (Vatican City: Edizioni musei vaticani, 2015), 42 and 47.

Adolphe and Rodolphe had certainly not been alone in their pursuit. The first efforts to set up a local museum can be dated to 1924 under the auspices of the French High Commissioner of the time, while the *Société archéologique d'Alep* was founded six years later. Its mission was to foster an appreciation of Aleppo's ancient heritage in various ways: it organized conferences and carried out archeological *promenades* "in order to raise the interest of its members in the history of their country, to animate them to study closely Syrian archeological monuments". It also published a journal, the *Revue archéologique syrienne*, and later participated actively in the reorganisation of the city museum.<sup>74</sup> Rodolphe and Adolphe were both members of the *Société*; Rodolphe was elected vice-president in 1936 while Adolphe collaborated in the publication of the *Revue*.<sup>75</sup>



**Figure 4.** Meeting of Levantine and foreign dignitaries (including Frédéric Poche, far right) with Hamidiye regiment leader Milli Ibrahim Pasha (fourth from left) and an Ottoman official at the Poche family home Khan al-Nahhasin. Collection Albert Poche, undated (ca. 1895-1908).

74 "Historique de la Société archéologique d'Alep," *Revue archéologique syrienne* [RAS] 1, no.1 (May 1931): 13-14; "Nouvelles archéologiques," RAS 1, no. 3 (July 1931): 68; "L'activité de notre société," RAS 4, no. 2 (April-June 1936): 47-48; "Les musées," RAS 1, no. 6-7 (October-November 1931): 116; "Le musée national d'Alep," RAS 1, no. 1 (May 1931): 18-19.

75 "L'activité de notre société," RAS 4, no. 2 (April-June 1936): 46; Poche-Marrache, *Famille Poche*, 43-45 ("Hommage à la mémoire du Docteur Adolphe Poche par Maître Gabriel Ghazal").

## Conclusion

This contribution has tried to show that the Levantine community of Aleppo in the nineteenth century was relatively small, lived as a rather introverted group in terms of language, cultural tastes and marriage patterns, and formed a distinct economic and societal elite. This did not mean, however, that their Europeanness condemned them to a secluded, ghetto-like existence. The community was far from homogenous in terms of national and religious background, even if they had in common many features of lifestyle as well as the striving for consular positions. Moreover, as traders, they were inevitably in contact with local society, in the city and beyond, with peasants and tribesmen, with Arabic language, Islamic law, and wider Syrian and Ottoman culture.

This belonging to, and identifying with, two different worlds of course evolved over time. With regard to the Poche family, we tried to show how they articulated their Austrian identity, cultivating family ties and seeking wives in Europe. Their nationality had not only functional but also sentimental value. At the same time, their archival records demonstrate how fluent they became in all aspects of local life, navigating Ottoman Arab institutions and dealing with real estate, regional trade, commercial law, landholding and agriculture. And more than just property ownership, it becomes apparent they were personally invested in their surroundings as such, valuing the heritage of a place where many civilizations had passed, visiting and documenting historical sites, travelling and meeting locals, and collecting coins and other artefacts including on the lands to which they had direct access. Perhaps more than the Levantine communities in major port cities, the Poches, Marcopolis and other families of Aleppo were intimately connected with the region not only from the standpoint of the city dweller but through their direct, multi-layered experience with the land around them.

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FP = Fonds Poche, Poche/Marcopoli archives, Aleppo.

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# THE SMYRNA MAIL AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BRITISH LEVANTINE IDENTITY IN OTTOMAN IZMIR (1862-1864)

Alexandra Solovyev\*

On Tuesday September 23, 1862, the first issue of the *Smyrna Mail* was published in the Ottoman port city of Izmir, known as “Smyrna” to its British residents.<sup>1</sup> The newspaper would continue to be published weekly until August of the following year, when the periodical briefly shifted to a monthly publication schedule. After the publication of its forty-eighth issue on October 1, 1863, the newspaper terminated operations until April 23, 1864, when an attempt was made to revive the fledging periodical, seemingly under new management. The revival was short-lived. The *Smyrna Mail* published its fifty-third and final issue on May 21, 1864, after which the newspaper permanently ceased publication.

The lifespan of the *Smyrna Mail* was brief: fifty-three issues published over less than two years. Each issue was also short, consisting of only four

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\* Ph.D. Candidate at University of Oxford, United Kingdom.  
Email: alexandra.solovyev@history.ox.ac.uk, ORCID: 0000-0001-8479-9937. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384853](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384853)

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1 The name “Smyrna” was widely used in classical and early Christian texts to refer to the Ottoman and modern Turkish city of Izmir and henceforth adopted by Western European travelers to and writers on the region. The *Smyrna Mail* exclusively uses the name “Smyrna” to refer to the city. In this chapter, I will use refer to the city as “Izmir,” but I will use “Smyrna” when quoting or paraphrasing from the *Smyrna Mail*.

pages of text that followed a standard pattern: page one was dedicated to advertisements and railway timetables; pages two and three shuffled between feature-length articles, correspondence from journalists, and local and regional news; and page four included market reports and further advertisements, as well as any additional local news that had failed to be included on earlier pages. We do not know the names of the newspaper's editors or its owner. We do know that it was published in Izmir by the bookseller Charles Green, although it is unclear whether Green was only its printer or also its proprietor.<sup>2</sup> Despite what little information we have about its founders, as well as its brief span of publication and the short length of each issue, the *Smyrna Mail* offers a rich window into the lives of the city's British residents and the ways by which they constructed a sense of identity and community. The first and only Anglophone newspaper published in Izmir during the Ottoman era, it was produced by and for Izmir's British community, which in the 1860s was composed of Levantines resident in the city for generations, as well as recent arrivals from Britain who had emigrated to the city for work. Recent British immigrants cannot strictly-speaking be considered "Levantines," for they did not stay in the empire long-term and returned to their home country after their employment had concluded.<sup>3</sup> Because the material and political interests of these two groups largely coincided, however, British Levantines and recent British arrivals were seldom distinguished between in the pages of the *Smyrna Mail*, and this chapter will use the term "British community" to refer to the combination of both groups. Indeed, although it marketed its subscriptions to cities across the broader Ottoman Empire, Eastern Mediterranean, and Western Europe, the majority of the *Smyrna Mail*'s articles, listings, and advertisements concerned Izmir and its surrounding region. Reading the *Smyrna Mail*, one thus gains an intimate view into the opinions, concerns, and needs of Izmir's British community at a moment of peak Anglo-Ottoman financial and diplomatic cooperation.

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2 An 1863 *Reader* article lists Charles Green as the publisher of the newspaper but does not say whether he is also its primary editor. "Miscellanea," *Reader*, July 4, 1863, 16.

3 Elena Frangakis-Syrett, "The Dynamics of Economic Development: Izmir and Western Anatolia, Late 19th/Early 20th Centuries," in *The Port-City in the Ottoman Middle East at the Age of Imperialism* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2017), 181.

The *Smyrna Mail* emerged at a moment when the legal parameters of citizenship were being actively negotiated and renegotiated within the Ottoman central bureaucracy and through the lived experience of the Ottoman populace. Tanzimat reforms had invited a reconceptualization of the rights and privileges granted to different population groups within the empire. The idea of Ottoman subjecthood was coming into focus, elevating national identity above traditional ethno-religious categories of designation. But it is not the legal conditions of citizenship that concern us here, but rather what Sibel Zandi-Sayek has described as the “informal (sociocultural) dimension [of citizenship,] acted and experienced in all sorts of daily practices.”<sup>4</sup> The urban space offers a particularly rich environment in which to examine these sociocultural dimensions, as the multinational character of the city allowed for public expressions of difference. Urban citizenship, Zandi-Sayek writes, was predicated not only on legal status but also on “active participation in and appropriation of the city’s economic, social, and cultural spheres by virtue of residing in an urban territory.”<sup>5</sup> Focusing on the sociocultural dimensions of citizenship in the urban space, therefore, reveals how broad changes in legal policy impacted individual lived experience and how identity was negotiated at the community level. The newspaper, as a platform through which the sociocultural dimensions of citizenship could be expressed as well as a sociocultural marker of citizenship in itself, emerges as the ideal lens through which to engage with questions of identity, nationality, and self-representation.

This chapter will explore the history of the *Smyrna Mail*, from its rise in 1862 through to its swift decline in 1864, with a focus on its role in constructing and bolstering a sense of British identity within the urban space of Ottoman Izmir. The newspaper was but one of the economic, social, and cultural institutions established by British in Izmir in the 1860s through which the community’s sense of identity was mediated: under the leadership of individuals including the entrepreneur, Hyde Clarke, socio-academic clubs targeting British audiences such as the Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution and the Academy of Anatolia for Archaeology and

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4 Sibel Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir: The Rise of a Cosmopolitan Port, 1840-1880* (Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 50.

5 Ibid.

Geology were opened. Other establishments, such as the Imperial Cotton Commission, although founded on entrepreneurial grounds, also proved to be a means through which identities could be expressed. As this chapter will explore, the establishment of these institutions was instigated by the migration of British personnel to Izmir to work for the British-owned Ottoman Railway Company. The railway company held such economic potential for the British Levantine community that Clarke, himself an employee of the company, said in an 1863 speech that if conditions were to continue as they had, “by the help of the railways, within ten years, their population and their trade would be doubled.”<sup>6</sup> The anticipation of success in these years was visceral.

Despite this initial enthusiasm, the *Smyrna Mail* and many of its accompanying institutions would shutter only a few years after their establishment. The chapter will address the causes of this deterioration and explore the role played by Hyde Clarke in preserving the legacy of the *Smyrna Mail* and Izmir’s British community as a whole. I begin this chapter, however, with a discussion considering the theoretical utility of the terms “cosmopolitan” and “nationalist” to describe the city of Izmir and its British residents. A nuancing of these terms and a critical view to the ways they have been used by previous scholars will create a foundation through which I will examine the way identity formation was expressed within the *Smyrna Mail*’s articles, advertisements, and listings. Engaging with the work of Will Hanley, Malte Fuhrmann, and Sibel Zandi-Sayek, in particular, I will demonstrate how the newspaper’s principally nationalist impulses were complicated by the multiple audiences that the paper was simultaneously trying to reach.

### **Ottoman Izmir: Cosmopolitan Enclave?**

Ottoman port cities of the nineteenth century, such as Izmir, Alexandria, and Beirut, have often been described in the scholarly literature as “cosmopolitan.”<sup>7</sup> This designation has been used to invoke the ethnic,

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6 “Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution,” *Smyrna Mail*, January 13, 1863, 4.

7 For a detailed discussion of such literature, albeit one published fifteen years ago, see Will Hanley, “Grieving Cosmopolitanism in Middle East Studies,” *History Compass* 6, no. 5 (2008): 1346–67.

linguistic, and religious diversity of the cities' population and to indicate that this diversity led to a greater degree of tolerance and cross-cultural exchange among the cities' residents. When used to describe individuals, a "cosmopolitan" is one who values and appreciates this multicultural diversity. Port cities, in particular, have been subject to this designation due to their being centers of international commerce, as well as temporary or permanent residences for non-Ottoman, usually European, merchants. The cosmopolitan, whether used as noun or adjective, is subsequently contrasted with its alleged antithesis, the nationalist. Both among regions and individuals, nationalist come to designate those parts and people in the Ottoman Empire distant from the port cities' global networks of trade and, in turn, their cosmopolitan values.

Employed as static markers of identity, the terms "cosmopolitan" and "nationalist" produce a reductionist binary that fails to capture the complexity of identity building, whether in urban or provincial locales. The limitations of these designations as related to studies of Middle East and North Africa have been explored in some depth by Will Hanley and Malte Fuhrmann, among others. Hanley's criticisms have focused on how discussions of cosmopolitanism have limited the scope of their study through a focus on social elites, adopted an approach that accentuates the similarities of supposedly cosmopolitan cities in favor of their critical differences, and inscribed a tone of "grieving nostalgia" towards the decline of these cosmopolitan enclaves within the literature.<sup>8</sup> Fuhrmann has also discussed the limitations of these terms, criticizing the way they have been used by scholars in macro-historical analyses to classify vast populations under these simplistic markers of identity.<sup>9</sup> Both accounts address the ambiguity and overreach that these terms can engender when used in a broad, abstract sense, rather than in a narrow and limited context.

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8 Ibid., 1346.

9 Malte Fuhrmann, "Cosmopolitan Imperialists and the Ottoman Port Cities: Conflicting Logics in the Urban Social Fabric," *Cahiers de La Méditerranée* 67 (2003): 4. Fuhrmann makes the point that even when scholars acknowledge that populations can be simultaneously cosmopolitan and nationalist, they may not provide examples of how these seemingly contradictory attitudes are expressed in individuals' lived experiences.

Both Hanley and Fuhrmann offer solutions to what they see as the inadequacy of the terms cosmopolitan and nationalist as they are currently used in the scholarly literature. Hanley suggests acknowledging the narrow context of a wealthy, mobile, secularizing elite that cosmopolitan has come to designate, expanding the use of the term to include those outside these immediate limitations, or moving away from fixed identities such as cosmopolitan or nationalist altogether.<sup>10</sup> At Hanley's suggestion, my approach in this chapter will be to move beyond using "cosmopolitan" and "nationalist" as two poles of a binary, in which an individual or a city can be categorized in some or all circumstances under one of the two extremes. Rather, while still using these terms, I intend to invoke them as descriptors of the sentiments and intentions expressed by editors and journalists, recognizing the fluidity with which opinion could vacillate between two seemingly contradictory modes of thought. Such an approach will allow me to better address the inherent instability of identity production and avoid the contention that British identity in Izmir was a singular or static entity.

Fuhrmann offers a related solution to confront the inadequacy of the terms cosmopolitan and nationalist. His prescription to scholars researching Ottoman port cities is to lean into micro-historical analysis, which he argues is a more productive approach through which to explore the "dynamics of conflict between notions of cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the social urban fabric."<sup>11</sup> Instead of abandoning the terminology of cosmopolitanism and nationalism altogether, Fuhrmann believes in their utility when used in a narrow context. Fuhrmann himself offers such an approach in his work, highlighting the distinct cases of three German nationals resident in the Ottoman Empire who in their social lives exhibited leanings towards both nationalist and cosmopolitan sentiments – that is, sentiments towards both their own community of German nationals and towards the broader social fabric of the cities in which they resided.<sup>12</sup> This sort of microhistorical approach can also be identified in the work of scholars who offer complex readings of the processes of identity-making in Ottoman Izmir, namely Sibel Zandi-Sayek and Vangelis Kechriotis. Interestingly, both

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10 Hanley, "Grieving Cosmopolitanism," 1358-1360.

11 Fuhrmann, "Cosmopolitan Imperialists and the Ottoman Port Cities," 4.

12 Ibid., 8.

authors focus their studies on national or nationalist celebrations performed within Izmir's urban spaces which, to use Zandi-Sayek's language, can be read as sociocultural expressions of citizenship.<sup>13</sup>

My forthcoming discussion of the *Smyrna Mail* will be structured through the microhistorical approach advocated by Fuhrmann and employed by Zandi-Sayek and Kechriotis. While I will still be using the terms nationalist and cosmopolitan, I will do so under the parameters discussed above, invoking them when describing sentiments and impulses, rather than individuals or communities. My close reading of the *Smyrna Mail's* editorials, articles, and advertisements will reveal the paper's appeal to be largely British nationalist sediment. While it would be remiss to discuss the nationalism of a print newspaper without reference to Benedict Anderson's concept of the "imagined community," what I want to show here is not that the *Smyrna Mail* created a community of readers united under their national identity, but rather that it failed to do so.<sup>14</sup> The *Smyrna Mail* was nationalist not in the sense of appealing to single, static British national identity, but nationalist in the sense of a multiplicity of national interests that reflected the multiple audiences that the paper was trying to reach. As we will see, it attempted to simultaneously speak to British audiences in Britain, British permanent residents at Izmir – a group itself composed of established Levantines and recent immigrants – and British travellers in the region. Each of these groups had different interests, concerns, and ways of understanding their status as British nationals. Appeals to multiple audiences leaves the newspaper marred by tensions, but perhaps not by coincidence, I argue, but rather by design. My analysis will show that the *Smyrna Mail's* appeals to various nationalist sentiments was strategic, expressing favor or solidarity with different audiences when it was most beneficial to the writers and

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13 Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir*; Sibel Zandi-Sayek, "Orchestrating Difference, Performing Identity: Urban Space and Public Rituals in Nineteenth-Century Izmir," in *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*, ed. Nezar Al-Sayyad (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 42–66; Vangelis Kechriotis, "Allons, Enfants de La... Ville': National Celebrations, Political Mobilisation and Urban Space in Izmir at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Ottoman Izmir: Studies in Honour of Alexander H. de Groot*, ed. Maurits H. van den Boogert (Leiden: Nederlands Instituut voor het Nabije Oosten, 2007), 123–37.

14 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised ed. (London & New York: Verso, 2006).

editors of the paper. Focusing on the multiplicity of British national interests helps to disrupt the nationalism-cosmopolitanism binary and demonstrates how the newspaper could function a space for the construction of multiple, competing identities.

### Anglo-Ottoman Relations in the Nineteenth Century

The foundation of the *Smyrna Mail* in September of 1862 was preceded by a series of diplomatic agreements, internal reforms, and private negotiations in the Ottoman Empire that would transform the Anglo-Ottoman political and economic relationship and the status of British nationals within the domains of the Sublime Porte. As one of the preeminent port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean and the terminus for agricultural products from the Anatolian interior destined for export, Izmir had attracted foreign merchants from at least the late sixteenth century. As foreign nationals, these merchant communities enjoyed a high degree of autonomy from the Ottoman bureaucracy, managing internal affairs through their consular offices. They also received capitulations, which granted foreign merchants the right to trade and freely express their religion within the empire.<sup>15</sup> The result of such measures was a flourishing European merchant class in the Ottoman Empire's port cities. In Izmir, Levantine communities made their places of residence on and around Frank Street, a thoroughfare originally valued for its proximity to the waterfront but ultimately developed as a centralized hub for foreign consulates, churches, and other establishments catering to the needs of European merchants.<sup>16</sup>

According to an essay published by Hyde Clarke in the *Levant Herald* in early 1862, British merchants had been resident in the Ottoman Empire since the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558-1603).<sup>17</sup> So significant were Levantine mercantile interests to British foreign policy in the Ottoman Empire that for most of its diplomatic history, British consular posts were held by individuals with a mercantilist background who had concrete knowledge of the economic conditions of the region they presided

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15 Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir*, 51.

16 *Ibid.*, 17.

17 Hyde Clarke, "The History of the British Colony at Smyrna," British Library, London, BLL01000714741.

over.<sup>18</sup> The incentive for British merchants to invest in the Ottoman Empire and for British Consuls to support them only increased with the passage of the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention of 1838 (*Baltalimani Antlaşması*). Supplementing what had been a favorable trade policy to begin with, the treaty resulted in greatly lowered tariffs and the abolition of various restrictions on British trade with the empire, including the abolition of monopolies.<sup>19</sup> A perhaps unexpected consequence of the treaty for its Ottoman negotiators, as Daniel Goffman has pointed out, was that it exposed Izmir and other Ottoman ports to European, and primarily British, manufactures.<sup>20</sup> A more predictable outcome of the treaty, though, was that it perpetuated the installment of British merchants as consuls. A prime case of this phenomenon was Charles Blunt, member of a well-established British Levantine merchant family, who served as British Consul in Thessaloniki before being appointed consul at Izmir in 1856.<sup>21</sup>

Negotiations for the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention were shortly thereafter followed by a much larger pan-Ottoman reform agenda. In November of 1839, Grand Vizier Mustafa Resid Pasha issued the Rose Chamber Edict (*hatt-ı şerif* of Gülhane), a far-reaching declaration that outlined the administrative, legal, and civil reforms that the Ottoman bureaucracy intended to implement over the following years and decades. The declaration marked the beginning of the Tanzimat era, and the legislative changes proposed in 1839 were subsequently institutionalized through the Ottoman Reform Edict of 1856 (*hatt-ı hümayun*). A crucial part of these reforms was the reevaluation of laws dictating the rights and privileges of various population groups in the Ottoman Empire. Tanzimat reforms moved away from the traditional Ottoman legal categories of Muslim, non-Muslim Ottoman resident (*dhimmi*), and non-Muslim foreigner towards a system that recognized individuals as either foreigners (*ecnebi*) or as Ottomans,

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18 Emine Zeytinli, "A British Merchant in Turkey: Freeman of the Levant Company and Consul, Donald Sandison at Bursa, 1795–1868," *Tarih Dergisi*, no. 68 (2018): 38-39.

19 M. Sükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 70.

20 Daniel Goffman, "Izmir: From Village to Colonial Port City," in *The Ottoman City between East and West: Aleppo, Izmir, and Istanbul*, by Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, and Bruce Masters (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 126.

21 Zeytinli, "A British Merchant in Turkey," 40.

thereby placing Muslims and *dhimmis* into the same legal category.<sup>22</sup> This reform expanded the rights granted to non-Muslim Ottomans, and the edict of 1856 went as far as to proclaim the legal equality of all Ottoman subjects.<sup>23</sup> These concepts were formalized in the Ottoman Law of Nationality of 1869.<sup>24</sup>

As this brief historical sketch illustrates, the legal conditions of citizenship were being actively written and rewritten by Ottoman administrators through the course of the nineteenth century. For the British Levantine merchant, the direct impact of these reforms were limited: capitulations had for centuries been designed so as to ensure foreigners' tax immunities and their relatively autonomy from the Ottoman bureaucratic state. Levantines would have experienced the reforms directly, however, through their relationships with non-Muslim Ottomans, whose expanded rights would have benefited them in their capacity as the Levantines' trading partners. Non-Muslim Ottomans dominated trade with Europe, regulating access to the hinterland through complex, local trade networks that Levantines themselves could not penetrate.<sup>25</sup> In any case, Tanzimat reforms did not hurt British Levantines. Rather, the combination of these reforms paired with the mercantile advantages awarded to them through the Anglo-Ottoman Commercial Convention invited British capitalists to see the Ottoman Empire as ripe for investment.

As Cem Emrence has discussed, European merchants and investors, unable to penetrate the Ottoman hinterlands without the cooperation of non-Muslim merchant class, limited their operations to certain areas in order to retain unencumbered control of their projects. Many Europeans, therefore, focused their energies on financing foreign trade through capital-intensive investments and the construction of infrastructure that would benefit port cities.<sup>26</sup> One of the first major British investment projects of

22 Sükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 74.

23 Gudrun Krämer, "Moving Out of Place: Minorities in Middle Eastern Urban Societies, 1800–1914," in *The Urban Social History of the Middle East, 1750-1950*, ed. Peter Sluglett (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 200.

24 Sükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, 74.

25 Cem Emrence, *Remapping the Ottoman Middle East: Modernity, Imperial Bureaucracy and Islam* (London & New York: I. B. Tauris, 2012), 38-41.

26 *Ibid.*, 41.

this type, and the most important for the purposes of this chapter, was the construction of a railway from Izmir to the regional center of Aydın. This infrastructure project was proposed by the London-based Ottoman Railway Company (ORC), whose shareholders were composed of both individuals in Britain and the Ottoman Empire, as well as the Ottoman government. The ORC was granted a concession by the Ottoman government in 1856, soon after the end of the Crimean War. After facing initial financial and administrative challenges, the ORC found itself with surer footing and new leadership by the start of the 1860s, with plans to open its primary section of line in 1862.<sup>27</sup>

While employing local seasonal workers to conduct the manual labor, the ORC imported engineers, contractors, and administrative staff from Britain to coordinate the construction of the railway lines. The result was a significant increase in the population of the British residents at Izmir from the late 1850s onward: the number of British merchants in the city increased from 202 in 1848 to 1,061 by 1856.<sup>28</sup> What is perhaps just as significant as the total population increase during this period is the presence of enthusiastic individuals within this demographic intent on developing the British community into a distinct socially-connected group. The most animated of these individuals was Hyde Clarke, an ORC representative who had emigrated to the Ottoman Empire on behalf of the company and who by 1862 was the President of the newly-founded Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution and the Academy of Anatolia for Archaeology and Geology. These institutions offered educational events for the British community and served as spaces of both social interaction and academic instruction. Other railway personnel were also deeply involved with the community's social and academic life. Chief ORC Engineer, Edward

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27 For a detailed histories of the ORC, see Yakup Bektaş, "The Imperial Ottoman Izmir-to-Aydın Railway: The British Experimental Line in Asia Minor," in *Science, Technology, and Industry in the Ottoman World*, ed. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Ahmed Djebbar, and Feza Günnergun (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 139–52, and Elvan Cobb, "Railway Crossings: Encounters in Ottoman Lands," PhD Dissertation, Cornell University, 2018.

28 Orhan Kurmuş, *Emperyalizmin Türkiye'ye Girişi* (Istanbul: Savaş Yayınları, 1982), 37, cited in Sevtap Demirci and Nevin Coşar, "Modernisation through Railways: Economic and Social Change in the Ottoman Empire in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies* 23, no. 5 (2021): 689.

Purser, became President of the Literary and Scientific Institution and the Academy of Anatolia after Hyde Clarke stepped down at the end of 1862, and ORC Contractor Thomas Russell Crampton was a regular fixture of the community's social life.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned, much like the *Smyrna Mail*, these socio-academic institutions can be understood as sociocultural markers of citizenship and will be discussed later on in this chapter.

What these examples demonstrate is that the population of the British community at Izmir increased with the influx of ORC personnel emigrating to the city and that from this group of recent immigrants emerged individuals with a particular interest in promoting social institutions targeting their own community. When the first issue of the *Smyrna Mail* was published in September of 1862, therefore, it was at a moment of heightened Anglo-Ottoman economic cooperation and British migration to Izmir. It was at a moment when the British population was in a state of transition, when the community of Levantines who had resided in the region for generations was beginning to be expanded by the recent, if temporary, immigrants to the city who were employed by the ORC. It was also at a moment when questions about identity, citizenship, and belonging were seeping from the legal establishment into quotidian life. The *Smyrna Mail* was a product of these developments and a translation of the contradictions, disjunctions, and split allegiances of British identity into the form of print.

### **The Establishment of the *Smyrna Mail* (1862)**

When the first installment of the *Smyrna Mail* was issued in 1862, it became the first and only Anglophone newspaper to be published in Ottoman Izmir. This is somewhat surprising because it was Levantine mercantile interests in the Ottoman Empire that had prompted the establishment of a vibrant periodical press culture within its domains. Burhan Çağlar has argued that it was the presence of foreign merchants and their need for up-to-date commercial and financial information that instigated the rise of newspapers across the empire. Many of these earliest newspapers were published in European languages and focused primarily on issues of economics and trade, suggesting that their core audience consisted primarily

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29 On Purser, see: "Local News," *Smyrna Mail*, December 16, 1862, 2.

of Levantine merchants.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, many of the first newspapers in the Ottoman Empire were published in Izmir, again indicating the importance of Levantine communities to the historical fabric of the city.<sup>31</sup> At the time the *Smyrna Mail* was inaugurated, the city was publishing a variety of newspapers in multiple languages, including the Francophone *L'impartial* and *L'écho de l'Orient, Journal de Smyrne*, likely the most linguistically accessible newspapers for the British community.

British Levantines had been resident in the empire since the late sixteenth century, but would have to wait until 1857 for the publication of the first Anglophone newspaper in Ottoman domains, the Istanbul-based *Levant Herald*. Writing shortly after its establishment, the editors of the newspaper justified their reasoning for creating the publication: “The vast increase since the [Crimean] War in the number of British residents in Turkey and other parts of the Levant, has suggested the establishment of a Journal for their special use and benefit.”<sup>32</sup> Although the idea to establish an Anglophone newspaper in the empire had apparently long been discussed, it was the promise of an increasing audience that finally stimulated the paper’s foundation.<sup>33</sup> This impetus echoes the factors that I argue were at play with the foundation of the *Smyrna Mail*: an influx of British immigrants, most likely merchants and employees of British companies capitalizing on Ottoman openness to foreign direct investment. Where the *Levant Herald* cites a diffuse movement of British immigrants into the Levant, the *Smyrna Mail*’s establishment appears to have been a response to the concentrated movement of personnel employed by the ORC.

The inaugural issue of the *Smyrna Mail* published on September 23, 1862 was dedicated almost in its entirety to the most consequential event in the recent history of Izmir’s British community: the opening of the ORC’s first section of line, from Izmir to the town of Ayasoluk (modern Selçuk), a short horse ride from the ancient city of Ephesus. Pages two

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30 Burhan Çağlar, *Anglophone Press in Constantinople: The Levant Herald & Eastern Express (1859-1878)* (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2020), 18-19.

31 *Ibid.*, 19.

32 “The Levant Herald: A Weekly English Newspaper of 8 Pages,” *Levant Herald*, January 5, 1858, 1, cited in Çağlar, *Anglophone Press in Constantinople*, 55.

33 Çağlar, *Anglophone Press in Constantinople*, 51.

and three of the issue were devoted in full to recounting the pomp and circumstance of the ceremony that accompanied the historic event.<sup>34</sup> The first page of the issue included, in addition to advertisements for upcoming steamship travel and events held at the Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution and Academy of Anatolia, information on purchasing ORC shares and participating in the half yearly shareholders meeting.<sup>35</sup> The final page featured a so-called “Strangers Diary,” listing sights and activities of interest around Izmir targeted at visitors to the city, as well as a number of supplemental advertisements and listings.<sup>36</sup> What this inaugural issue makes clear is both the importance of the ORC as a subject of the newspaper’s reporting and the importance of ORC personnel to the newspaper’s readership. Elvan Cobb has recently explored the ways through which the ORC was portrayed in the *Smyrna Mail*, highlighting how the newspaper offers a complex and multifocal understanding of the railway enterprise that other primary sources fail to capture.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the variety of articles, listings, and advertisements that offer a unique window into the lives of Izmir’s British residents, this first issue did not offer its readers a justification or an explanation as to why the newspaper was founded and what goals it sought to achieve. This would only be addressed in the newspaper’s fifth issue in a substantial editorial that described the editors’ motivations. The editorial began with a short history of British trade with the Ottoman Empire, emphasizing that, despite its importance as a trade centre during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the city of Izmir was nearly unheard of in England at that time. The writers went on to indicate that the situation had improved little by the mid-nineteenth century:

In England take twenty out of every hundred, and you will find that they have notion that there is Turkey in Asia; that such a place as Smyrna exists; they causally see in chemists shops ‘fine Smyrna sponges’ or

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34 “Opening of the Smyrna and Aidin Railway to Ephesus,” *Smyrna Mail*, September 23, 1862, 2-3.

35 *Smyrna Mail*, September 23, 1862, 1.

36 “Stranger’s Diary,” *Smyrna Mail*, September 23, 1862, 4.

37 Elvan Cobb, “Infrastructure in the Making: The Ottoman Railway Company as Portrayed by the *Smyrna Mail*,” in *The Built Environment Through the Prism of the Colonial Periodical Press*, ed. Alice Santiago Faria, Anne Shelley, and Sandra Ataíde Lobo (New York & Abingdon: Routledge, 2023), 56–76.

hear of 'Smyrna Figs' or 'Sultanè [sic] Raisins' but they do not enquire from what part of the world they come...<sup>38</sup>

This passage is instructive not only for its assertion that knowledge about Izmir was limited among the broader British population at the moment of the newspaper's inauguration, but also its note that existing British knowledge about Izmir was mediated through its commercial goods: sponges, figs, and raisins. Though little was known about the city, what was known were its commercial exports.

The editorial then continued to list recent developments in Izmir as they related to the British community, including the opening of the railway, the exertions of both recent immigrants and established British Levantines, and the liberal trade policies afforded to British merchants by the Ottoman government. In particular, they highlighted the cultivation of cotton in the region as something that would have a direct impact on the people of England, a point to which I will return in the forthcoming section. But how, the editors lamented, are the people of England to know all that is happening in Izmir, without an "English Journal" to document it? The *Smyrna Mail*, they argued, will serve to communicate the commercial resources of the city to readers in Britain, the editors' sole object being the "promulgation of the name of Turkey in Asia, and to shew [sic] its capabilities for the due advancement of commerce, agriculture, mining, etc."<sup>39</sup>

What we learn from this editorial is that the aims of the *Smyrna Mail* were principally nationalist, yet international: its key audience members were British nationals in England, who would learn about the activities of their countrymen in Izmir by reading the paper. If we look to another statement of purpose by the newspaper's editors in its twenty-seventh issue, commemorating the six-month anniversary of the *Smyrna Mail's* inauguration, we encounter a slightly different sentiment being expressed. The editors began this editorial by citing the "large amount of public service" that the newspaper has already been able to render, proclaiming outright that, "Already our paper has made Smyrna known in England and America, as it has never been known before."<sup>40</sup> Although the writers do not provide

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38 "Smyrna 21st October," *Smyrna Mail*, October 21, 1862, 2.

39 Ibid.

40 "Smyrna, Tuesday, March 24," *Smyrna Mail*, March 24, 1863, 2.

evidence to support this claim, they may be alluding to the fact that extracts from the *Smyrna Mail*, particularly those focused on cotton production, were being somewhat regularly reprinted in British newspapers such as the *Morning Post*.<sup>41</sup> After having briefly acknowledged its successes, the editorial shifted tones, addressing what was perceived as a lack of support they had received from readers in Izmir. Although the local community expected a great deal from them, the editors expressed regret that “numerous persons in the English community are not subscribers to our paper, although they subscribe to foreign papers, which oppose their interests, and do not meet their wants.”<sup>42</sup> The editors then called upon their existing subscribers in Izmir to send their copies of the paper abroad to supplement its reach, to invite their correspondents to advertise in the paper, and to identify which of their neighbors were not yet subscribed to the *Smyrna Mail* and to shame them into doing so.

What we find in this editorial, in contrast to the earlier one, is a concern with the nationalist, but local: although the newspaper had purportedly succeeded in enlightening the English-speaking world as to the importance of Izmir, its implied difficulties, financial or otherwise, were due to a lack of support from the British community in Izmir. The editors’ complaint that members of the community subscribed to foreign papers, but not to the *Smyrna Mail*, is more than a jibe at the quality of alternative papers like *L’Impartial*: it is perceived as a betrayal of the British national interest. The *Smyrna Mail*, in its aims and ambitions, should be read as nationalist, but this nationalism is fractured by the competing interests of the global and the local. Simultaneously trying to attract an international audience while requesting that local readers shame their peers into subscribing, the newspaper wants to operate both as an “English Journal” and as a local paper. Even in the editorials trying to explain why the *Smyrna Mail* was founded, the identities and audiences invoked by the paper are not static.

The apparent inconsistencies expressed within these editorials are part of what I perceive to be part of a broader pattern within the pages of the *Smyrna Mail*: the strategic employment of nationalist sentiments. The newspaper appeals to the global *and* the local, the nationalist *and* sometimes

41 See, for instance: “Cotton from Turkey,” *Morning Post*, January 20, 1863, 8.

42 “Smyrna, Tuesday, March 24,” 2.

the cosmopolitan, whenever it best suits the arguments and aims of its authors and writers, as demonstrated by the editorials already discussed. When nationalist sentiments are expressed in the newspaper, it is critical to ask which particular group these sentiments are appealing to: the international community of British nationals or the community of the British in Izmir. To further explore the ways that these sentiments were strategically employed in the construction of a British identity in Izmir, we will now turn to more specific examples to be found in the pages of the *Smyrna Mail*.

### Strategic Identity-Building in the *Smyrna Mail* (1862-1863)

While many of the articles and listings in the *Smyrna Mail* warrant critical analysis, I will focus here on three subjects that are of particular interest: local institutions, the 1863 poll tax, and what I will refer to as the “Konak versus Lantern” incident. Local institutions, despite being by definition Izmir-based, are perhaps the best expression of the *Smyrna Mail*’s aim of reaching both local and international British audiences. Some of these institutions, most importantly the Imperial Cotton Commission, reflected the newspaper’s ambition to speak to a British home audience. The Commission was composed both of Izmir-based British merchants and local Ottoman officials. Created in response to the decreased supply of cotton being exported to textile producers in Northwest England as a result of the ongoing Civil War in the United States, the Commission advocated for the cultivation of cotton in the Ottoman Empire to ameliorate the ensuing “cotton crisis.”<sup>43</sup> *Smyrna Mail* articles reporting on the progress of Ottoman cotton cultivation, therefore, were intended to target both interested British cultivators in Izmir and British financiers and lawmakers at home who were developing strategies to combat the economic and human costs of a shrunken cotton supply. As mentioned, reports from the *Smyrna Mail* about the Imperial Cotton Commission and cotton cultivation were also being reprinted in British publications at the time. In this sense, the *Smyrna Mail*’s reports about the Imperial Cotton Commission represent its editors’

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43 For a detailed history, see: Orhan Kurmuş, “The Cotton Famine and Its Effects on the Ottoman Empire,” in *The Ottoman Empire and the World-Economy*, ed. Huri Islamoğlu-Inan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 160–69.

goal of elevating Izmir's commercial standing in Britain, appealing both to an international and local nationalist sentiment. At the same time, Cobb has noted how newspaper reports on the Commission demonstrate the importance of Ottoman bureaucrats in the decision-making process around cotton cultivation, reflecting the dependence of British merchants on the support of Ottoman officials.<sup>44</sup> From this perspective, the Imperial Cotton Commission and its press representation are also indicative of a cosmopolitan sentiment, reflecting the realities of conducting business in a multinational urban space.

Other institutions reported on in the *Smyrna Mail*, such as the aforementioned Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution and Academy of Anatolia, are not so clearly internationalist in their scope. Both of these institutions were presided over by Hyde Clarke around 1862 and, as mentioned, would be subsequently taken over by ORC engineer Edward Pursler. Although exactly what membership in either institution entailed is not entirely clear, both publicly advertised their upcoming lectures and classes within the pages of the *Smyrna Mail*. The institutions' events were reported on by the paper after their proceedings had concluded, and, in some instances, lectures of interest were republished within subsequent issues. The institutions' listings were highly localized: the Literary and Scientific Institution, for instance, could be found at No. 19 Frank Street, and its Newsroom was open from 9 am to 10 pm.<sup>45</sup> Such information is only legible to a British public in Izmir, whether the permanent resident or the temporary tourist, and follow the lead of other advertisements and listings in the paper that relied on its reader's knowledge of Izmir's urban fabric. The advertisements of the bookseller Charles Green, for example, listed recent publications and services that were available for purchase from his shop on Frank Street, "opposite the English Consulate."<sup>46</sup> Those of Mr. Pierre Roux, Surgeon Dentist, informed readers that he was presently staying at the Milles Hôtel des Deux Augustes.<sup>47</sup> It is possible that listings such as these appealed

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44 Cobb, "Infrastructure in the Making," 64. Cobb discusses the representation of the cotton crisis in some length in her chapter.

45 "Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution," *Smyrna Mail*, September 23, 1862, 1.

46 "Charles Green," *Smyrna Mail*, January 27, 1863, 1.

47 "Advertisements," *Smyrna Mail*, March 3, 1863, 4.

to the imperial identities of readers in Britain, who would be reassured to learn about any British communities overseas. But even if this was the case, if the newspaper's reports on the Imperial Cotton Commission reflect its status as an English Journal, these listings speak to the *Smyrna Mail*'s simultaneous status as a local paper.

The Imperial Cotton Commission, the Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution, and the Academy of Anatolia all appear to have been formed around the late 1850s or the early 1860s, a direct impact of the foundation of the ORC and the immigration of its personnel to Izmir. In the case of the Cotton Commission, British investors perceived cotton cultivation and the railway as mutually beneficial; as the railway made the transportation of cotton more efficient and more viable.<sup>48</sup> In the case of the socio-academic institutions, they were administered primarily by ORC personnel. Other local events, such as the Smyrna Races, a series of annual public horse races widely attended by various communities in Izmir since the 1850s, were also advertised and reported on in the *Smyrna Mail*.<sup>49</sup> At the time these races were publicized in the newspaper in 1864, though, the railway company had already made its mark: about half of the horse owners listed among the competitors were ORC personnel, while the other half was composed of members of established British Levantine families.<sup>50</sup>

The case of the local institutions' representation within the *Smyrna Mail* demonstrates how the paper vacillated between appealing to a British audience in Izmir and a British audience at home. In both cases we find an appeal to British national or nationalist interests, although this too can be complicated through the acknowledgement of alternative sources of authority, such as the decision-making power held by Ottoman bureaucrats in the Imperial Cotton Commission. To consider a case in which the interests of the British in Izmir did not coincide with the directives of their home government, we turn to the 1863 poll tax. In February of 1863, a notice appeared on the front page of the *Smyrna Mail* that instructed all British and Ionian citizens above the age of 21 living in Ottoman domains under the protection of the British government that they would be required to register

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48 Kurmuş, "The Cotton Famine and Its Effects," 163-164.

49 Zandi-Sayek, *Ottoman Izmir*, 32.

50 "Smyrna Races," *Smyrna Mail*, April 23, 1864, 4.

with their local consulate. The fee to register would be 5 shillings, whereas failing to register would incur a fine of no more than 40 shillings.<sup>51</sup> In an article in the same issue, the editors of the paper lambasted the poll tax, marking it as one of the “numerous acts of tyranny and vexation to which we have been subjected” and expressing the unanimous public disapproval of the measure.<sup>52</sup> The measure was perceived as an infringement on the mercantile interests of the British community in the Ottoman Empire, imposed on them by an overbearing home bureaucracy that failed to serve its needs.

By positioning their stance, and apparently the unanimous stance of the British residents of Izmir, as antithetical to that taken by the British home government, the editors of the *Smyrna Mail* emphasize the discrepancies between British interests at home and British interest in Izmir. In previous issues, the two were taken to be one and the same, as we have already seen in the editorials highlighting British mercantile ambitions. It is through the poll tax that we see the two expressed as independent entities: British governmental decision-making is firmly degraded, while the sentiments of British residents of Izmir, both Levantine and recent immigrants, are appealed to. Going even further to sever the relationship between the two is the editors’ hope for alternative protection: “The more general wish here is for American protection, and in case that cannot be got, Ottoman protection...”<sup>53</sup> That British community would opt for American or Ottoman protection rather than the protection of their home country reflects more than the editors’ anger at the moment of this infringement: it shows that the editors of the *Smyrna Mail* strategically employed nationalist identities to support their interests, and that, in this case, the interests of the local trumped that of the international.

To conclude this discussion with a final case of strategic identity-building, I will recount an incident and the *Smyrna Mail*’s response to it that occurred in January of 1863. An English resident of Izmir, writing under the pseudonym “Konak versus Lantern,” recounted being detained by local authorities and being put in prison overnight for not carrying a lantern outside after ten o’clock in the evening, as was legally required of all residents

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51 “In Her Majesty’s Consular Court at Smyrna. Notice,” *Smyrna Mail*, February 3, 1863, 1.

52 “Smyrna, Tuesday, February 3,” *Smyrna Mail*, February 3, 1863, 2.

53 Ibid.

of the city. The man was heading home after attending the Anniversary dinner of the Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution when he and a friend were arrested for their infringement. Despite apparently being recognized as a “resident Englishman of known respectability” by at least half of his guards and in spite of his many angry pleas, the man was not released until the following day. To this individual, who felt that, as a respectable Englishman, he did not deserve the treatment he received and that some redress should be put in place going forward, the editors of the *Smyrna Mail* simply wrote in an aside, “The Police regulations must be upheld, people should not go about the streets at night without lanterns.”<sup>54</sup>

In a longer response the following week, the editors rebuked the respectable Englishman as an example of British sojourners in the Ottoman Empire who believe they can “with impunity infringe any law or regulation established therein... showing their superiority over the people of the country.”<sup>55</sup> Far from agreeing with the author to offer some sort of reproach, the editors wrote that while they are always ready to do what they can to advance the welfare of their fellow countrymen, this duty did not extend to those who sought “petty spite and unseemly revenge” against a government that had been insulted and whose laws had been infringed.<sup>56</sup> Far from evoking British exceptionalism, this statement resituates Izmir’s British community within the broader social fabric of the city, speaking to both a cosmopolitan impulse to see one’s community as part of a multinational urban space and to a British nationalist sentiment. Continued British prosperity within the empire, the editors seem to remind their readers, is predicated on a productive and just relationship between the community and the Ottoman government. By strategically prioritizing this component of British identity, the editors rebuke the respectable Englishman’s self-identification as a British national by identifying him as a national abroad.

The specific examples and anecdotes that I have described here demonstrate the complex and sometimes contradictory ways the *Smyrna Mail* appealed to aspects of its community’s identity. Although the newspaper’s explicit aim was to reach readers resident in Britain, through the strategic

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54 “Mr Editor, Dear Sir,” *Smyrna Mail*, January 20, 1863, 4.

55 “Smyrna, Tuesday, January 27,” *Smyrna Mail*, January 27, 1863, 2.

56 Ibid.

appeal to the interests of the British community at Izmir in cases like the 1863 poll tax and the “Konak versus Lantern” incident, its editors reveal their newspaper’s interests to often lie with its local readers. Local institutions, in appealing to both international and local readerships, complicate the newspaper even further. As the following section will consider, the multiple identities, and interests espoused by the *Smyrna Mail*, critical as they are for our understanding of the complexity of the British community at Izmir, may have also been the cause of its decline.

### Decline and Cessation (1863-1864)

On August 1, 1863, in its forty-fifth issue, the *Smyrna Mail* published a detailed statement explaining why the newspaper would be shifting away from being a weekly to a monthly publication. The main reason was that the costs of running the newspaper had become prohibitive: after the proprietor of the paper had given it up in April of that year, expenses had piled up. Due to what the editors described as an extortion scheme by a local printer that deprived the newspaper both of paper and funds, the newspaper would no longer be able to print at weekly intervals.<sup>57</sup> Based on listings advertising his bookshop, it appears that Charles Green, the newspaper’s publisher, had died in June of 1863, suggesting that it was his retirement from the paper in April of the same year that had instigated its publishing difficulties.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to this immediate financial difficulty, though, the editors also lamented the lack of financial support the paper had received, both from its readers and from the British government. In a sarcastic and biting tone, the editors challenged some of their “good patrons” who “complain bitterly” about the heavy subscription price they pay for such a small newspaper.<sup>59</sup> They responded that if the newspaper had been paid for as well as it had been read, then it would have been a very encouraging enterprise. It is

57 “The Smyrna Mail. To Our Readers,” *Smyrna Mail*, August 1, 1863, 2.

58 On June 9, 1863, Green’s shop is advertised as “Charles Green.” By June 16, it is advertised as “Janson & Co LATE CHARLES GREEN,” suggesting both the proprietor’s death and the installation of new management, perhaps the same management that would attempt to continue to publish the *Smyrna Mail*. See: “Charles Green,” *Smyrna Mail*, June 9, 1863, 1, and “Janson & Co LATE CHARLES GREEN,” *Smyrna Mail*, June 16, 1863, 1.

59 “Smyrna, August 1,” *Smyrna Mail*, August 1, 1863, 2. Similar complaints were expressed earlier in the year, see: “Smyrna, Tuesday, March 24,” 2.

likely because the editors felt that they had been representing British local interests, specifically, that they were so painfully disappointed by the lack of reciprocal investment.

The editors, however, held contempt not only for the frugality of their readers, but for lack of support they received from their home government. Although its readers expected the *Smyrna Mail* to receive a large subsidy from the British government, the editors wrote that, far from government institutions propping up “English newspapers in the east,” they provided the *Smyrna Mail* just as little support as they did to other English interests in the region. Steam navigation, banking, and railways all, the editors wrote, were passing or were bound to pass into the hands of the French. Instead of supporting British newspapers in the Ottoman Empire, the Foreign Office and the Supreme Consular Court “took away the subsidy from the *Levant Herald*,” having done all they could do to crush it, and “so they have done for the *Smyrna Mail*.”<sup>60</sup> In attributing their financial deficit, in part, to a withdrawal of support by their home government, the editors of the *Smyrna Mail* are also acknowledging their perceived betrayal, echoing the sentiments expressed by the paper in response to the imposition of the poll tax. The continued publication of the *Smyrna Mail* was dependent on invested interest of both readers in Britain and in Izmir. By March of 1863, it was struggling to hold on to either.

After switching to a monthly publication schedule for three months, the *Smyrna Mail* ceased printing on October 1, 1863. On April 23, 1864, the newspaper reemerged, seemingly with a new proprietor, a new editorial strategy, and a slightly altered layout. The motivation of this latest iteration of the newspaper was, as the new editors laid out, “to keep alive if possible a Paper in the English language particularly for those who have not access to English periodicals, that they may have something in their own language to amuse and instruct them.”<sup>61</sup> Where all previous issues of the paper had been labeled “Volume 1,” the revived issues of the newspaper would be categorized as “Volume 2.”<sup>62</sup>

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60 Ibid.

61 “From the Editors Table,” *Smyrna Mail*, April 23, 1864, 1.

62 Despite the changes in volumes, the numbering of issues continued in sequential order.

Under the new management, the cost of a single issue of the newspaper dropped from 8d to 6d. The decrease in price suggests two related conclusions. The first is that the new proprietors of the paper sought to increase sales and engage a larger audience through a decrease in price, hoping perhaps to avoid the problems of low patronage outlined by their predecessors. The second reflects the newspaper's content and therefore its quality and relevance to its audience. What had in the first volume of the newspaper been first-hand news accounts and opinion pieces from observers around Izmir, the second volume of the *Smyrna Mail* consisted largely of news articles and fictional stories reprinted from other, largely British, newspapers. The decrease in cost thus reflects an editorial decision not to employ local journalists who would have in previous years reported on local and regional news. The quality of the paper, as well as its local and regional coverage, were therefore greatly diminished.

There was no farewell published in the final issue of the *Smyrna Mail*. The texts presented themselves business-as-usual, with no indication that this publication would be its last. Thus, with no fanfare, the *Smyrna Mail* ceased publication on May 21, 1864.

What accounts for the *Smyrna Mail* going out of business, less than two years after its foundation? On a basic level, it was newspaper's financial difficulties that made it impossible to continue publication. The first iteration of the paper was beleaguered by both a lack of popular subscription and the withdrawal of a government subsidy, problems that likely carried on to its second iteration and were exaggerated by the absence of local journalism in the latest editions. But the reason for this financial decline, particularly its lack of popular subscription, is worth interrogating further. As I have discussed throughout this chapter, the aim of the *Smyrna Mail* was to serve multiple audiences, to represent the interests of multiple British identities in multiple parts of the world. By strategically deciding when to appeal to whom, the paper's editors and writers hoped to balance these groups' interrelated but sometimes competing interests. This multiplicity may have been its downfall, as the newspaper ultimately appealed to everyone and no one. The task of producing an English Journal and a local paper simultaneously proved impossible.

Writing in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* about his amateur anthropological investigations around Izmir, Hyde Clarke described the difficulties he faced attempting to create a scholarly community in Izmir:

There is no public spirit, and no zeal. The whole number of scientific inquiries is small... A small academy we formed, under the name of the Academy of Anatolia, and of which I was the President, has dwindled since its first year; the attempt to form a library has failed...and the efforts for museums have proved abortive.<sup>63</sup>

Clarke's lamentation about the state of the cultural community writ large seems to echo the downfall of the *Smyrna Mail*. It too began to decline less than a year after its foundation, a decline that could similarly be attributed to a lack of public zeal. Despite the original enthusiasm they inspired, cultural institutions such as the Academy of Anatolia and the *Smyrna Mail* found themselves losing an audience soon after their inauguration. The combination of financial difficulties and a lack of public zeal was further heightened by the ephemerality of the British immigrants who had followed the ORC to Izmir. Ultimately, the institutions that had developed in response to a growing immigrant community would cease to exist once these immigrants departed. Hyde Clarke, having arrived in Izmir around 1860, had returned to Britain near the end of the decade. 1871 found him petitioning the British Foreign Office on behalf of a railway endeavor in Romania.<sup>64</sup>

Throughout this chapter, I have sought to show how individuals like Hyde Clarke contributed to the construction of complex, multilayered British Levantine community at Izmir. Multiple nationalist and cosmopolitan identities were being negotiated within this community, mediated through sociocultural institutions like the *Smyrna Mail*. Breaking down the polarity between the nationalist and the cosmopolitan with regard to the Levantine communities of the Ottoman Empire and interrogating how these sentiments were expressed in practice through individuals' lived experience

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63 Hyde Clarke, "On Anthropological Investigations in Smyrna," *Journal of the Anthropological Society of London* 4 (1866): cii.

64 In 1860, Hyde Clarke published a report on the traffic of Smyrna on behalf of the ORC, suggesting he was working for the company in Izmir by this time. See: Hyde Clarke, *Ottoman Railway Company. Report on the Traffic of Smyrna, with Statistics of Trade, &c.* (London: Nissen & Parker, 1860). On Clarke's work on the Romanian railways see: "Money Market and City News," *Morning Post*, January 25, 1871, 8.

reveals the complex ways that these communities saw themselves in relation to their home countries, the Ottoman Empire, and to the variety of people who constituted their own communities.

### Coda: Hyde Clarke, Archivist

We have seen that, in May of 1864, the *Smyrna Mail* ceased publication, unable to sustain itself as an English Journal and a local paper simultaneously. This is not, however, the end of the story. The complete archive of all fifty-three editions of the *Smyrna Mail* are found in the collection of the British Library, London.<sup>65</sup> Paging through these issues, one notices an inscription on the twelfth issue of the *Smyrna Mail*, from December 9, 1862. The inscription reads, “Hyde Clarke, Esq., Hôtel d’Angleterre, Constantinople.”<sup>66</sup> On the newspaper’s fifty-third and final issue from May 21, 1864, one finds another inscription. This inscription here reads, “Hyde Clarke, Esq., care of E. R. Kelly,” followed by a London address that is not entirely legible.<sup>67</sup> This inscription is accompanied by postage stamps on the first page of the newspaper that indicate that it was mailed to London by way of a French postal service. The inscriptions indicate that Clarke had requested copies of the *Smyrna Mail* to be mailed to him when he was away on business and therefore suggest that the remaining editions in the British Library may have been collected by Clarke while resident at Izmir. Indeed, a foray into the corporate archives of the British Museum and the British Library reveals that Hyde Clarke donated the entire extant collection of the *Smyrna Mail* to the British Museum in June of 1889.<sup>68</sup>

Hyde Clarke, ORC representative, President of the Smyrna Literary and Scientific Institution and the Academy of Anatolia for Archaeology and Geology, also serves as the figure responsible for the *Smyrna Mail*’s

65 According to Francisco Javier Valenzuela, an additional complete archive of the *Smyrna Mail* can be found in the University of Texas, El Paso Archives, but I have not been independently able to confirm this. See: Francisco Javier Valenzuela, “The Construction of the Smyrna-Aidin Railway in Southwestern Anatolia, 1856-1866: A Discussion,” seminar paper for the degree of M.A., University of Texas, El Paso, 1975, 50.

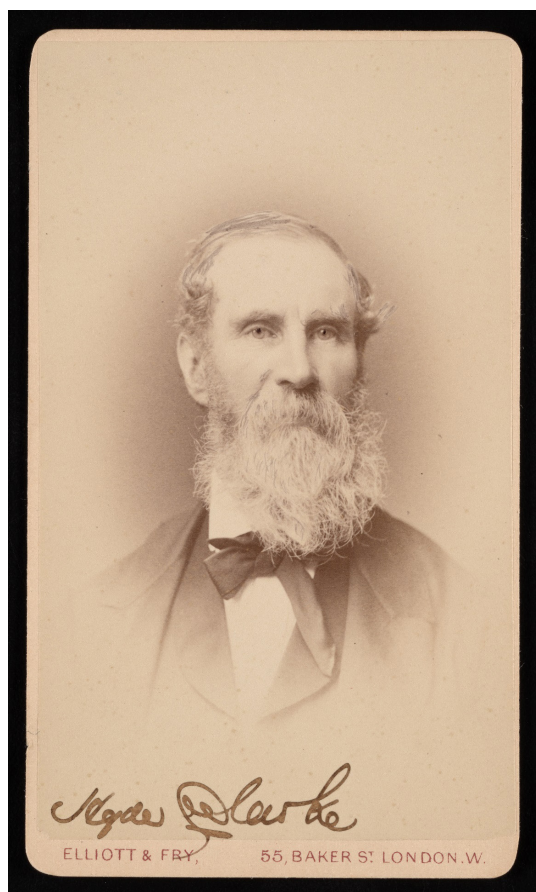
66 *Smyrna Mail*, December 9, 1862, 1.

67 The address appears to say, “28 Old R(?) Court, London.” *Smyrna Mail*, May 21, 1864, 1.

68 Elizabeth Gaskell, and Alexandra Solovyev, “Research Enquiry from Doctoral Student,” July 6, 2022.

lasting impact as an archival resource. It is fitting that one of the people most invested in the British community at Izmir during the *Smyrna Mail*'s publication was also the one to preserve its legacy. In doing this, Clarke ironically succeeded in reconstructing the community he had sought to create during his time in Izmir, one that is accessible to us not through its lived reality, but through its representation in the *Smyrna Mail*. In the 1860s, this community was not sustainable, with the Academy of Anatolia and the *Smyrna Mail* both falling away within a few years of their inauguration; but through Clarke's efforts, in the archives of the British Library, that community lives on.





**Figure 2.** Portrait of Hyde Clarke (1815-1895), c. 1876.  
(Smithsonian Institution Archives. Image # SIA\_000095\_B27A\_053)

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# INTERNATIONAL ELITES IN OTTOMAN SALONICA: THE COMMERCIAL AND DIPLOMATIC PORTFOLIOS OF THE HADJILAZARO FAMILY

Kaleb Herman Adney\*

## Introduction: The Hadjilazaro Family in Ottoman Salonica

The Hadjilazaro family, Greek Orthodox notables of Ottoman Salonica, participated heavily in the development of some of the most important industries throughout the southern Balkans from the middle of the nineteenth century until World War I. Their agricultural estates throughout Macedonia and their financial resources allowed them to invest in a number of sectors while maintaining a diplomatic and commercial presence in the port-city of Salonica.<sup>1</sup> In addition, they were integrated into the most important diplomatic circles of the city and the province. This allowed them to

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\* PhD Candidate at University of California, Los Angeles, USA.  
Email: [kalebherman@ucla.edu](mailto:kalebherman@ucla.edu), ORCID: 0000-0002-8423-4829. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384847](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384847)

1 Ευάγγελος Α. Χεκίμογλου [Evangelos A. Hekimoglou], “Ενθύμιον Χατζηλαζάρου: το έργο ενός λησμονημένου προκρίτου της Θεσσαλονίκης” [A Memento of Hadjilazaro: The Work of a Forgotten Thessaloniki Notable], in *Μακεδονική Ζωή [Macedonian Life]*, 293–295, 23–25, 44–46, 42–43. Specifically regarding their urban properties within the city of Salonica, see Sotirios Dimitriadis’ references to the tax registry of 1906 in Sotirios Dimitriadis, “The Making of an Ottoman Port-City: The State, Local Elites, and Urban Space in Salonica, 1870-1912,” (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of London, 2013), 98. On the financial role of the Hadjilazaros in the twentieth century, especially that of Cleon, see Paris Papamichos-Chronakis, “Οι έλληνες, εβραίοι, μουσουλμάνοι και ντονμέ έμποροι της Θεσσαλονίκης, 1882-1919: Ταξικοί και εθνοτικοί μετασχηματισμοί σε τροχιά εξελληνισμού [The Greek, Jewish, Muslim, and Dönme Merchants of Thessaloniki, 1882-1919: Class-based and Ethnic Transformations in the Course of Hellenization],” (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Crete, 2011), 114–119, 217–236.

obtain political privileges and access markets in Europe, Russia, and the New World while maintaining their elite status in the city and the province of Salonica. More specifically, a few members of the family acted as consuls and consular employees for various European governments. The Hadjilazaros, through both their commercial and political networks, were thereby integrated into an international elite culture in Salonica along with core members of other religious and ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup> On the one hand, these included the most notable Jewish and Christian families of Salonica whose roots were mostly in western and central Europe and who obtained political protections and economic privileges from European governments. On the other hand, Muslims and *Dönme* (Jewish converts to Islam) maintained significant commercial networks in Germany, Austria-Hungary, and beyond. This culture was entrepreneurial and politically savvy, and its members cooperated to advance institutional finance and industrial production within local business circles until the early period of Greek rule.<sup>3</sup>

The Hadjilazaros had roots in Macedonia and were Orthodox Christians. Most of the family aligned with the Patriarchate of Constantinople rather than the Bulgarian Exarchate throughout the rivalry between the two churches.<sup>4</sup> However, there is some evidence that members of the family

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2 See Sarah Abrevaya Stein, *Extraterritorial Dreams: European Citizenship, Sephardi Jews, and the Ottoman Twentieth Century* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2016), 1–23, 50–72.

3 This cosmopolitan culture, and the cooperation between Greek Orthodox and Jewish commercial elites of Salonica in particular, was undermined by Greek nationalist discourse in the Salonica Chamber of Commerce during the period leading up to World War I. See Paris Papamichos-Chronakis, “De-Judaizing a Class, Hellenizing a City: Jewish Merchants and the Future of Salonica in Greek Public Discourse, 1913–1914,” *Jewish History* 28, no. 3/4 (2014): 373–403.

4 On the rivalry, see İpek K. Yosmaoğlu, “Counting Bodies, Shaping Souls: The 1903 Census and National Identity in Ottoman Macedonia” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 38, no. 1 (2006): 55–77; İpek Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties: Religion, Violence, and the Politics of Nationhood in Ottoman Macedonia, 1878–1908* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2014), 79–130, 209–288; Keith Brown, *Loyal Unto Death: Trust and Terror in Revolutionary Macedonia* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013); Duncan Perry, *The Politics of Terror: The Macedonian Revolutionary Movement, 1893–1903* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1988); Ioannēs Choïda, *Hē historia tēs Makedonikēs hypotheseōs* (Athens: Estia, 1908), 118–146; Dimitris Stamatopoulos, “The Bulgarian Schism Revisited,” in *Modern Greek Studies Yearbook* 24/25 (2008/2009), 105–125; Dimitris Stamatopoulos, “Orthodox Ecu-  
menicity and the Bulgarian Schism,” in *Etudes Balkaniques* LI/1: Greece, Bulgaria and

may have been invested in Macedonian nationalism at the end of Ottoman rule. The president of the Ustrumca (present-day Strumica) branch of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) was a member of the Hadjilazaro family, for example, and he wrote a letter to the organization's Sofia branch in 1897 requesting rifles and cartridges for the struggle against the "Turks" who "don't suspect anything."<sup>5</sup> In any case, other diplomats and consular employees of the family typically aligned with the Orthodox Christian polities of Greece and Russia rather than with the more commonly sought-after privileges of Britain, France, and Austria-Hungary. In addition, however, Pericles Hadjilazaro represented the United States consulate in Salonica during the last third of the nineteenth century and his son Cleon would take over the post upon Pericles' retirement in 1908.<sup>6</sup> Later, he became president of the Salonica Chamber of Commerce's Mixed Committee in 1913, following the surrender of the city by the Ottoman governor Hasan Tahsin Pasha.<sup>7</sup>

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*European Challenges in the Balkans* (Sofia: Institut d'Etudes balkaniques & Centre de Threcologie, 2015), 70-86; Dimitris Stamatopoulos, "The Splitting of the Orthodox Millet as a Secularizing Process," in *Griechische Kultur in Südosteuropa in der Neuzeit. Beiträge zum Symposium in memoriam Gunnar Hering* (Vienna, 16–18 December 2004), 243–270; Ryan Gingeras, "Between the Cracks: Macedonia and the 'Mental Map' of Europe," in *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 50, no. 3/4 (2008): 341–58. Gábor Demeter and Krisztián Csaplár-Degovics, "Social Conflicts, Changing Identities and Everyday Strategies of Survival in Macedonia on the Eve of the Collapse of Ottoman Central Power (1903-12)," *The Hungarian Historical Review* 3, no. 3 (2014): 609–649; Dimitris Livanios, "'Conquering the Souls': Nationalism and Greek Guerilla Warfare in Ottoman Macedonia, 1904–1908," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 23 (1999): 195–221; Basil C. Gounaris, "Preachers of God and martyrs of the Nation: The politics of murder in ottoman Macedonia in the early 20th century / Pasteurs de Dieu et martyrs de la nation: la politique du meurtre en Macédoine ottomane au début du XXe siècle," *Balkanologie: Revue d'études pluridisciplinaires* IX, no. 1-2 (2005): 31–43.

- 5 T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives, Ottoman Archives) (BOA). A. MTZ.(04). 35/85, From the Governor of Thessaloniki to the Grand Vizierate, 25.02.1314 (August 5, 1896).
- 6 In 1908, when Pericles resigned from his post after 40 years of service to the American government, his son Cleon was granted the post in his stead. See Χεκίμογλου [Hekimoglou], "Ενθύμιον Χατζηλαζάρου" [A Memento of Hadjilazaro], 25.
- 7 Paris Papamichos-Chronakis, "De-Judaizing a Class," 373-403; Hasan Tahsin Paşa, *İzhâr-ı Hakikât: Selânik'in Esbâb-ı Sukutu Hakkında Vesa'ik: Müretteb Sekizinci Kol Ordu'nun Esbâb-ı İnhizâm* (Unpublished manuscript: 1329/1913-1914); Hasan Tahsin Paşa, *Selanik Düşü: Selanik'in Kaybediliş Öyküsü ve Hasan Tahsin Paşa'nın Savunması*, ed. Mustafa Balcı (İstanbul: Kesit Yayınları, 2014).

The Hadjilazaros, by some definitions, should not be considered Levantines given that the family did not originate from France or Italy and were not Catholic. Here I employ a broader use of the term to refer to non-Muslims who straddled the spaces between the European and Ottoman political economy. At the same time, recognizing that the term Levantine might still be a problematic moniker, I suggest an alternative set of terms. The question of whether Muslims can be considered Levantines is an important one, but it is not one which I deal with here. As Malte Fuhrmann points out, Levantines did not constitute a religious *millet* nor did they share a real or imagined origin story as did other Ottoman communities such as the *Dönme* for example.<sup>8</sup> This makes it difficult to determine who or what could be described as Levantine in the first place. Whether we consider the Hadjilazaros to be Levantines ultimately depends on whether we limit the term to a specific sect of Christianity or a specific place of origin within Europe. However, they were certainly prominent members within the international diplomatic and business community of Salonica, which itself was more or less dominated by Ottoman subjects with European political protection and/or a European lineage. Belonging to this Europe-oriented Ottoman milieu constituted a potentially broader sense of the Levantine identity.

Since this does little to clarify what or who was Levantine in a strict sense, I prefer to rely on the terminology of Ottoman Europeanness. The international elite culture of Salonica was based in an ethno-linguistic and religious diversity not merely on Western European lineage. Members of these elite circles had a tangible sense of participation in the political and commercial development of the Ottoman Balkans. Thus, political and commercial interaction amongst those whom Mark Mazower describes as the “city’s new masters” in the nineteenth century were crucial components of being an Ottoman European. As such, it would be misleading to dismiss these businessmen and diplomats from discussions of Levantine identity since it overlapped so much with Ottoman Europeanness. Socially, politically, and financially, the Hadjilazaros family was comparable to Levantine elites, whether or not they themselves were technically Levantines.

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8 Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 288.

Their role in the commercial and diplomatic life of Salonica was significant throughout the period in question but key institutions — such as the corporate form — were largely absent from their commercial portfolios until the turn of the century. At that point, their strategic use of incorporation under Ottoman law and their role in the institutional banking sector made them indispensable for the economic development of Salonica even if only for a brief period after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1912.

The emergence of an elite culture that was inclusive of the various religious and ethnic groups in Salonica and which brought together finance and diplomacy serves to highlight the elusiveness of the terminology surrounding “Levantine” identities. The Hadjilazaros identified as Greek Orthodox, but members of the family were also aligned with the Russian, British, and American governments and internal reports from the Ottoman government referred to Pericles Hadjilazaro as a Bulgarian. At the same time, some of the court records on his father Ioannis did not specify his nationality or citizenship which, by default, would make him legally an Ottoman subject thanks to the Ottoman legislation on nationality, especially that of 1869.<sup>9</sup> Alignment of the Hadjilazaro family with these European states is certainly not enough to indicate their “Levantine” identity when understood as an aspect of ethnic lineage. At the same time, the Hadjilazaros operated in the space between Euro-American diplomacy and Mediterranean finance in the territories of “Turkey in Europe.”<sup>10</sup>

The family’s experience within the late Ottoman context highlights the important role that both Ottoman and foreign institutions played in protecting the business interests and entrepreneurial activities of elite Christian families with political connections in Europe and the New World. As such, their story helps to explain the bureaucratic and commercial transformation of the southern Balkans and the effect this transition had on local Christian notables towards the end of Ottoman rule. The key to this

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9 Will Hanley, “What Ottoman Nationality Was and Was Not,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 3, No. 2 (2016): 277–298; Aviv Derri, “Imperial Creditors, ‘Doubtful’ Nationalities and Financial Obligations in Late Ottoman Syria: Rethinking Ottoman Subjecthood and Consular Protection,” *International History Review* 43, No. 5 (2021): 1063.

10 On geographic knowledge and topographical representations of the region, see Yosmaoğlu, *Blood Ties*, 79–130.

transformation was twofold. First, the increased ease with which merchants could adopt the corporate form by means of joint-stock companies in the early twentieth century coincided with what a recent history of Macedonia has called a “framework for industrialization.”<sup>11</sup> Second, western-style institutional finance became a more dominant feature of the Hadjilazaros’ commercial portfolio with the establishment of new Greek-funded banks in the early twentieth century, especially the local branch of the *Banque de l’Orient* in 1905. These two factors created a means by which the capital and entrepreneurial activities of the Hadjilazaros, accumulated over the previous decades, could be protected and preserved. The end of Ottoman rule, however, would have a profound impact on the family eventually leading to isolation within the new Greek political ecosystem in Salonica after 1912.

The reliance of the family on Ottoman legal institutions and practices provided them with limited commercial advancement between 1860 and 1900 but their role in industry and commerce became even more pronounced in the new century. The emergence of a “framework for industrialization” coincided with the expansion of institutional banking in Salonica and the surrounding region giving the Hadjilazaros family another forum for advancing their commercial interests. In the period before 1900 then the family certainly enjoyed elite status in the commercial and diplomatic circles of Salonica but after the turn of the century their economic role in the region became even more crucial. The family-owned extensive agricultural properties in Macedonia and urban buildings in Salonica itself but their institutional hold on commercial resources in the region increased in the early twentieth century as a result of Pericles’ and Cleon’s activities in textiles and finance, respectively. The period from 1900 to 1912 saw important changes to the local and regional political economy, which in turn provided new opportunities for the Hadjilazaros.

The lives and commercial activities of the Hadjilazaros in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries highlight an elite international identity within the city of Salonica which stood at the crossroads of diplomacy and commerce throughout Macedonia. This elite culture was not limited to those

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11 Pinar Cakiroglu-Bournous and Costas Lapavistas, *Capitalism in the Ottoman Balkans: Industrialisation and Modernity in Macedonia* (London and New York: I.B. Taurus, 2019), 77–106.

who had descended from western European families living in the Ottoman Empire. Instead, the elite cosmopolitan culture of Salonica reflected economic status; political alignment with western powers; and a commitment to the economic development of the region through industrialization and institutional finance.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, Jewish and Greek Orthodox commercial elites of Salonica were as deeply integrated into this project as their Levantine counterparts with family roots in Britain, France, and other western European countries. Setting aside the question of whether or not the Hadjilazaros are categorized as Levantines, the boundaries of their identity were blurred because of their active role in Salonica's international elite culture. Retracing the emergence of the Hadjilazaros' diplomatic and commercial networks demonstrates some of the ways that international elites of Salonica cooperated across confessional or ethnic boundaries to advance a political and economic development agenda based on selective European and Ottoman institutions and practices.

Whether or not the Hadjilazaros were *really* Levantines is of secondary concern here, since the term itself ultimately reveals very little about the historical experience of commercial elites in Salonica who kept one foot in the world of Ottoman institutions and the other in European diplomacy and finance. As such, the iterative process whereby they became invested in the corporate form was a crucial component of conducting business and of institutional finance via European banks, especially in the twentieth century. Like their colleagues in Salonica's international elite circles, the political and commercial affiliations of the Hadjilazaros reflected an aspiration to be "European" over "Levantine."<sup>13</sup> At the same time, their commercial networks and transactions reflect the Ottoman administrative domain to which they belonged. Although the phrase "Turkey in Europe" has a problematic historical lineage, perhaps the commercial and diplomatic experience of international elites in Salonica can best be described as the emergence of a novel Ottoman Europeanness in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.<sup>14</sup>

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12 Craig Encer, "Interview with Kaleb Herman Adney – March 2022," *Levantine Heritage Foundation* (March 2022), <http://www.levantineheritage.com/kaleb-herman-adney-interview.html>

13 Fuhrmann, *Port Cities*, 298.

14 See, for example, W.M. Sloane, "Turkey in Europe," *Political Science Quarterly*. 23, no. 2 (1908): 297–319.

The Hadjilazaros, as Ottoman Europeans engaged in the international elite culture of Salonica, also provide a theoretical challenge to two recent trends in Ottoman historiography. On the one hand, the long-winded historiographical tradition of dependency theorists and world-systems theorists has privileged the integration of the world economy on terms set by Europe and the New World. Although this is not baseless, the role of non-Western institutions such as the pluralistic Ottoman legal system are an important yet overlooked component of the history of interaction between local and global developments, as shown by Avi Rubin and others.<sup>15</sup> The Hadjilazaros, much like the other elite merchant families of Salonica, relied extensively on Ottoman commercial law to protect their investments, to form corporate bodies, and to ensure repayment of debts. On the other hand, the strategic use of Ottoman institutional forms by Christian merchants has been presented by some Middle East historians as evidence for the preferability of Ottoman institutional forms over European institutions.<sup>16</sup> Although refuting essentialism is a noble goal, the reliance of Jewish, Orthodox Christian, and Levantine merchants on Ottoman institutions, practices, and legal forms paints a rather different picture in the case of Salonica. The elite business culture of the city of Salonica demonstrates that merchants diversified their portfolios through Ottoman and non-Ottoman institutions alike as part of an entrepreneurial plan while pursuing Europeanness through diplomatic and commercial network-building.

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- 15 Avi Rubin, "Modernity as a Code: The Ottoman Empire and the Global Movement of Codification," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 59, no. 5 (2016): 828–856; Beshara Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700–1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995); Stefania Ecchia, "Informal Rural Credit Markets and Interlinked Transactions in the District of Late Ottoman Haifa, 1890–1915," *Financial History Review* 21, no. 1 (2014): 5–24; İrfan Kokdaş, "Land Ownership, Tax Farming and the Social Structure of Local Credit Market in the Ottoman Balkans, 1685–1855," *Financial History Review* 24, no. 1 (2017): 53–81.
- 16 Kristen Alf, "Levantine Joint-Stock Companies, Trans-Mediterranean Partnerships, and Nineteenth-Century Capitalist Development," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 60, no. 1 (2018): 150–177.

## Property, Enterprise, and Business (c. 1863-1911)

On 6 February 1863 Stavros Hadjilazaro petitioned the Ottoman commercial court in Salonica to summon a certain Abdullah Bey because the latter allegedly owed a large sum of money to the former — 115 Ottoman Lira (OL) to be precise. Hadjilazaro successfully confiscated the revenues from Abdullah Bey's agricultural estates, which were nothing to scoff at, and managed to hold onto Abdullah's rental property in the city of Salonica as a sort of ransom for the amount owed to him.<sup>17</sup> Hadjilazaro then submitted another summons for the inheriting relatives of Abdullah Bey since, in the interim, the defendant had passed away thereby leaving his progeny to confront a difficult legal case. Represented by the very prominent Jewish lawyer Liatchi Modiano, Hadjilazaro waited in court on the appointed day only to witness the session conclude with an in-absentia ruling since the late Abdullah Bey's family had apparently moved to Istanbul and had not received notice of the case. According to the stipulations of the in-absentia ruling, Abdullah Bey's family would pay off the debt over the course of 9 years and 2.5 months.<sup>18</sup> This would bring the total owed, including accrued interest, to 127 OL and 7 *kuruş* plus an additional 1189 *kuruş* to pay off the costs associated with the court case and the associated attorney's fee.<sup>19</sup>

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17 The confiscation process is referred to as *taht-ı hacze almak* in the documentation. For more on the precise conversion rate and the complexity of value, see Ali Coşkun Tunçer and Şevket Pamuk, "Ottoman Empire: from 1830 to 1914," in *South-Eastern European Monetary and Economic Statistics from the Nineteenth Century to World War II*, ed. Matthias Morys (Athens, Sofia, Bucharest, Vienna: Bank of Greece, Bulgarian National Bank, National Bank of Romania, Oesterreichische Nationalbank, 2014), 1–27.

18 Tevfik Tarık, *Ticaret-i Berriye Kanunu ve Usûl-i Muhakame-yi Ticaret*, (Istanbul, İktbal Kütüphanesi, 1329-1332/1913), 280. According to the 67th article of the codebook entitled *The Principles of the Commercial Courts (Usûl-i Muhakame-yi Ticaret)* if someone involved in a court case did not show up, the court could either postpone the case to the following week or make an in-absentia ruling. In-absentia rulings were an ongoing problem for the court since time and again both claimants and defendants would miss court appearances in the first decades of the court's existence.

19 Ιστορικό Αρχείο Μακεδονίας (Historical Archive of Macedonia, hereafter IAM), Εμποροδικείο Θεσσαλονίκης (Commercial Court of Thessaloniki, hereafter STM), Δ20.2.6., File no. 182, 29.03.1299 (10 April 1883), 305–307.

Stavros Hadjilazaro continued to take Abdullah Bey's family members to court over the same dispute for over 20 years. In fact, on 10 April 1883 Mecdi Bey, the son of the now deceased Abdullah Bey — who was himself represented by the Greek Orthodox lawyer Anastasi Papazoğlu — presented a petition to the commercial court of Salonica requesting a re-consideration of the results of the 1863 case raised against his father twenty years earlier. The centrality of the court in Stavros Hadjilazaro's efforts to consolidate wealth and land holdings indicates a fundamental truth about the important role that the institution played in local economic life. It was a pragmatic decision for the Hadjilazaro family to initially go to the court in search of a favorable ruling. However, Abdullah Bey's inheritors avoided the interest payments owed to Hadjilazaro, slowed down the progress that Stavros Hadjilazaro made towards his goal, and even won back 841 *куруş* in the 1883 court hearing. At the same time, a large debt by a Muslim resident of Macedonia to a notable Christian family demonstrates the importance of the commercial court within the economic life of the city.<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps it was the limited leverage provided by the commercial court against debtors, as shown by the Abdullah case, that kept other members of the Hadjilazaro family from relying on the court more extensively. Those who utilized the court to challenge debtors with more regularity, however, tended to be representatives of banks and other long-standing financial entities in the region. Commercial disputes between individuals were very common within the court notices of the legal verdicts made on commercial disputes (Ottoman: *i'lamat sicillati*) but within the petitions filed at court over unpaid debts in particular (*protesto defterleri*) were dominated by a few financial institutions. The Imperial Ottoman Bank was the most regular registrant of *protestos* followed by the *Banque de Salonique* after its establishment in 1888. Individual litigants were few in number but included Salonican Jewish elites such as Saul Modiano. In the relatively few cases where money-lenders – *sarrafs* – filed *protestos* these tended to be lumped into groups. For example, nine claims in a row were made against Israel Yako Perahia in 1891 constituting over 2% of the total *protestos* between August 1888 and August 1891.<sup>21</sup> Unfortunately, after the Hadjilazaros became involved more directly

20 Ibid.

21 IAM, STM, Δ20.3.3., File nos. 62-70, 23.05.1307 (August 4, 1891).

in institutional finance via the *Banque de l'Orient* in 1905 the *protesto defterleri* either stopped being recorded by the commercial court or are simply no longer extant. However, between 1909 and 1912 the registration of *protestos* took place under the purview of the Notary Public (*Mukavelât Muharrirliği*) providing us some insight into the financial role played by the Hadjilazaros during that period via the *Banque de l'Orient*.<sup>22</sup>

Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the commercial court was staffed by Ottoman subjects of the diverse religious communities represented in the Ottoman Balkans. The Salonica court had two permanent staff members in 1870, one Muslim and one Christian, along with four impermanent staff members who rotated in and out of the court proceedings. These impermanent members consisted of two Muslims, one Christian, and one Jew.<sup>23</sup> In 1886, on the other hand, the staff of the court included a Muslim president named Mustafa Sabri Efendi, two permanent members (again one Christian and one Muslim), as well as four impermanent members (one Muslim, two Jewish, and one Christian).<sup>24</sup> The staffing components of the court changed over the years but the court procedures remained relatively stable and allowed Ottomans and those with European political affiliations to obtain a forum for commercial disputes that spanned across community lines. This provided lenders like Stavros Hadjilazaro with a predictable legal process that they could pursue in cases of default. In spite of the transformation of the Ottoman legal system in the nineteenth century, which allowed for non-Muslims and Muslims to dispute property rights and unsettled debts, there were still a host of difficulties facing entrepreneurs who sought to invest in burgeoning industries that held the capacity to transform the region's economic infrastructure.

Prior to the turn of the century, the Hadjilazaros' efforts to dominate industry within the province of Salonica had only had limited success. However, the doyens of the Hadjilazaro family — namely Ioannis and his

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22 Between 1909 and 1912, the notary public presented a number of these *protestos* to the commercial court indicating that these were merely the *protestos* filed with the notary public but those which deserved further investigation by the commercial court to settle the disputes.

23 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Selanik I*, (1287): 30.

24 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Selanik IX*, (1303): 359.

son Pericles — ended up playing a significant role in the industrialization of the city after 1900. In addition, Cleon — the son of Pericles — occupied an important position in the formal banking sector in Salonica after 1904. Ioannis and Pericles attempted to break into the textile industry in 1872 by petitioning the Ottoman government to establish a textile factory in Ağustos (Gr. Naoussa).<sup>25</sup> In spite of the contraction of textile manufacturing in the face of European and Indian imports and the fact that during the second half of the nineteenth century Ottoman textiles remained mostly limited to the domestic market, it was still a modestly profitable industry until the collapse of Ottoman rule in the province.<sup>26</sup>

Although it is unclear why, the Ottoman government never approved the establishment of a corporation to administer this textile factory. The petition to establish such a firm was the first of its kind for the sub-district of Ağustos and the entire region around Mt. Vermion but it was followed by multiple others in the following years. The most important of these in the 1870s and 1880s was the Longos-Kyrtsis-Tourpali mill established in 1875 in Ağustos.<sup>27</sup> At least one of the Ottoman yearbooks published in the 1880s also indicates that a member of the Longos family would become the president of the municipality of Ağustos.<sup>28</sup> This could indicate that there was opposition by the Longos family to a mill or a firm established by a competing network such as that of the Hadjilazaro family. Unfortunately, this is not a point which can be confirmed without further evidence on the political economy of Ağustos prior to these yearbooks in the mid-1870s when the Hadjilazaros initially sought to establish their textile factory. Nevertheless, the success of the Longos-Kyrtsis-Tourpali mill over the following decades gave even more impetus to Pericles to enter the textile industry over the following decades. By 1907 the Hadjilazaros-Angelakis woolen cloth-spinning mill was established in collaboration with the Angelakis family. In 1911, Pericles Hadjilazaro and his partners successfully

25 BOA, Ş.D. 2402/18, Application letter for the permit of a yarn factory, 19.06.1290 (August 14, 1873).

26 Donald Quataert, *Ottoman Manufacturing in the Age of the Industrial Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 80–104.

27 Cakiroglu-Bournous and Lapavitsas, *Capitalism in the Ottoman Balkans*, 77–106, 185–188.

28 *Salname-i Vilayet-i Selanik IX*, (1303): 259.

converted this firm into a joint-stock company called the Ağustos Textiles Ottoman Joint-Stock Company, which was subject to Ottoman law.<sup>29</sup>

The decision to incorporate under Ottoman law ran parallel to a concerted effort by the ruling Committee for Union and Progress (CUP) — a revolutionary organization which originally seized power from Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1908 — to promote new corporations amongst Muslims in the empire.<sup>30</sup> Muslim corporations may have been late arrivals to the commercial sector in the empire and required state support as argued by Timur Kuran but they were nevertheless part of a relatively successful effort to create a self-professed ‘Muslim’ national economy.<sup>31</sup> A notable example of this effort is the *Şirket-i Hayriye*, the Ottoman shipping company owned and operated by Hüseyin Hâki Effendi in Istanbul.<sup>32</sup> However, there were a number of other non-Muslim Ottoman corporations in the empire that had made a similar decision presumably in order to invoke Ottoman protections over their properties should a political or diplomatic dispute arise. In addition to the Hadjilazaro firm (The Ağustos Textiles Ottoman Joint-Stock Company), many of the local Ottoman joint-stock companies managed by non-Muslims were essentially Jewish commercial firms in Salonica. One of the most notable examples was the *Société Industrielle et Commerciale de Salonique*, one of the firms established by the Allatini Brothers. The Société was established in 1897 as part of the Allatini’s efforts to simplify their commercial and industrial activities in the city of Salonica. It was primarily dedicated to the family’s bread-making and flour-processing activities, but the family’s ceramics factory was also subject to the by-laws of the

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29 Cakiroglu-Bournous and Lapavitsas, *Capitalism in the Ottoman Balkans*, 197. For the by-laws of this joint-stock corporation see BOA, Ş.D. 1234/3, Documents for the State Council’s review of the proposed company charter, 20.12.1329 (December 12, 1911).

30 For a comprehensive guide to these corporations including their founding members and their net worth in 1911, see E. Pech, *Manuel des Sociétés Anonymes fonctionnant en Turquie* (Constantinople: Gérard Frères, 1911).

31 Timur Kuran, “Why the Middle East is Economically Underdeveloped: Historical Mechanisms of Institutional Stagnation,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18, no. 3 (2004): 71–90 and Timur Kuran, “The Absence of the Corporation in Islamic Law: Origins and Persistence,” *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 53, no. 4 (2005), 785–834; Zafer Toprak, *Türkiye’de “Milli İktisat” 1908-1918* (Istanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012).

32 Zafer Toprak, “Şirket-i Hayriye Amele Cemiyeti ve 1925 Grevi,” *Toplumsal Tarih* 30, (1996): 8–11.

corporation. Perhaps the example of the Allatinis — by far the most successful commercial elites of the entire region — provided enough proof for the Hadjilazaros to incorporate under Ottoman law.<sup>33</sup>

In any case, the commercial endeavors of Ioannis and Pericles were not limited to textiles alone. The family's ownership of large estates (Tr. *çiftlik*s) in Macedonia contributed to their interest in important agricultural goods as well. The Hadjilazaro family was involved in the production of agricultural goods and metal works on their Macedonian properties although little archival evidence remains that can provide much detail on these activities.<sup>34</sup> Apparently, however, their agricultural products included tobacco according to a case from 1869 in the commercial court of Salonica. The case reveals the limited framework for corporate mercantile activities such as tobacco exportation and, as we have already seen, textile manufacturing in the period directly preceding the reign of Abdülhamid II. Ioannis Hadjilazaro had apparently started exporting tobacco from the port of Kavala before 1869 under the name Hadjilazaro Brothers (*Haci Lazaro Kardeşleri*) but was prevented from doing so in November of that year by the local customs office. The firm had likely not been registered or was never officially incorporated under Ottoman or foreign law since the only signatures on the contested company records were apparently those of Ioannis himself. It was for this reason that the court itself required the “activities conducted with this signature to pertain to Ioannis Hadjilazaro himself” rather than to an unofficial, and therefore dubious, corporation. It is unclear whether Ioannis' brother Stavros or his son Pericles had at any point been part of this tobacco-exporting venture but the lack of sufficient signatures or any explanation of the corporate structure of the so-called Hadjilazaro Brothers firm was enough to undermine their tobacco exportation rights.<sup>35</sup>

Interestingly, from 1863 to 1883 the Allatini Brothers (Solomon Allatini in particular) had obtained special privileges from the Ottoman

33 Pech, *Manuel des Sociétés Anonymes*, 277. See the company by-laws in BOA, A.DVN. MKL. 40/3, Allatinis Thessaloniki Industry and Trade Ottoman Corporation's by-laws and the associated note from the Ministry of Public Works, 29.9.1315 (21 February 1898).

34 Χεκίμογλου [Hekimoglou], “Ενθύμιον Χατζηλαζάρου” [A Memento of Hadjilazaro], 293–295, 23–25, 44–46, 42–43.

35 IAM, STM, Δ20.2.1., File no. 1, 29.8.1285 (November 10, 1869), 5.

government to export tobacco to the Austro-Hungarian domains. The Austro-Hungarian government had come to such an agreement in 1863 with the Ottomans to allow suppliers of the Austro-Hungarian tobacco monopoly, such as Solomon Allatini, to export their tobacco with little-to-no interference from the customs office. Legislation in 1874 would reinforce the Allatinis' privileged status vis-a-vis the Ottoman customs administration. It reiterated the right of suppliers of the Austro-Hungarian monopoly to export duty-free while doubling down on the surveillance of other tobacco merchants.<sup>36</sup> After the declaration of Ottoman bankruptcy in 1875, tobacco became one of the commodities that was integrated into the realm of Ottoman public debt as part of the restructuring process under the Ottoman Public Debt Administration (OPDA) upon its establishment in 1881.<sup>37</sup> Eventually tobacco revenues and administration of the domestic tobacco industry as a whole would be hired out to a third party, the Régie Company, in 1883, which functioned as a domestic tobacco monopoly within the empire.

Even before this however, between 1881 and 1883, the OPDA was active in seeking out unregistered tobacco within Ottoman Salonica. In one case, the Mevlevi Sufi dervishes of the city stored large amounts of unregistered tobacco in their lodge, which the OPDA referred to in relevant documentation as “smuggled” tobacco. The Ottoman administration treated Ioannis Hadjilazaro with suspicion for not registering his tobacco through the proper channels or incorporating his firm under Ottoman law. This suspicion carried over to OPDA policy, particularly towards those that it labeled as smugglers such as the Mevlevi Sufis.<sup>38</sup>

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36 Semih Gökatalay, *The Political Economy of Corporations in the Late Ottoman Empire and Early Turkish Republic (1908-1929)* (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2019), 1–44; Kaleb Herman Adney, “Institutional Finance, Interconnected Markets, and Trans-Regional Networks: The Political Economy of Ottoman Tobacco in Macedonia and Thrace (1880-1900),” in *Mehmet Genç Anısına Osmanlı İktisat Tarihi Çalışmaları - I*, ed. Fehmi Yılmaz (İstanbul: Güngören Belediyesi Yayınları, 2023), 599–624.

37 Murat Birdal, *The Political Economy of Ottoman Public Debt: Insolvency and European Financial Control in the Late Nineteenth Century* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 129–165; Ali Coşkun Tunçer, *Sovereign Debt and International Financial Control: The Middle East and the Balkans, 1870-1914* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1–28, 53–78.

38 BOA, Ş.D. 2010/9, Complaint from the Customs Office regarding the smuggled tobacco stored at the Mevlevi Lodge, 18.06.1298 (6 May 1881).

It remains unclear whether the Hadjilazaros remained invested in tobacco officially through cooperation with one of the many Greek Orthodox or Jewish export firms in Macedonia or unofficially through the many black-market networks that continued operating after the establishment of OPDA and the Régie Company. What is clear is that, whereas their entrance into textiles and tobacco was problematic and subject to roadblocks along the way, they remained deeply involved in the commercial and financial life of Salonica throughout the final decades of Ottoman rule. Pericles Hadjilazaro (the son of Ioannis), and later his son Cleon, were central to the family's ascendancy in this regard.

In 1873, Pericles became a founding member of the *Cercle de Salonique*, the most important social club for elite bankers and merchants of Salonica. Within this club, Pericles Hadjilazaro rubbed shoulders with the most important bankers, lawyers, and merchants of the city including Hugo Allatini, Joseph Mizrahi, Samuel Modiano, and John Blunt while strategizing their plans for developing Salonica's industrial and commercial sectors.<sup>39</sup> Another prominent member of the *Cercle de Salonique* was Alfred Loir who was the chief accountant for the Ottoman Bank from 1872 to 1879 and then the branch director from 1879 to 1890 when he left for Beirut to work for the bank there. Mr. Loir, a Levantine of French descent from Izmir, was also an administrator of the *Banque de Salonique*, the Allatini Brothers' financial entity, after its establishment in 1888.<sup>40</sup> The Imperial Ottoman Bank was essentially a British-French financial entity which founded a Salonica branch in 1864 whereas the *Banque de Salonique* was founded later on with Austrian, French, and indigenous Salonican capital. Although most of the details of Ioannis and Pericles Hadjilazaro's financial activities remain unknown, in 1906 Ioannis Hadjilazaro was one of the wealthiest bankers in Salonica with around 40,000 Ottoman Liras to his name. This pales in comparison to the wealth of the Allatini and Modiano firms which held around 8 or 10 times as much in liquid capital reserves.<sup>41</sup> At the same time, it is likely that the Hadjilazaros had capital held in either

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39 John Karatzoglou, *The Imperial Ottoman Bank in Salonica: The First 25 Years: 1864-1890* (Istanbul: Ottoman Bank Archives and Research Centre, 2003), 6.

40 *Ibid.*, 1-10, 20-21.

41 Cakiroglu-Bournous and Lapavitsas, *Capitalism in the Ottoman Balkans*, 134.

the Ottoman Bank (directed by the aforementioned Alfred Loir) or the Banque de Salonique (the Allatinis' bank), or possibly in both, given that they took part in the same elite culture and the options for institutional banking in Salonica prior to the turn of the century were relatively limited.

Belonging to the elite commercial society of Salonica, which included Jews, Greek Orthodox Christians, and descendants of western Christian families, was crucial to the financial and commercial success of merchant families like the Hadjilazaros. Nevertheless, incorporation became an increasingly important aspect of the Hadjilazaros' business approach leading to the eventual establishment of the Ağustos Textiles Ottoman Joint-Stock Company in 1911 under Ottoman law. The establishment of the company as such was in opposition to the failed attempt decades earlier. In a similar manner, the family became deeply involved in the expansion of European banking in Salonica through the Banque de l'Orient (Gr. *Trapeza Anatoles*) which was a joint Greek-German venture founded in Athens in 1904. It expanded in subsequent years and one of its first additional branches was the Salonica branch established in 1905 in order to facilitate trade for a large clientele. Cleon Hadjilazaro, the son of Pericles, became the director of the bank branch there and, in many ways, the bank became the response of Greek Orthodox merchants and businessmen to decades of central European consolidation within the financial sector of Salonica.

As alluded to earlier, from a preliminary analysis of data available in the Ottoman commercial court records it is clear that the Imperial Ottoman Bank and the *Banque de Salonique* issued more loans to merchants than other entities. From the court's extant notices of missed payment (*protesto defterleri*), the Ottoman Bank emerges as the most active complainant against its debtors. For example, from the petitions filed for unpaid debts in the Ottoman commercial court (*protestos*) between 25 June 1891 and 8 September 1891, the Ottoman Bank accounted for 25.7% of the complaints filed for unpaid debts. Banque de Salonique, for its part, accounted for 22.8% of these complaints filed against debtors during the same period of time. This three-month period seems to represent a general trend — these entities accounted for a sizable portion of the total credit lent out to merchants in the city of Salonica.

The establishment of the *Banque de l'Orient* and other Greek banks facilitated an expansion of institutional credit and banking options available to Christian merchants in particular, though not exclusively.<sup>42</sup> Cleon Hadjilazaro became the director of the Salonica branch of the *Banque de l'Orient* in 1905. By the second constitutional period, the *Banque de l'Orient* was responsible for over 16% of the total *protestos* filed with the Salonica public notary and was accompanied by an increase in institutional complainants such as the Bank of Athens and Mitylene Bank. The Imperial Ottoman Bank and the Banque de Salonique continued to play an important role in the credit market of Salonica and the surrounding region but the direct entrance of prominent merchants such as the Hadjilazaros into institutional banking changed the ratio of Greek Orthodox involvement in that sector.<sup>43</sup> In addition to the financial networks which likely helped to keep the Hadjilazaros involved in Salonica's commercial life, their diplomatic role was also a crucial part of their interaction with the international elite of Salonica.

### Consular Affiliation and Nationality

In the court case described above wherein Stavros Hadjilazaro sought to collect unpaid debts from Abdullah Bey, the scribes of the commercial court in Salonica make it very clear (both in 1863 and 1883) that he was a Russian subject.<sup>44</sup> However, in 1875 the Translation Office of the Sublime Porte recorded him as "one of the Greek subjects resident in Salonica."<sup>45</sup> This indicates that either he retained dual consular protection and would go between the two depending on what he needed or, alternatively, that there was some confusion over his political identity and affiliation. In neither

42 Hassan Akif Pasha for example, the famous *dönme* merchant, maintained an account with Banque de l'Orient as evidenced by a number of transactions.

43 This information is compiled from a meta-analysis of *protestos* filed with the commercial court in 1891 on the one hand and *protestos* filed with the public notary between 1909 and 1911 on the other. See IAM, STM, *Protesto Defterleri* 1888-1891, Δ20.3.3, Case Nos. 46-82 (25 June 1891 – 8 September 1891), 364–400 and IAM, STM, *Selânik Mukavelât Muharirliğinin Selânik Ticaret Mahkemesine Takdim Olunan Beyannameleri*, Δ20.14.1. (2 March 1909 – 1 September 1911).

44 IAM, STM, Δ20.2.6., File no. 182, 29.03.1299 (10 April 1883), 305.

45 BOA, HR.TO. 312/117, Document from the Sublime Porte's translation office regarding Stavros Hadjilazaro's claims on a deceased person's inheritance, 20.01.1307 (1 April 1891).

case would the authorities or residents of Salonica be very surprised since members of the Hadjilazaro family claimed British, Russian, and Greek protection on a regular basis and some of the Hadjilazaros served as consuls for the British and American governments in the region.<sup>46</sup> A certain Grégoire Hadjilazaro also served as consular agent for Russia in Larissa in the early 1860s, where the Russian Empire did not operate a full consular service, the closest one being stationed in Janina (present-day Ioannina).<sup>47</sup> By far the most famous diplomat of the family, however, was Stavros' nephew Pericles who became the US consul to the Ottoman Empire in Salonica in 1869 and served in that capacity for 40 years.

While representing the American government, Pericles was deeply integrated into the commercial circuits of Ottoman Salonica given his involvement in the *Cercle de Salonique* and the Ağustos Textiles Ottoman Joint-Stock Company. His consular post, like his commercial endeavors, were subject to a significant amount of turmoil during his forty years of service. Although I will not provide a detailed analysis here of the so-called "grievous Salonica affair," given that the details of the case are secondary to the concerns of this chapter, it is an important part of the history of the American consulate that bears mentioning. In short, a very public dispute in 1876 over the conversion to Islam of a young Bulgarian woman named Stephana would shape the relationship of western consulates with their Ottoman host society in Salonica for the remainder of the century; this included the American consulate and Pericles Hadjilazaro. Stephana had allegedly set off from Avrathisar on May 7, 1876 to publicly declare her allegiance to Islam in front of the nearest Islamic judge who was in Salonica. It is unclear whether the woman was acting under compulsion but what is apparent is that her arrival at the train station in Salonica was either poorly timed or elaborately planned out. In response to her mother's accusations

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46 Mark Mazower, *Salonica, City of Ghosts: Christians, Muslims, and Jews, 1430-1950* (New York: Vintage Books, 2004), 166.

47 *Annuaire diplomatique de l'Empire Russie pour l'année 1861, 1ère année*, (Saint Pétersbourg: Imprimerie de F. Bellizard, 1861), 37; The aforementioned Grégoire served in that position until at least 1874 and possibly until the 1881 seizure of Larissa and Ioannina by the kingdom of Greece, see also BOA, ŞD. 2087/10, Telegram from Larissa (Yenişehir) to the State Council in the Capital, 03.02.1288 (15 February 1873); BOA, ŞD. 2087/12, Memo on Enclosures from the State Council, 25.9.1290 (16 November 1873).

that she was being forcibly converted to Islam, stated publicly at the train station, the German consul publicly removed her veil there and a group of Greek Orthodox passersby swept her away into the carriage of none other than the honorary consul, Pericles Hadjilazaro.<sup>48</sup>

Although his carriage was used to carry the girl away, Pericles himself was not present for the event. He was, at the time, outside of the city. Unluckily for his German and French counterparts, however, the next day a mob of Muslims, incensed by the events, began to demand that the girl be released so that she could perform the public conversion which she had allegedly come to Salonica of her own volition to perform. The situation quickly spiraled out of control when the French and German consuls tried to confront the mob for their impetuous behavior. The French consul in particular, Jules Moulin, was apparently very confrontational with a crowd of already incensed protestors. Both consuls were tragically beaten to death. Terrible as it was, to many this event demonstrated the limits of European protection within the Ottoman setting especially since it took place in a predominantly non-Muslim city and a major commercial hub within the empire. It provoked outrage and confusion while some debated whether this event should be counted as evidence for the inability of the empire to implement political reforms.<sup>49</sup>

Six of the murderers were hung publicly and Sultan Abdülhamid II, upon his accession to the throne in August of that year, would attempt to compensate the families of the victims with nearly one million French Francs. Although Pericles Hadjilazaro was only tangentially implicated in this event by association with the American consulate, his alleged political leanings in the following years would put him in the imperial spotlight in a more direct manner. Although Pericles represented the United States government in the Ottoman Empire, he also enjoyed Russian subjecthood according to court records. As such, he came under suspicion of treason during the relatively short-lived Russo-Ottoman war of

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48 Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 98–105.

49 Berke Torunoğlu, *Murder in Salonika 1876: A Tale of Apostasy and International Crisis* (Istanbul: Libra Kitap, 2012), 47–68; L. Léouzon le Duc, *La Turquie: Est-elle incapable de réformes?* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1876), 5–32.

1877-1878. A little over 9 months after that war had begun, an internal report from a representative for the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Washington DC claimed that “Hadji Lazaro seems to sympathize with the enemies of our country.”

At the same time, the ministry could not prove this assertion and relied on “the Bulgarian nationality of this agent and his affinity with active agents of Pan-Slavism and of Greece” to justify its suspicion.<sup>50</sup> Although the ethnic origins of the Hadjilazaros family were clearly a concern for the Ottoman government within this political context, this had no obvious effect on his involvement in the elite commercial society of Salonica, which continued well into the twentieth century. The extensive commercial networks of Pericles allowed him to circumnavigate these political obstacles and remain prominent within the international elite culture of Salonica into the twentieth century.

### **Conclusion: The Commercial and Diplomatic Portfolios of the Hadjilazaro Family**

In the twentieth century, the surviving members of the Hadjilazaro family played a significant role in local political and economic life. During the first two decades of the new century, Salonica itself was subjected to political turmoil as highlighted by the bombing of the Ottoman Bank in 1903 by members of a Bulgarian anarchist group and the rising tensions between Ottoman unionists and their critics after the 1908 revolution of the Committee for Union and Progress. These events were followed by a decade of war between 1912 and 1922 throughout the eastern Mediterranean which resulted in one of the League of Nations most ambitious demographic engineering projects — the tragic compulsory exchange of the Greek Orthodox and Muslim populations of the Ottoman Empire and Greece, respectively. The role of both Pericles and Cleon during these final years of Ottoman rule has been highlighted by other historians but should still be considered within the broader context of the decades-long commercial and diplomatic portfolio-building that the family engaged in.

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<sup>50</sup> BOA, HR.SYS. 68/18, Report from the Ottoman Embassy in Washington on Hadjilazaro’s Actions against the Ottoman State (1 January 1878).

Analysis of the diplomatic and commercial careers of the Hadjilazaro family demonstrate important features of late Ottoman political economy. First of all, as demonstrated by the reliance of Stavros and Ioannis on Ottoman commercial courts and Ioannis' and Pericles' dependence on Ottoman business law, being integrated into trans-regional and international markets did not prevent Salonica's commercial elites from utilizing Ottoman legal and political institutions to their advantage. In fact, proximity to Ottoman institutions was a prerequisite for commercial success in Salonica. To put this differently, neither the "consular courts" nor the Ottoman commercial courts were "the Trojan horse for foreign meddling," as one historian has framed the scholarship on such institutions.<sup>51</sup> Instead, the Hadjilazaros and others like them were integrated into a local and regional political economy that allowed for foreign intervention, especially in the formal financial sector, but was not completely dominated by foreigners. Their reliance on Ottoman institutions of this sort demonstrates that, even in cases where commercial elites sought out extraterritorial privileges and aligned themselves with foreign consulates as the Hadjilazaros did, Ottoman legal and commercial forms were still strategically beneficial.

Secondly, investment in various industries was a crucial component of the Hadjilazaro's financial success. This included investments in diverse agricultural, industrial, and financial sectors, which was an approach that the family shared with the most prominent Jewish merchants of the city as well, such as the Allatinis and Modianos. However, the family's ability to benefit from the many commodity markets they attempted to incorporate into their portfolios was limited by a number of factors. Reliance on the corporate form and on institutional banking in the early twentieth century gave Pericles and Cleon the ability to move past these limitations. As such, they found greater success at this time in the textile industry and the financial sector while continuing to invest in agricultural products, urban properties, and mine-works.

The Hadjilazaros and several other Ottoman merchants utilized both Ottoman and European commercial forms and relied on their commercial and diplomatic networks both in the Ottoman domains and in Europe to

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51 Julia Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2011), 200.

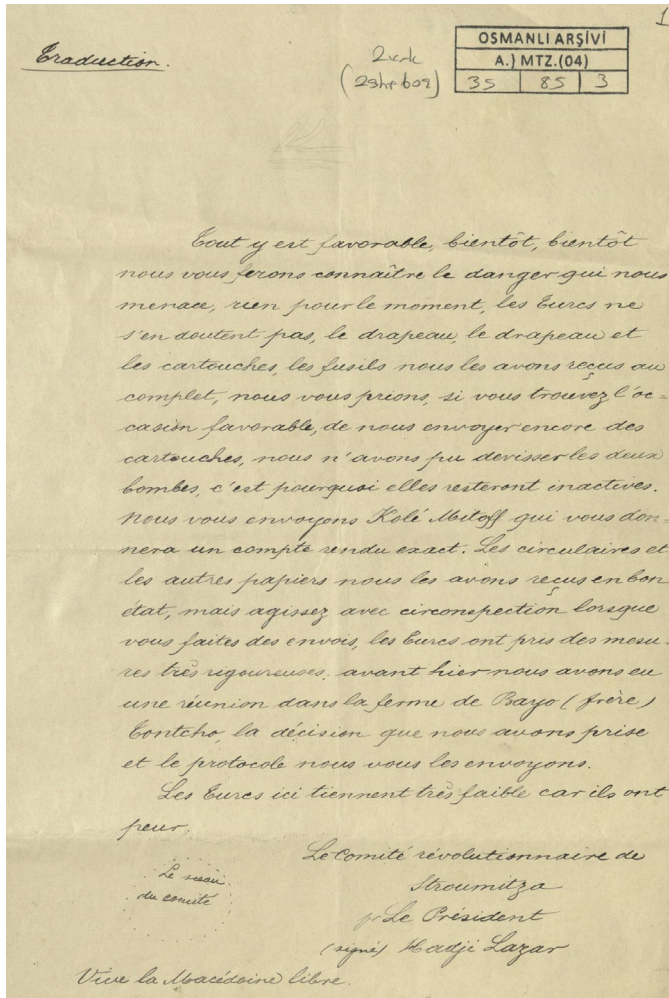
protect their interests. Far from demonstrating that capital accumulation was unique to Europe, these examples point to European networks and Ottoman institutions alike as crucial aspects of entrepreneurial success in the Ottoman Empire during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Together, a reliance on European and Ottoman legal, commercial, and political forms allowed Salonica's Hadjilazaro family to enjoy privileged access to capital and market networks. As such, their commercial and diplomatic activities ought to be seen as portfolios that spanned the Asian and European contexts rather than choices made between the two. In this sense, they were truly international and trans-regional in their entrepreneurial scope. The expansion of the Hadjilazaro commercial portfolio to include an Ottoman corporation and the institutional banking networks of Greece and Germany via the *Banque de l'Orient* demonstrate some of the ways that this portfolio expanded prior to the collapse of imperial rule in the Balkans.

This chapter has demonstrated that elite commercial and diplomatic circles in Salonica were not dominated exclusively by "Levantine" but, at the same time, the most prominent merchants and diplomats in the city were of European origin and were affiliated with the financial and political institutions of western Europe and the New World. For this reason, Salonica offers a significant challenge to the terminology of Levantine. Indeed, the international elite circles of Salonica tend to obfuscate the term even further. Many of the participants in these circles check some of the boxes typically associated with being Levantine while never fully satisfying its definition, at least as it has been conceived by historians.

Many of the Jewish merchants that dominated commerce and industry in Salonica during the late nineteenth century had a European lineage, hailing from Austria-Hungary, Spain, or Italy. Meanwhile, merchants of Greek Orthodox extraction were rooted in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean. Those of Greek Orthodox heritage, such as the Hadjilazaros, often represented foreign consulates such as the American, French, and Russian consulates. Salonica's many interesting case studies demonstrate that ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities did not prevent specific merchants from interacting within a cultural and economic sphere that is at once fully Ottoman and fully European. Utilizing the terminology of

Ottoman Europeanness in place of Levantine is at once more historically specific while accounting for the blurred boundaries of Levantineness, which fail to furnish a foundation for discussions of complex identities like those of the Hadjilazaro family. Ultimately, the decision to apply any terminology *ex post facto* deserves a broader discussion of the specific commercial networks of late Ottoman port-cities and the merchants, bureaucrats, and diplomats active within them.

## Appendix



**Figure 1.** 1897 letter from the president of the Strumica branch of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization, a Hadjilazaro family member, to the IMRO's Sofia branch, requesting arms for their covert resistance against unsuspecting Ottoman forces. BOA. A. MTZ.(04). 35/85, 5 August 1896.

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- III -

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BIOGRAPHIES:  
PORTRAITS & PERSONAL NARRATIVES

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# PEN AND POLITICS: THE INTELLECTUAL LEGACIES OF TWO LEVANTINE JOURNALISTS

Burhan Çağlar\*

## Introduction

The Anglo-Ottoman Treaty of Balta Limani, ratified in 1838, ushered in an era of amplified British engagement with the Ottoman Empire and initiated a steadfast commitment to enhancing British influence in the Near East. During this period, the British consular structure underwent a significant reorganization, culminating in the formation of a supreme consular court in Constantinople. Operating under Anglo-Saxon law, this institution was grounded in the principles of Capitulations, laws that granted specific legal and trading rights to foreign nations within the Ottoman territories.<sup>1</sup>

James Carlile McCoan, a former Crimean War correspondent with legal expertise, commenced his service at this court. In 1859, backed by the British ambassador, he launched *The Levant Herald*, a periodical he envisioned promoting London's regional policies and reinforcing British interests in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Upon transferring the editorship of *The Le-*

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\* Ph.D. Candidate at Sakarya University, Turkey. Email: burhancaglar@sakarya.edu.tr, ORCID: 0000-0001-5032-516X. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8381956](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8381956)

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1 Candan Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War (1853-1856)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 60-63; Johannes Berchtold, *Recht und Gerechtigkeit in der Konsulargerichtsbarkeit: Britische Exterritorialität im Osmanischen Reich 1825-1914* (Berlin: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2009), 212-215.

2 Gioula Koutsopanagou, "Language Matters Unravelling Journalistic Language Choice. British War Reporting and The Projection of Journalistic Values at The Height of Eastern Crisis (January to March 1878)," *Media History* (2023): 5-7.

*vant Herald* to Edgar Whitaker in 1872, McCoan detailed its mission in his farewell article, depicting the newspaper as a “platform for British thought and interests” and a medium to “support and expand the sphere of British influence in the Near East.”<sup>3</sup>

Following the Crimean War (1853-1856), Britain’s foreign policy centered on preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. This strategy aimed to prevent Russia from controlling the straits, expanding southwards towards warmer seas, compromising British commercial interests in the region, and endangering the route to India.<sup>4</sup> *The Levant Herald* echoed this political stance, which would be extended in McCoan’s contributions and subsequent writings after leaving the newspaper and returning to London.<sup>5</sup> In *Our New Protectorate: Turkey in Asia*, he discussed the regional power shifts following the 1878 Treaty of Berlin and underscored the importance of maintaining the Ottoman Empire’s territorial integrity under British guardianship.<sup>6</sup>

In the wake of the geopolitical shifts triggered by the Treaty of Berlin, London’s Near East policy underwent certain modifications. Nevertheless, *The Levant Herald* maintained its original political stance. Edgar Whitaker, who took over the newspaper’s editorship from McCoan, earned recognition through his publications that persistently upheld the same political views. He staunchly advocated reforms against separatist uprisings and revolts within the Empire, accentuating the need to preserve the territorial unity of the Ottoman state.<sup>7</sup> Whitaker repeated the necessity for Britain to remain resolute in its political direction, emphasizing the critical importance of sustaining this course.

The intellectual breadth, regional expertise, and robust networks possessed by McCoan and Whitaker greatly influenced their ability to engage

3 “To Our Subscribers,” *The Levant Herald*, 11 September 1872, 12.

4 Badem, *The Ottoman Crimean War*, 287, 406; M. Şükrü Hanioglu, *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 79–83.

5 Murat R. Şiviloğlu, “Levant Herald Gazetesi ve Osmanlı Tarih yazıcılığı İçin [Muhtemel] Önemi,” *Kebikeç* 53 (2022): 219–220.

6 J. Carlile McCoan, *Our New Protectorate: Turkey in Asia, Its Geography, Races, Resources, and Government*, 2 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879).

7 Burhan Çağlar, “Edgar Whitaker: A British Journalist in the Ottoman Empire,” *Media History* 29 (2023): 44–56.

in discourse on the region. Intertwined with *The Levant Herald*, their careers were conduits for articulating their encounters and insights gained from interactions with the Sublime Porte. These experiences facilitated interpretations and analyses with direct implications for Britain's political interests. Perhaps influenced by his Irish roots, McCoan adopted a more liberal viewpoint, whereas Whitaker, by contrast, exhibited conservative stances. However, both recognized within the framework of *The Levant Herald* that the political divisions in the Ottoman sphere were distinct from those in London and emphasized the need to prioritize Britain's role.<sup>8</sup> Despite their differing viewpoints, both converged on issues pertaining to the Ottoman Empire. These included the urgent need for reforms, unwavering support for the Porte in foreign policy matters, and the imperative of defending the Ottoman state against the expanding Russian threat.

This study explores McCoan and Whitaker's contributions to the existing literature on the Levant. Both figures have produced comprehensive works detailing the area's socio-cultural dynamics, political contexts, and historical evolution, informed by their personal experiences and observations. Their writings, comprising a range of books, pamphlets, and articles, reflect their intellectual engagement with this locale. Their contributions offer an in-depth portrayal of the Levant, exceeding essential historical documentation. They move beyond mere factual exposition or narrative, weaving together a multifaceted depiction of the Levant that captures the complex intersection of social, cultural, and political elements that have influenced the region over time. Through an in-depth examination and analysis of their works, this study seeks to underscore the influence of these writings. It further aims to elucidate the diverse aspects of the Levant, demonstrating how the writings of McCoan and Whitaker have contributed to a more thorough and nuanced comprehension of this culturally and historically rich area.

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8 Burhan Çağlar, *Anglophone Press in Constantinople: The Levant Herald & Eastern Express (1859-1878)* (İstanbul: Libra Kitap, 2020), 101–103.

## The Authorial Views and Political Pursuits

McCoan embarked on his journey in writing and disseminating information at the age of twenty-four. This formative period, which followed the completion of his law education at the Middle Temple in London, marked the emergence of his first publication and may have served as the initial step towards his aspirations in journalism and publishing.<sup>9</sup>

Published in 1853, *Protestant Endurance Under Popish Cruelty: A Narrative of the Reformation in Spain* is a non-fiction work that chronicles the trials and persecutions endured by Protestants during the Counter-Reformation in Spain. It illuminates the era's religious conflicts, constraints on religious freedom, and the Roman Catholic Church's dominance, underscoring the atrocities committed by the Spanish Inquisition. The book aims to offer a critical perspective of European history, emphasizing the violation of civil and religious liberties and its impact on the country's spiritual and political dynamics.<sup>10</sup>

Raised in Northern Ireland, a region characterized by pronounced religious and political divisions, particularly between Protestantism and Catholicism, McCoan likely developed an interest in and understanding these religious communities' tribulations. His particular focus on the experiences of Protestants during the Reformation era reflects this curiosity. This perspective, forged from his personal connections and experiences, possibly played a crucial role in shaping the narrative of his book. His Northern Irish context may have influenced his decision to explore the Reformation and scrutinize the manifold challenges faced by Spain's Protestants during this tumultuous historical period.

McCoan's first book stands as a testament to his dedication to illuminating the trials endured by religious communities. It offers insights into the early development of his impassioned character, providing a glimpse into his earnest disposition and steadfast commitment to investigating and articulating the struggles faced by varied groups. The text significantly reflects his early intellectual pursuits and commitment to shedding light on

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9 Ibid., 101-103.

10 J. C. McCoan, *Protestant Endurance Under Popish Cruelty: A Narrative of the Reformation in Spain* (London: Binns and Goodwin, 1853).

under-explored facets of historical and socio-religious narratives. Upon arriving in Constantinople, his intense temperament enabled him to realize his desire of launching a newspaper. This quest occasionally led to confrontations with the Ottoman administration. McCoan's twenty-three-year tenure in the Ottoman capital was marked by passion and a tireless pursuit of his ambitions. Despite waning support from the British embassy, McCoan tenaciously persevered with his publishing endeavors. However, his passionate character likely played a role in his eventual departure from the newspaper. Faced with swift and numerous repercussions, he felt compelled to sell his publication.<sup>11</sup> By 1863, the embassy had withdrawn its advertising support, and the pressure from his ongoing dispute with Judge Edmund Hornby of the Supreme Consular Court only intensified.<sup>12</sup> During this period, Sir Henry Bulwer, the British ambassador, recommended McCoan as a suitable candidate for a position in the international legal council that Ismail Pasha, the Khedive (Viceroy) of Egypt, intended to establish. Having accepted the Khedive's proposal, McCoan began preparing and resigned from his court role, anticipating his new position. However, the Khedive postponed the council's launch and withdrew his initial offer. This unexpected turn left McCoan with incomplete plans and unforeseen preparation costs. Disappointed by these developments, he grew increasingly critical of the Khedive and eventually committed all his efforts to journalism.<sup>13</sup> A decade later, circumstances led him to discontinue his affiliation with his newspaper and leave the country, ultimately returning to London in 1872.<sup>14</sup>

As McCoan's critiques of the Khedive gained attention in his newspaper, it stirred unrest in Cairo. Through the intervention of the Sublime Porte, Ismail Pasha sought to issue a warning to the newspaper. Eventually, he presented McCoan with an offer, suggesting a monetary incentive for

11 Burhan Çağlar, "Müzmin Muhalif Bir Pera Gazetesi: The Constantinople Messenger," *Kebikeç* 54-55 (2023): 93–95–125; and "Alafranga Neşriyat: Osmanlı Basımında Levanten Gazeteler ve Süreli Yayınlar," in *İmparatorluğun Son Asrında Osmanlılar: Kurumlar, İnsanlar, Kaynaklar*, ed. Fatih Bozkurt and Burhan Çağlar (İstanbul: Kronik Kitap, 2021), 124–125.

12 Berchtold, *Recht und Gerechtigkeit in der Konsulargerichtsbarkeit*, 197–198.

13 Jacques Tagher, "John Carlile Mc Coan: Propriétaire du 'Levant Herald' et Correspondant du Khédive Ismaïl à Londres," *La Revue du Caire* 74 (1945): 326–332.

14 Şiviloğlu, "Levant Herald Gazetesi," 220–221.

ceasing negative publications, supporting his policies, and endorsing his initiatives. Based on the agreement reached on July 15, 1871, McCoan would receive an annual payment of 20,000 Francs for five years, and the newspaper would refrain from publishing defamatory content against the Khedive. However, McCoan's unexpected shift towards endorsing the Khedive and publishing critical articles about Mustafa Fazıl Pasha, the Khedive's brother with whom he had continuous disagreements, captured significant attention. The newspaper's sudden and unambiguous pro-Khedive position gave rise to fresh concerns in Cairo.<sup>15</sup>

Rumors suggest that McCoan's aversion to Fazıl stemmed from the latter's tenure as the Minister of Justice. McCoan approached him with an offer to represent the Ottoman government as an international lawyer. However, he declined, believing that someone frequently involved in debates and controversies might not be suitable for a legal position of such magnitude. As tensions grew from his critiques of Mustafa Fazıl and his disputes with the Grand Vizier, *The Levant Herald* received a quarter-year suspension. McCoan subsequently transferred ownership of the newspaper and returned to London. While in the British capital, he enjoyed the Khedive's financial patronage in return for producing publications that endorsed him and advocated for Cairo's official policies.<sup>16</sup>

### 1) Consular Jurisdiction in Turkey and Egypt

Once back in Britain, McCoan's career journey took a different path, marked by notable shifts and fresh pursuits. He ventured into the realm of British domestic law, assuming the role of a magistrate. Concurrently, he authored his second book, *Consular Jurisdiction in Turkey and Egypt*, exploring the complex interplay of Anglo-Saxon law within international contexts.<sup>17</sup> He commended the legal transformations in Egypt and underscored Ismail's measures in this field.

By the time he published his book, McCoan had already accumulated years of experience in journalism and publishing. His work in the consular

15 Tagher, "John Carlile Mc Coan," 326–332.

16 Tagher, "John Carlile Mc Coan," 326–332.

17 "Death of Mr. James Carlile M'Coan," *The Levant Herald and Eastern Express*, 20 January 1904, 1.

court in Constantinople further honed his understanding of international law. Living in the Ottoman Empire, traveling to Egypt, and witnessing firsthand the Crimean War and the Russian threat in the region provided insights he used in his writings. The books he published during this period became the cornerstone of his forthcoming direction in politics. Shaped by the political events and demands of the era, these works showcased McCoan's knowledge and proficiency and began to elevate him to the status of an authoritative figure in these areas. His written works echoed the trajectory of British foreign policy since the Crimean War, and he was a staunch advocate for the continued application of similar principles in contemporary circumstances.

*Consular Jurisdiction in Turkey and Egypt*, published in London in 1873, stands as a noteworthy contribution by McCoan.<sup>18</sup> His engagement in the Consular Court in Constantinople not only enabled him to apply his legal expertise but also provided firsthand exposure to the far-reaching implications of consular jurisdiction in shaping international affairs. This experience deepened his comprehension of the Capitulations and their socio-political ramifications.<sup>19</sup>

The book analyzes consular jurisdiction in the Ottoman Empire and Egypt, emphasizing its significant impact on Britain and the broader spheres of commerce and politics. The consular system in these regions, bestowing substantial authority upon Consuls, deviates from those in Europe and America. However, it shares similarities with the systems in place in China and Japan. The book notes that the consular authority in the Ottoman Empire existed for over two centuries and was initially a benevolent gesture by the Ottoman Sultans to foster peaceful international relations. The privileges granted, such as free trade throughout the Empire, protection from capricious taxation, inviolability of homes, and the resolution of civil disputes among foreigners by their respective Consuls, were intended to facilitate smoother international interactions.

However, McCoan critically appraises this system, highlighting its potential drawbacks and unintended consequences. In his assessment, these

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18 James Carlile McCoan, *Consular Jurisdiction in Turkey and Egypt* (London: William Ridgway, 1873).

19 Çağlar, *Anglophone Press in Constantinople*, 101–103.

consular privileges have inadvertently encroached upon the Ottoman authority, weakening their sovereignty and ability to self-govern. He expresses particular concern over the diminishing prestige of the British Consular Court, which he perceives as a symptom of the inherent problematic nature in this consular jurisdiction.

The situation in Egypt, as depicted by McCoan, is even more tangled. The extensive reach of consular privileges, which subjects the Egyptian government itself to consular jurisdiction, represents a considerable challenge. His critique of the role of consular jurisdiction in criminal proceedings reflects his commitment to judicial fairness and his awareness of the obstacles encountered by local authorities. He articulates his disappointment with the slow pace of reform, emphasizing the urgent need to establish a reliable justice system. Despite the slow progress and resistance to the reform process, McCoan remains steadfast in endorsing a fair and robust judiciary. He advocates for proposed reforms that, while preserving the Capitulations, would ensure foreign authority and provide better safeguards against misuse for both locals and foreigners.

In the book, McCoan aptly employs the issue of Suez Canal dues, raised by Mr. Baillie Cochrane in the House of Commons, as an illustration of the current system's shortcomings. He contends that the proposed judicial reforms would alleviate such problems and yield benefits for all parties, showcasing his vigorous advocacy for judicious diplomacy serving diverse interests. His focus on these issues also further indicates his inclination toward parliamentary debates, likely sharpened in anticipation of his imminent political career.

## 2) Egypt: As It Is

The inauguration of the Suez Canal marked a significant turning point in Britain's regional interests and political orientation. Responding to this transformative development, McCoan redirected his focus towards Egypt, aiming to unpack the profound impact of the canal's opening. Owing to the financial backing he received from the Khedive, he consistently underscored Ismail's contributions, giving him notable mention throughout the work.

In the introduction of his 1877 book *Egypt as It Is*, McCoan highlighted the lack of contemporary English studies on Egypt. This void became a driving force behind his dedicated exploration and documentation of Egypt's multifaceted aspects.<sup>20</sup> He emphasized that, despite numerous authors thoroughly exploring the country's antiquities, the current body of literature offered insufficient insights into recent developments, including crucial administrative and judicial reforms. McCoan articulated that his main objective in writing this volume was to fill this intellectual void and provide readers with the most current perspectives on the topic. While recognizing the value of diverse academic research, he further emphasized the importance of his wide-ranging firsthand knowledge from an extended stay in the Eastern Mediterranean and recent trips to Egypt. These personal observations, bolstered by reliable Egyptian governmental and private sources, provided a credible foundation for the content of his book.

The book unfolds as a carefully curated series of chapters, each designed to explore a distinct aspect of the topic. The first chapter plunges readers into an exploration of Egypt's geography, with a particular emphasis on the Nile River, laying a solid groundwork for understanding the region. The narrative then shifts to demography in the next chapter, illuminating the nuanced dynamics of Egypt's population. Readers are subsequently drawn into the rich tableau of cities and towns, each painted in vivid detail to showcase the country's urban infrastructure. In the fourth chapter, the multilayered relationship between Egypt and the Sublime Porte is illuminated, clarifying their intertwined dynamics and multifaceted interactions.

The book's subsequent chapters offer a broad and enlightening journey through Egypt, each dedicated to a distinct topic, offering wide-ranging perspectives into the country's diverse aspects. These include an in-depth analysis of the climate, agricultural practices, religious structures, trade and commerce, manufacturing and industries, financial organization, public instruction and works, administration, the Suez Canal, and even the historical context of slavery. A standout feature of the book is its meticulous presentation of information. Through detailed maps,

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20 James Carlile McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin 1877); J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1877); J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (New York: John B. Alden, 1889).

population statistics, exhaustive demographic tables, and fiscal and trade data, the book equips readers with a rich repository of knowledge. Beyond the mere presentation of data, the book also offers expansive analyses of raw materials, production-consumption patterns, and foreign trade volumes. This exploration helps readers decipher the sophisticated economic mechanisms of Egypt, enhancing their appreciation of its historical and contemporary development.

Moreover, the book delves into the social structure, administrative organization, and diverse religious and ethnic groups in Egypt. It presents detailed classifications that explore the distinct roles played by different segments of society. For instance, it probes into the essential role of the Fellah people in agriculture, highlighting their contributions to the country's farming industry. The author also emphasized the bureaucratic prowess of the Coptic community, noting their expertise in account-keeping and their involvement in subordinate administrative positions within government offices and estates owned by affluent Arab and Turkish proprietors. Furthermore, he scrutinized the dominance of Turks in property management, where they held prominent positions as landlords and officials. It delves into the practices of the Jewish people, highlighting their roles as local financiers, money-changers, auxiliary clerks in government and merchant offices, as well as skilled artisans in various trades. Besides this, the book acknowledges the contributions of black individuals in domestic services, recognizing their indispensable role in households. The book lastly details the substantial engagement of Levantines in international commerce and the banking industry, noting their roles as merchants, shopkeepers, and currency exchange brokers. The exploration of these varied groups and their respective roles delivers a detailed perspective on Egypt's vibrant and multidimensional socio-economic fabric during the time under review.

In addition, the book reveals the dynamics of Muslim and non-Muslim communities, uncovering their unique identities, traditions, and remarkable contributions. It investigates the various aspects of these communities, unraveling the interplay between religious, cultural, and social factors that influence their existence in Egypt. By examining their historical pathways, religious practices, and societal roles, the book enables readers to

appreciate the diverse spectrum of Egypt's religious landscape. Special attention is given to the myriad Christian communities, with an exhaustive exploration of the distinctive features of their churches. The subtleties of their traditions, hierarchical structures, and active engagement in various social spheres are probed, illuminating these Christian communities' crucial role in sculpting the country's cultural and religious patterns.

The author also describes the historical trajectory of Egypt's integration under Ottoman rule. The narrative acknowledges the 1517 Ottoman conquest as a significant milestone, albeit falling short of establishing an unassailable dominion. The author clarifies that despite the passage of time, the Ottomans faced formidable challenges in attaining complete administrative sovereignty over Egypt. As the 18<sup>th</sup> century dawned, their grip on power began to wane, creating an opening for resilient local authorities that had survived since the Mamluk era. This examination showcases a sophisticated awareness of Egypt's political and administrative interactions and fluctuating governance paradigms during that period. McCoan underscores Mehmed Ali Pasha's (referred to here as Mehemet) ambition to oust the Ottomans from Egypt and his vision of the country under his rule. This ambition drove Mehmed Ali into various struggles to achieve his objective. Ultimately, he attained *de facto* independence for Egypt as a vassal of the Ottoman Empire and founded his own dynasty in the country. He relentlessly pursued reforms to advance the material and social development of the nation. The author draws a comparison between Mehmed Ali and Peter the Great, emphasizing Mehmed Ali's central role in Egypt's progress.

McCoan posits that the foundations of modern state order in Egypt were laid during Mehmed Ali's reign and reached a peak under Ismail Pasha. Throughout the book, he consistently commends Ismail as the Khedive, emphasizing his fundamental contributions in improving governmental efficiency, bolstering the bureaucratic apparatus, and modernizing administrative structures. The author asserts that Ismail's comprehensive initiatives delivered transformative results, including mitigating the effects of corruption and remedying disparities in the judicial system resulting from Capitulations. Further, Ismail's unwavering commitment to progress fostered advancements in agriculture, industry, and public works, creating a

prosperous environment and facilitating infrastructure development. However, McCoan also highlights the significant financial cost of these transformative endeavors. He notes that during Ismail's reign, Egypt accrued an unprecedented level of foreign debt, demonstrating the immense financial burden that these ambitious reforms and development projects imposed. Yet, he implies, the loans were not misused but were, in fact, judiciously funneled into essential projects that fueled Egypt's revival.<sup>21</sup>

The author states that in the prevailing circumstances, local administrators hold roles in both civil and military authorities. This situation precipitates a diminished use of the Turkish language, leading to an ascendancy of Arabic as the primary language within the state apparatus. Drawing on this observation, he offers a prediction, suggesting that within approximately half a century, the sway of the Ottoman Empire over Egypt will extinguish, marking the end of their rule over the region.

McCoan, draws a considered comparison between Egypt's administration and the Ottoman rule, characterizing the former as more open to development and inclined towards reforms. He argues that the Sublime Porte lacks initiative towards modernization, with limited success in implementing transformative changes. In contrast, he commends Cairo for its remarkable capacity to blend the old and the new. This quality is exemplified by its significant advancements in sectors such as education, agriculture, industry, public services, and the judiciary, all achieved through substantial reforms.

Throughout the book, McCoan commends Egypt's resurgence, frequently emphasizing and praising Ismail's actions and administration. The introductory chapters vividly portray the emergence of "New Egypt," a unique fusion of modern elements that coexist harmoniously with the venerable remnants of the past. McCoan underscores the introduction of railways, telegraphs, sugar factories, and cotton gins, all of which exist alongside the timeless grandeur of pyramids, rock tombs, temples, and ancient hieroglyphs that trace back to pre-Abrahamic times. In his view, this distinctive interweaving of Egypt's ancient heritage with its contemporary

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21 "Reviewed Work: Egypt as It Is by J. C. McCoan. New York: Henry Holt & Co. 1877. Pp. xv, 417," *The North American Review* 125/259 (1877): 584-585.

progress sets the country apart, creating a captivating landscape that appeals to both capitalists and politicians and offers numerous opportunities for tangible involvement in the African continent.

McCoan's work serves as an exhaustive guide to comprehending Egypt during a transformative phase in its modern history. Drawing from his personal knowledge and firsthand experiences, the author presents a detailed and nuanced portrayal of the country's geography, demography, administrative structure, and economic framework. The book particularly depicts Egypt's socio-economic terrain and emerging political dynamics during the late 19th century. Consequently, it may have provided insights that influenced British foreign policy and served as an enlightening resource for policymakers and officials. This was especially significant at a time when Britain's engagement in the region was intensifying.

Upon its release, the book was prominently featured in various media outlets. The British literary magazine, *The Athenæum*, showcased the work in a full-page advertisement, using the book's subtitles as promotional headlines.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile, an American literature magazine, *Appletons' Journal*, praised it, saying, "His work is by far the best interpretation of modern Egypt that has been presented in English so far."<sup>23</sup>

Considering McCoan's background and the timing of his book's publication while preparing to enter politics, it suggests that his work likely served purposes extending beyond mere documentation or historical analysis. This endeavor was not solely academic; it possibly had political and strategic intentions, including the defense of Ismail and his policies. The extensive volume on the Near East might have been an attempt to establish himself as an authoritative figure for the region, thereby enhancing his credibility and influence in political circles, particularly on issues related to Egypt and the Ottoman Empire.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, McCoan's Irish origins and his advocacy for Irish self-determination could have induced a sense of kinship with Egypt, given its similar striving for autonomy under Ottoman

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22 "Egypt as It Is," *The Athenæum*, 14 July 1877, 64.

23 "Books of the Day," *Appletons' Journal: A Monthly Miscellany of Popular Literature*, November 1877, 477–478.

24 David Murphy, "McCoan, James Carlile," in *Dictionary of Irish Biography* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

dominance. This sentiment, combined with the funding he received from Ismail, could have introduced biases that could influence the perspective and implications of his work.

The book enjoyed success and was reprinted several times in both London and New York. However, the Anglo-French intervention in Egyptian affairs clearly discredited the work. Furthermore, during that period, McCoan's role became less crucial. He was soon informed that his allocation would be suspended due to economic constraints, and his services would terminate starting January 1, 1879. On the 31st of that month, he wrote, "Please assure His Highness that, in the future as in the past, he can rely on my best services."<sup>25</sup>

### 3) Our New Protectorate: Turkey in Asia

In the aftermath of the 1877-78 Ottoman-Russian War, the geopolitical landscape of the Near East underwent a profound transformation with the signing of the Treaty of San Stefano and, later, the Treaty of Berlin. These momentous agreements redefined the balance of power and solidified Britain's prominent role in the region.<sup>26</sup> Seizing the opportunity presented by this shifting environment, McCoan leveraged his extensive research, personal encounters, and in-depth studies to publish his work, *Our New Protectorate: Turkey in Asia*, in 1879. This publication brings into focus the dynamic developments of the region, suggesting perspectives and analysis.<sup>27</sup> The book, comprising two volumes, is a testament to McCoan's comprehensive understanding of the ever-changing political landscape in the Near East.<sup>28</sup> Its conception aligned with his deep engagement in politi-

25 Tagher, "John Carlile Mc Coan," 326–332.

26 Feroze A. K. Yasamee, "European Equilibrium or Asiatic Balance of Power?: The Ottoman Search for Security in the Aftermath of the Congress of Berlin," in *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 211), 56–59.

27 J. C. McCoan, *Our New Protectorate: Turkey in Asia, Its Geography, Races, Resources, and Government*, 2 vols. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1879).

28 The fact that McCoan's work was translated into Russian underscores its broad influence beyond the English-speaking world. His insights on the geographical, ethnographic, and economic landscapes of Minor Asia seemed to resonate not only with British readers, but also with a Russian audience that had its own imperial interests in the region during that period. The translation was undertaken by Mikhail Katkov, a prominent journalist known for his nationalist leanings. In his introductory remarks

cal affairs as he prepared himself for an imminent entry into active politics as a Member of Parliament in the Home Rule Party in 1880.<sup>29</sup>

McCoan's comprehensive account of the Ottoman lands in Asia, also known as Asiatic Turkey, draws from diverse sources and his own firsthand experiences. The book delves into the geographical, socio-cultural, and economic realities of the region, providing readers with a deep understanding of the Ottoman Empire's presence in Asia. It offers insights into the complexities of governing a diverse and multi-ethnic population. The timing of the book's publication aligns with a significant period of policy reassessment by the British government in the region.<sup>30</sup> McCoan's work emerges as a timely resource, presenting a range of perspectives and knowledge that contribute to ongoing policy discussions. It serves as a valuable reference for policymakers, academics, and individuals seeking a deeper understanding of the history and politics of the Ottoman Empire.

McCoan commences the book by acknowledging the profound impact of the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 on the political landscape of the Near East. In the introduction, the author emphasizes the significance of the Treaty of Berlin, highlighting its transformative nature compared to the Vienna and Paris Treaties of 1856. Building upon the foundation laid by the Treaty of Balta Limanı in 1838, which had already fostered a beneficial relationship between Britain and Western Asia, the new treaty further solidified this bond. Importantly, it also endowed upon Britain additional responsibilities in the region, establishing significant links between British interests in India, Minor Asia, and the Levant. Motivated by these developments, McCoan wrote this book with a dual purpose: to familiarize the general readership with the intricate complexities of a

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to the translated work, Katkov suggests that McCoan might have reassessed his viewpoint following the unsuccessful implementation of the convention and delivers pointed criticisms of the British for their exploitative actions. J. C. McCoan, *Nash Novyi Protektorat: Opisanie Geograficheskikh, Etnograficheskikh I Ekonomicheskikh Svoistv Turetskoi Azii* [Our New Protectorate: Description of the Geographical, Ethnographic, and Economic Properties of Turkish Asia]. Trans. M. Katkov, (Moscow: Universitetskoi Tipografii, 1884), 1–5.

29 G. Norgate and K. D. Reynolds, "McCoan, James Carlile (1829-1094)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* 35, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 135.

30 Koutsopanagou, "Language Matters," 1–2.

region now under British influence and to provide a comprehensive work tailored specifically for British readers.<sup>31</sup>

In the first chapter, the author argues that while the Ottomans had a significant presence in Europe for several centuries, their primary homeland and the center of their empire had always been in Asia. In Europe, the population was diverse, with only a small fraction consisting of Ottoman Turks. Conversely, in regions like Anatolia, the Taurus Mountains, Syria, and the plains of Iraq, the Turkish population maintained a solid religious and ethnical identity, which historically posed a threat to Europe. The author highlights that the decline of the Ottoman Empire in Europe resulted in an underestimation of the resources and potential in Asia. Moreover, it is mentioned that the eastern provinces suffered from administrative neglect and abuse. However, due to the predominance of the Turkish population in these regions, the severity of misrule was relatively less pronounced compared to Europe.

According to McCoan, the precise extent of the Ottoman Empire's sovereignty in Asia was not known with absolute certainty, but estimates suggested it covered approximately 570,000 square miles. This expansive region comprised diverse geographical features, including plateaus, mountain ranges, and plains. The author emphasizes that despite centuries of misrule that had adversely affected once thriving and fertile regions, transforming them into deserts and swamps, vast stretches of land with magnificent climates, natural beauty, and abundant vegetation still remained. These areas held immense potential, but their reclamation and rejuvenation required enlightened governance.

McCoan methodically examines each of these regions, categorizing them into distinct sections. His investigation encompasses a wide range of aspects, including boundaries, geographical features, and climate characteristics. He delves into agricultural and industrial production, providing detailed insights and information. Additionally, the author offers an analysis of the population makeup in these areas, describing their diverse composition and demographics. Lastly, McCoan undertakes a thorough exploration of the administrative structure and dynamics between the state and the local population. Through his research and observations, McCoan's

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31 McCoan, *Our New Protectorate* 1, 1–7.

work supplies readers with a comprehensive understanding of the socio-political dynamics in the region.

The author presents a portrayal of the diverse ethnic and religious groups that inhabited the Ottoman lands in Asia during the given period. The depiction encompasses prominent communities such as Arabs, Circassians, Turcomans (Yörüks), Jews, as well as smaller groups like Tartars and Roma. McCoan notes the religious divide within Ottoman society, identifying it as a significant source of dissatisfaction that paved the way for the spread of nationalist ideologies. The author recognizes the predominance of two major groups within the Muslim population, Sunni and Shia, with Sunnis comprising the majority within the Empire. Additionally, he highlights the vibrant diversity of Christianity, encompassing various branches and sects, most notably, the influential Greek Orthodox and Armenian Gregorian churches, alongside ancient Christian communities. Furthermore, the author duly acknowledges the presence of Roman Catholicism and elaborates on the propagation of Protestantism through the dedicated efforts of missionaries.

McCoan delivers a concise historical account of the regions and the establishment of Ottoman sovereignty, illuminating the administrative structure of the past. Moreover, he delves into the contemporary administrative mechanism and organization of the Empire's Asian territories while also highlighting notable exceptions such as the Archipelago and the Hejaz. Overseeing this administrative system is the central government, known as the Sublime Porte, located in Constantinople. However, the administration faces challenges, including corruption, inefficiency, and the complexities associated with governing a diverse and multi-ethnic population. Nonetheless, the author notes that the administration maintains a certain degree of stability and order throughout the region despite these obstacles. The author also highlights that the Ottoman lands in Asia possess a vibrant commercial landscape, encompassing both domestic and international trade. Noteworthy regional exports include cereals, fruits, cotton, wool, silk, opium, tobacco, and minerals. However, the development of trade and commerce encounters obstacles such as insufficient infrastructure and political instability. Nevertheless, these lands' strategic geographical position and abundant resources endow them with significant trade prospects.

In the book's final chapters, McCoan explores the geography of the Ottoman Empire and its impact on effective governance. He brings attention to weaknesses in local administration and the judicial system, highlighting the widespread issue of corruption and its detrimental effects on overall efficiency. The author advocates for a shift towards merit-based appointments of government officials, underscoring the negative consequences of favoritism and nepotism. Additionally, he addresses injustices in the tax collection system and the concerning prevalence of bribery and financial misconduct. While the judicial system may seem fair in theory, McCoan reveals its struggles with corruption and bribery.

The author also addresses unlawful activities, widespread bribery, and favoritism within the gendarmerie, identifying them as disruptive forces within the administration. Throughout these discussions, McCoan emphasizes the challenges that permeate various levels of the Ottoman state apparatus, leading to significant and far-reaching negative consequences. Despite these obstacles, the author stresses the importance of comprehensive reforms within the empire. Optimistically, he highlights the potential for transformative change and progress through these reforms. He raises the question of whether the Ottoman government has the determination and capacity to implement the mentioned reforms or if external pressure is necessary. It is argued that the government exhibits a deficiency in both the will and the capability to undertake the essential reforms for the Empire. However, it is suggested that positive changes can be achieved with adequate pressure. If the demands of civilization and British interests call for additional reforms, it may be imperative for Britain to assume responsibility. Neglecting to apply the required pressure or embark on reform efforts would result in a future marked by corruption, impoverishment, and the eventual decline of the empire.

Overall, the author aims to shed light on the vast potential and elements for regeneration that exist in the region. While acknowledging the challenges brought about by centuries of misrule, he highlights the need for enlightened governance to unlock the region's prosperity and vitality.

#### 4) Egypt Under Ismail: A Romance of History

McCoan began writing his book, *Egypt Under Ismail: A Romance of History*, following a significant phase in his life that marked his departure from active politics. Notably, his previous literary pursuits were undertaken before his quest for a parliamentary seat, a notable milestone in his career. However, his political journey hit a roadblock when he was expelled from his party in 1881 for supporting a land bill proposed by Gladstone. Despite making subsequent attempts to re-enter politics in later elections, he was unable to secure a victory.<sup>32</sup>

The year 1882 marked a seismic shift in Egypt's fate as it fell under British occupation, becoming a "veiled protectorate" until the outbreak of the First World War. This occupation, driven by Britain's financial interests, left a profound imprint on the region's geopolitical landscape. In this context, McCoan dedicated his book to the reign of Ismail, portraying him as a despotic, extravagant, and exploitative ruler, offering a distinctly different perspective from his previous work. In this transitional phase, with the Khedive's authority in Cairo diminished, McCoan emerged as the voice championing the legitimacy of the new administration over its predecessor. Through his portrayal, McCoan echoed the critical state of Egypt's financial crisis, emphasizing the urgent need for intervention and shedding light on the shadowy aspects of Ismail's governance.<sup>33</sup>

Although the work employed rhetoric in line with liberal sentiments, it remained wedded to the traditional narrative of Near Eastern foreign policy. However, it failed to capture the anticipated attention from liberal politicians, possibly due to his differing interpretations or conflicting priorities. This situation was further exacerbated by McCoan's consecutive electoral defeats, which may have diminished his influence within liberal political circles. Despite these setbacks, the book likely continued to enjoy prominence due to the escalating political interest in the region and the burgeoning public curiosity surrounding Near Eastern affairs. Multiple editions until 1892 indicate the sustained interest and relevance of the work within the broader discourse on the Near East.

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32 Norgate and Reynolds, "McCoan, James Carlile," 135.

33 James Carlile McCoan, *Egypt Under Ismail: A Romance of History* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1889).

In the prologue of his book, the author aspires to address a notable gap in the current body of literature by presenting a thorough and interconnected account of Egypt under the rule of Ismail. Despite its significance rivaling that of Mehmed Ali, the architect of modern Egypt, this era has yet to be thoroughly examined in historical discourse. Drawing on credible sources, including official documents and firsthand accounts, McCoan weaves a narrative that, while grounded in historical accuracy, assumes the captivating allure of an extraordinary tale, offering readers a unique and compelling perspective on the recent past of Egyptian politics.

At the beginning of the book, McCoan provides an overview of the dynasty's founder, Mehmed Ali, highlighting his rule in Egypt and the significant events of his era. He outlines the reforms implemented under Mehmed Ali's administration and explores the reigns of his successors. McCoan observes that while Abbas I lacked the same leadership qualities as his predecessor, his administration began deviating from the privileges the Porte granted. By contrast, Said Pasha made notable strides in trade and commerce, including the abolition of state monopolies and the construction of the Suez Canal. However, Said's tenure was characterized by a deteriorating financial situation, attributable to his extravagant lifestyle and costly obligations to the French. The book follows a chronological arrangement, starting with Ismail's accession to the governorship of Egypt in 1863, and details the significant events throughout his reign over the following ten chapters. The narrative concludes with Ismail's removal from office and subsequent exile in 1879.

In his book, McCoan comprehensively examines the political, economic, and social transformations that unfolded during Ismail's rule in Egypt. He critically analyzes Ismail's financial mismanagement, oppressive taxation, and lavish spending, illustrating these issues through specific examples such as the accumulation of national debt and the deteriorating living conditions of the Egyptian populace. Additionally, the author delves into the incursion of foreign powers, particularly Britain and France, into Egyptian affairs. He scrutinizes the military interventions enacted by these powers and explores their profound and far-reaching impacts on the region. Towards the conclusion of the book, McCoan engages in a discussion about Egypt's future, contemplating potential scenarios that could shape

the country's destiny. He speculates on the likelihood of British control, suggesting that Britain might exert significant influence or even establish direct authority over Egypt. Moreover, he raises the possibility of the partition of the Ottoman Empire, highlighting the potentially substantial impact such an event could have on Egypt's trajectory.

Overall, McCoan illuminates the political landscape of the era, underscoring the intricate web of political intrigue and foreign influence that shaped Egypt's history during Ismail's reign. He offers an insight into the historical context, presenting a critical depiction of Ismail's rule and its adverse impact on the Egyptian populace. The author places substantial emphasis on fiscal matters, elucidating how, despite various investments, the country offers an insight into the historical context, progressively falling into a deepening debt crisis. He highlights that the reform efforts, intended to bring about positive change, paradoxically contributed to accruing additional debt. For instance, implementing certain projects or initiatives has incurred significant costs without yielding substantial returns. Furthermore, the pronounced disparity between income and expenditure in the budget had wide-ranging socio-economic implications. This imbalance affected social welfare, infrastructure development, and economic stability, amplifying the country's challenges.

In his book, McCoan presents well-grounded arguments, endowing readers with a wealth of knowledge underpinned by documented sources. His primary thesis posits that modern Egypt has inherited the burdens of financial and political mismanagement from Ismail's reign. He critiques Ismail's governance, noting that his reforms leaned heavily towards accumulating debt rather than making meaningful investments. McCoan implies that Ismail's attention was skewed towards borrowing money, not efficiently directing it towards productive pursuits. McCoan thus underscores the necessity of intervention against Ismail, attributing it to Europe's collective wisdom. He emphasizes the importance of the newly established administration and, through analysis, argues for the need for British intervention during the era of the British Liberal Government to protect their valuable investments in Egypt. It's worth noting that McCoan's prior support for Gladstone's Liberal Government through the Home Rule League led to a certain level of estrangement. Despite obstacles in securing a parliamentary

seat in later elections, he remained steadfast in his ambition to regain domestic political prominence. His book served as a powerful instrument supporting his aspirations in this arena. Despite shifting his perspective on Egypt and Ismail in this book, McCoan allowed his earlier work, *Egypt as it is*, to be reprinted multiple times in New York until 1902, prefaced by a brief publisher's note on recent developments.<sup>34</sup>

### The Literary Contributions and Political Convictions

Edgar Whitaker embarked on a path divergent from that of his predecessor, McCoan. Driven by a yearning to explore the East, he abandoned his education in law and departed for India between 1849 and 1852. The passing of his father, a judge in London, served as a pivotal moment, prompting Whitaker to return to the familiar grounds of Britain. Simultaneously, his influential uncle played a crucial role in establishing the University of Toronto in Ontario. Yet, despite the allure of exploring new territories, Whitaker may have perceived Canada as an extension of London and chose to refocus his attention towards the East.<sup>35</sup>

The escalating Crimean War captured the attention of the British public and raised interest in the Ottoman Empire. Reports from regional war correspondents, including McCoan, might have further fueled Whitaker's passion. The connections he cultivated in India laid the groundwork for a new chapter in the finance sector as he set sail for the bustling Levantine city of Smyrna in 1857. Immersing himself in Levantine culture, Whitaker dedicated his efforts to learning the details of his craft. During this period, he contributed to the emergence of the banking industry within the Ottoman territories. Drawing from his experiences and observations, he authored his first publication, *La Banque Est Un Bienfait*, marking the beginning of his literary contributions. Highlighting the bank's potential to serve diverse needs, he invited the community to consider its services.<sup>36</sup> However, this stay was not to

34 James Carlile McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1882), VII-VIII; J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (New York: John B. Alden, 1889); J. C. McCoan, *Egypt as It Is* (New York: Peter Fenelon Coiller, 1889 and 1902).

35 Burhan Çağlar, "A Maverick Pressman: The Personal and Professional Life of Edgar Whitaker (1831-1903)," *Kadim* 6 (2023): 149-174.

36 "Banque Ottomane," *Journal de Constantinople* (19 January 1856), 2.

be his final destination. Whitaker's return to London was simply a brief interlude on his journey. During this transitional period, he may have resumed his education and leveraged his family connections to carve out a position within the government. Ultimately, he secured a position as a vice-consul in Gallipoli, which would significantly shape his future.<sup>37</sup> Whitaker's early intellectual pursuits revolved around his musical compositions. However, his venture into writing began when he acquired *The Levant Herald* from McCoan in 1872. As a writer, he actively contributed to the publication, authoring original works and translating books from various languages. A notable aspect of his writings, in line with the mission of *The Levant Herald*, was his unwavering advocacy for the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The origins of this political stance, whether influenced by McCoan or developed through interactions with the Ottoman administration, remain a mystery.

Despite frequently finding himself in disagreement with the Sublime Porte over Ottoman internal politics, Whitaker successfully managed to establish financial relationships with Ottoman entities and secure backing through his newspaper and publications.<sup>38</sup> He regarded the Ottoman Empire as a viable partner for Britain and asserted that supporting the Ottomans would ensure stability and promote British interests in the region. Contrary to the liberal political trends gaining popularity in Britain, Whitaker stood firm in his belief of preserving the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. He considered maintaining the unity of the Empire a vital component in protecting British interests in the eastern Mediterranean. He supported the idea of the Empire serving as a bulwark against other powers' aspirations to expand their spheres of influence. Whitaker feared any weakening of the Empire would allow Russia to extend its reach into the region. As a result, he was often labeled a Russophobe, due to his staunch opposition to Russian expansionism, a sentiment mirrored in his advocacy for an anti-Russian policy in London.<sup>39</sup> He insisted that Britain should adopt a more aggressive stance towards Russia to protect its regional interests and prevent the spread of Russian influence. It appears that the Ottoman authorities may

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37 Çağlar, "A Maverick Pressman," 153-154.

38 Ibid., 163-165.

39 Roderic H. Davison, "The Question of the Documents Called 'Les Responsibilités,'" *XI. Türk Tarih Kongresi: 5-9 Eylül 1990* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1990), 4/1552.

have endorsed his viewpoint on the matter and presumably provided monetary backing for his publications and translations.

Whitaker's pro-Ottoman stance during the Bulgarian uprising of 1876 and the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877 underscored his conviction in preserving the territorial integrity of the Empire. He viewed the Ottoman Empire as an essential contributor to regional stability and recognized that any diminution of its strength could escalate conflict and turmoil, potentially putting British interests in the eastern Mediterranean at risk.<sup>40</sup> Whitaker's perspective clashed with those of many British politicians and intellectuals who were proponents of liberalism and self-determination. They argued that the Ottoman Empire, perceived as outdated and oppressive, hindered the region's progress. In stark contrast, Whitaker employed his various works to support the Tanzimat reform movement and advocate for expanding non-Muslim rights within the Empire. He maintained that these reforms were essential for the modernization and viability of the Ottoman Empire, as they would promote greater equality and justice for all its subjects, regardless of religion or ethnicity. Whitaker consistently emphasized the imperative for the Ottoman Empire to modernize its institutions and adapt to the evolving political realities of the time.

In late 1884, when his newspaper was temporarily suspended, Whitaker traveled to London for Christmas and gave an interview to *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*. During the discussion, he criticized the British government's foreign policy and expressed concerns over the growing influence of European powers in Ottoman territories. He singled out the rising power of Russia and the ascending influence of Germany. Whitaker contended that the Germans saw themselves as gaining control over the region, while Russia employed deceitful and hypocritical tactics to stealthily enhance its influence and win favor with the local populace. Whitaker explicitly stated that his criticisms were targeted at administrators and government officials, not ordinary people who, in his view, invariably placed their trust in Britain's goodwill. He emphasized that this sense of affinity had increased after Britain's endorsement of the Ottoman Empire in the Treaty of Berlin, which he considered a testament to the validity of Britain's approach to

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40 Edgar Whitaker, *The Outlook in Asiatic Turkey* (London: P.S. King, 1880), 10.

the region. When asked about his political leanings, Whitaker did not outright deny a conservative stance. Instead, he clarified that he did not conform to a traditional political approach and, if compelled to align himself, he would identify as anti-liberal. He suggested that individuals living outside Britain might appear somewhat conservative in terms of international relations. Concluding his remarks, Whitaker warned that if the British government failed to fulfill its responsibilities and duties in foreign policy, Russia would attain considerable power and influence in Ottoman territories, leaving Britain unable to respond effectively.<sup>41</sup>

### 1) The Famine in Asia-Minor

Early in his journalism career, Whitaker penned an editorial volume delving deep into the acute drought that devastated Anatolia, leading to widespread famine. This volume comprised articles previously featured in *The Levant Herald*. Many narratives originated from letters written by residents of the affected regions, later showcased in the editor's correspondence column.<sup>42</sup>

In the book's preface, Whitaker illuminates the harrowing conditions of drought-stricken Anatolia, emphasizing firsthand accounts from those most severely affected. He expresses his alarm at the government's lethargy during the onset of the drought and its subsequent ignorance as the crisis escalates into famine. For Whitaker, the irony is palpable: an agriculturally prosperous region finds itself plunged into calamity. He criticizes the Ottoman administration for its apparent indifference and limited perspective. He contends that the centralizing reforms under Sultan Mahmud II further debilitated local governance in the regions. Whitaker discloses that a particularly brutal winter exacerbates the crisis, isolating communities and interrupting essential communication networks. He chronicles the desperate measures to which inhabitants resort, including consuming grass and tree bark, as societal norms begin to unravel with increasing theft, robbery, and general lawlessness. These unfolding disasters underscore the region's fragile infrastructure and glaring vulnerabilities.<sup>43</sup>

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41 "Russian Intrigues in Armenia," *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 27 November 1884, 5.

42 Edgar Whitaker, ed., *The Famine in Asia-Minor: Its History, Compiled from the Pages of the "Levant Herald"* (Constantinople: 1875).

43 Whitaker, *The Famine in Asia-Minor*, III-XVI.

The volume intends to cast a spotlight on the devastating toll of famine, notably rampant hunger and widespread mortality rates, with the aim of fostering international awareness and humanitarian campaigns. From his journalistic standpoint, Whitaker highlights the Ottoman administration's apprehension about publicizing the catastrophe. Asserting that the role of journalism extends to addressing such critical matters, he censures the Ottoman government. His primary objective in producing this volume is to expedite crisis alleviation measures and spearhead relief initiatives. He reflects on the momentum gained from *The Levant Herald's* initial publications, which ultimately culminate in the book. An annex in the volume furnishes a concise overview of various relief committees, outlining their methods and aggregated contributions.<sup>44</sup>

In association with his efforts, Whitaker attended the Asia Minor Famine Relief Fund meeting in London in June 1875. The gathering, mainly comprised of members of parliament, opinion leaders, and aristocrats, was an avenue for him to update attendees, including the Judicial Committee of the Fund. Reiterating his aid appeals, he revisited details first introduced in his book's preface, seeking to draw heightened attention to the afflicted region. He displayed bread made from cottonseed and grape kernel flour at the meeting, emphasizing its meager nutritional value. He underscored the bleak reality: those grappling with the famine have no alternatives but to rely on such inadequate sustenance, highlighting the severity of the situation.<sup>45</sup>

## 2) Look to the Balkans!

Whitaker's political orientation becomes evident through his numerous publications, including *The Levant Herald*, as well as his essays and translated booklets.<sup>46</sup> One such booklet was *Look to the Balkans!*, translated from French to English by Whitaker. In the preface, he posits that any European attempt to impose political liberty upon the Balkans artificially carries substantial risks. Instead, he contends that sustainable freedom can only be

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44 Ibid.

45 Asia Minor Famine Relief Fund, *Report of the Public Meeting in Aid of the Asia Minor Famine Relief Fund* (Woodfall & Kinder: London, 1875), 2–3, 15–28.

46 "Orbituary," *The Evening Mail*, 26 August 1903, 4.

attained through natural development, and, at present, the most effective course of action would involve improving the existing administrative structures that hinder progress.<sup>47</sup>

The booklet provides a comprehensive exploration of the Russia's plans and objectives for expanding into the Balkans, focusing on their strategic actions. It reveals how Russia, leveraging its substantial military expertise, had recognized that the Balkan region posed the only barrier to the military advancement toward Constantinople. The primary aim of Russia was to disseminate Pan-Slavic ideology among the Bulgarians and throughout the wider Balkan region. The booklet sheds light on how the Russians selected the Bulgarians as the cornerstone of their expansionist strategy in the Balkans, initiating Pan-Slavic activities among them. They encouraged the Bulgarians to sever ties with the Greek church and establish their own, a move that would promote Pan-Slavism. Furthermore, Russia intervened in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire by assuming the title of Protector of Eastern Christians.<sup>48</sup>

The publication also highlights the extensive propaganda campaigns employed to achieve these objectives. The author reveals that the Russians portrayed the Bulgarian population, scattered across the Balkan Mountains, the Danube, and certain parts of Macedonia, as inhabiting a vast region extending to the Mediterranean. They exaggerated the actual population size, reporting it to be three to five times larger than it truly was, supported by misleading maps. The booklet emphasizes this deception, providing annotations and examples to demonstrate how the propaganda influenced the European public. Ultimately, Russia aimed to establish a Slavic principality from the Danube to Adrianople, with a Slavic monarchy ruling over the Maritsa Valley.<sup>49</sup> The author warns the Liberal Party, urging caution in supporting Slavic causes due to their potential threats to Europe's freedom and the advantages they offered to Russia. The need for prudence in foreign

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47 *Look to the Balkans! A Translation*, trans. Edgar Whitaker (Constantinople: The Levant Herald Office, 1876); The original version of the booklet, titled *Attention Aux Balkans!*, was published in Bucharest and printed by Typographie et Litographie André Ziotti in 1876. See, *Attention Aux Balkans!* (Bucharest: Typographie et Litographie André Ziotti, 1876).

48 Whitaker, trans., *Look to the Balkans*, 1–32.

49 *Ibid.*, 8, 12–15, 20–21, 26–27.

policy decisions is underscored, with the author emphasizing the dangers associated with endorsing Slavic nationalism. Despite being published by *The Levant Herald* printing house in 1876, the identity of the original author remains a mystery.<sup>50</sup>

### 3) Russia's Work in Turkey: A Revelation

One of the booklets translated by Whitaker into English titled *Russia's Work in Turkey: A Revelation*, illuminates the activities undertaken by Russian agents and their Slavic allies in the Balkans. The publication delves detailed insights into how these agents inflamed Slavic nationalism in the region and instigated rebellions. Additionally, the booklet includes a collection of relevant documents that further substantiate these matters.<sup>51</sup>

In the preface to his translation, Whitaker asserts that the booklet unveils the Russians' plans, drawing upon included documents and confidential letters to expose Russia's deliberate collaboration with Pan-Slavic groups in sowing discord and confusion in the region. According to Whitaker, the booklet also traces the roots of conflicts in the Balkans, including uprisings in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and provides insights into the Bulgarian revolt. Thus, he contends that the booklet reveals the secret activities that influenced these people to participate in rebellions they may not have otherwise supported.<sup>52</sup>

Originally authored by Georges Giacometti in French under the title *Les Responsabilités*, the work was swiftly translated into Turkish and German. The publication can be interpreted as a counter-propaganda piece, intended to challenge the pro-Bulgarian uprising literature circulating within the international community.<sup>53</sup>

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50 Ibid., 30–32.

51 Georges Giacometti, *Russia's Work in Turkey: A Revelation*, trans. Edgar Whitaker (London: E. Wilson, 1887).

52 Giacometti, *Russia's Work in Turkey*, 3–6.

53 Davison, "The Question of the Documents Called 'Les Responsabilités,'" 4/1543-1544.

#### 4) The Rhodope Inquiry: Report and Protocols

Whitaker's translation and publication of the Rhodope Report, executed through *The Levant Herald's* printing house, constitutes another significant accomplishment in his works. The report, produced by an international commission, unveils the brutalities inflicted upon the civilian population in Bulgarian territory during the Ottoman-Russian War and the ensuing forced migration. Drafted to examine the situation in the Rhodopes during the Congress of Berlin, the report uncovers that the region is populated by Muslim refugees from all areas subjected to Russian occupation.

This report, entitled *The Rhodope Inquiry: Report and Protocols of the International Commission Instituted by the Congress of Berlin*, offers a comprehensive depiction of the kinds of abuses endured by civilians, the extent of residential destruction, and the geographic origins of the refugees.<sup>54</sup> In his introductory remarks to the booklet, Whitaker voices apprehension that diplomats might neglect the findings of the inquiry regarding the mistreatment of Muslims in Thrace. Consequently, he seizes the opportunity to translate relevant documents from the inquiry and disseminate them in English.

The report, compiled by the Commission through interviews with refugees, unveils the harrowing experiences that led Muslim individuals to flee from horrific acts of violence, looting, assaults, and rapes during the war, finding refuge in the Rhodopes. An intense dread of such atrocities fueled their mass exodus. These refugees armed themselves with weapons and ammunition abandoned by the defeated Ottoman army. Even though they lacked the resources to confront the Russian occupation directly, they prevented Russian forces from penetrating the Rhodopes.<sup>55</sup> The significance of the report is twofold. Firstly, it provides a crucial record of the brutalities and massacres inflicted upon civilians during the Russian occupation. Secondly, it offers an official account that connects these events.

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54 Rhodope Commission, *The Rhodope Enquiry: Reports and Protocols of the International Commission, Instituted by the Congress of Berlin*, trans. Edgar Whitaker (Constantinople: The Levant Herald Press, 1878; London: Effingham Wilson, 1878).

55 Ömer Turan, "The Rhodope Resistance and Commission of 1878," in *War and Diplomacy: The Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and the Treaty of Berlin*, ed. M. Hakan Yavuz and Peter Sluglett (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 2011), 530–532.

Moreover, the report proves beneficial for the Ottoman Empire in determining the status of the Eastern Rumelia province.<sup>56</sup>

### 5) The Coup d'Etat in Eastern Roumelia

Apart from his translation ventures, Whitaker also penned a variety of publications, one of which was an article regarding the annexation of the Eastern Rumelia Province by the Bulgarian Principality. The article, titled *The Coup d'Etat in Eastern Roumelia*, was composed as the events took place, offering both a contemporaneous and insightful commentary.<sup>57</sup>

The piece thoroughly explores the region, with a specific focus on the Pan-Slavism movement and an exploration of the province's administration. Whitaker delves into Russia's political involvement in the provincial administration, local attitudes and perceptions, and resistance activities. He also probes the underlying reasons for the province's aspiration to unify with the Bulgarian principality. The article details the attempted coup, which ultimately led to the annexation of Eastern Rumelia by the Bulgarian Principality, bringing to light the delayed awareness of the Sublime Porte concerning the unfolding events. Whitaker critically assesses the Sultan's indecisiveness, the ineffectiveness of ministerial decisions, and the government's reluctance to employ military measures. He emphasizes the fact that Russian efforts and manipulations to establish dominance over the settlement were widely acknowledged by those closely monitoring the political balances in the region. Consequently, he argues that the Ottoman government should have exercised greater vigilance and proceeded with appropriate caution.<sup>58</sup>

Whitaker posits that the formation of Bulgarian unity, resulting from the consolidation of the Bulgarian Principality and the Eastern Rumelia province, has the potential to ignite a chain of events capable of disrupting the fragile balance established in the region following the Congress of Berlin, potentially plunging the entire Balkans into a period of chaos and strife. He notes that the neighboring countries might resort to military measures

56 Eşref Eşrefoğlu, "Ali Ferruh Bey'in Doğu-Rumeli'de 'Lisan-ı Osmanî ve Sikke-i Osmanî' Meselesine Ait 1903 Tarihli Bir Raporu," *Tarih Dergisi* 32 (1979): 385–386.

57 Edgar Whitaker, "The Coup d'Etat in Eastern Roumelia," *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review* 18 (July-December 1885): 819–832.

58 Whitaker "The Coup d'Etat in Eastern Roumelia," 820–825, 831.

to protect their interests, while Germany could seek to expand its sphere of influence in the area, inevitably drawing them into the conflict. Whitaker nevertheless maintains that should the Ottoman government choose to militarily intervene with the aim of dissolving the Bulgarian unity and re-establishing the Eastern Rumelia province, it would only result in more profound internal disturbances and instability within the region.<sup>59</sup>

Whitaker composed his article while on the move as a war correspondent, bearing witness to the escalating tensions in Serbia, which would eventually erupt into war. His writings demonstrate an in-depth comprehension of the unfolding situation, and he seemingly anticipated imminent events.<sup>60</sup> His account was published in *The Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review*, a highly regarded British monthly literary magazine founded in 1877 by James Knowles. This publication was one of the most essential and respected periodicals during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It presented authors with a platform to share their insights on burgeoning conflicts with a broad, intellectually engaged readership.<sup>61</sup>

## 6) The Outlook in Asiatic Turkey

In another piece, *The Outlook in Asiatic Turkey*, Whitaker shifts his focus to Russian expansionism in the Near East. Diverging from his earlier works, which primarily centered on Thrace and the Balkans, this treatise underscores the looming Russian threat to the Ottoman territories in Eastern Anatolia.

The book opens with a detailed analysis of the Ottoman Empire's Asian territories, spotlighting rising ethnic tensions along language, religious, and sectarian lines, including divisions within the Muslim-Arab communities. Whitaker, for instance, underscores the stark structural differences in Eastern Anatolia and brings attention to the emergence of an incompatible and destabilizing environment that fosters conflicts. He further notes that social cohesion in the region has substantially weakened and that

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59 Ibid., 830–832.

60 Ibid., 832.

61 "Nineteenth Century: A Monthly Review (1877-1901)," in *Dictionary of Nineteenth-Century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoore (London: Academia Press, 2009), 456, 665.

the Ottoman administration stands on the verge of disintegration, posing formidable challenges that the state might struggle to overcome on its own. He proposes that the Great Powers assist the Sublime Porte by endorsing reforms and facilitating the establishment of regional order with their knowledge, resources, and experience. Yet, he also concedes that the Ottoman administration might remain wary of such supportive gestures due to its well-founded trust issues, which must be resolved before any substantial cooperation can occur.<sup>62</sup> Whitaker suggests that the disintegrating social fabric could trigger political fragmentation and chaos, encouraging powerful states to step in and seize control of regions abundant in strategic and natural resources yet socially divided and unable to govern themselves.

His primary concern lies with the region known as Ottoman Armenia. He underscores that the Armenians in this area and throughout the Ottoman territories had previously maintained a stable rapport with the state administration. However, he notes a post-Tanzimat shift in this dynamic, as the state began to exhibit hostility towards the Armenians and incite conflicts with them. Despite certain administrative and legal commitments made in favor of the Armenians during the Paris Conference and Berlin Congress, the Ottoman Empire fell short in fulfilling these promises. Further exacerbating the situation, local administrators exhibited a bias towards armed Kurdish tribes, subjecting the Armenians to looting and oppression. As a result, despite initial commitments, the situation devolved into persecution.<sup>63</sup>

The author emphasizes that the territory where Armenians live lies just beyond the Russian border, closely neighboring Russian fortifications and ammunition depots. Consequently, considering its historical, religious, and strategic importance, it becomes apparent that this region would likely be a top priority for an expansionist Russia. Whitaker suggests that Russia might attempt to manipulate religious and humanitarian concerns toward Armenians as an excuse for annexing the region.<sup>64</sup> He posits that Russia could seek to defend its actions by arguing it aims to shield Armenians from persecution and liberate Christian communities. Such

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62 Whitaker, *The Outlook in Asiatic Turkey*, 4–5,

63 *Ibid.*, 5–6, 13–16.

64 *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

assertions could serve as a means to justify its intrusion into the area. He further contends that Russia would likely push to expand its footprint in the region by moving southwards, seizing Diyarbakır, dominating the Euphrates Valley, and expanding its influence over the Iskenderun Bay. Given the administrative frailties and the region's social structure during this period, Whitaker maintains that it could pose a significant challenge for the Ottoman Empire to fend off such an attack.<sup>65</sup>

Whitaker proposes that the potential for Russian territorial growth is mounting and represents a menace not just to the European nations but also to British interests in the Near East. He voices surprise at the nonchalance exhibited by European powers towards this predicament. He underscores the necessity of maintaining the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity to avert such an eventuality. Despite the European states pledging to uphold this principle in the Treaty of Paris of 1856, they demonstrated inaction on this front during the Ottoman-Russian War. Whitaker asserts that the preservation of the Ottoman Empire's territorial integrity, which is paramount to Britain's own interests, must be at the forefront of Britain's agenda. Yet, he notes that London appears to be pursuing a policy that contradicts its interests. As a result, this predicament becomes increasingly complex to resolve, leaving the region susceptible to Russian expansionist aims. Whitaker concludes that any prudent British politician would never let such a scenario endanger the passage to Egypt, the Persian Gulf, and British India.<sup>66</sup>

## Conclusion

McCoan and Whitaker, both distinguished British journalists in the Levant with backgrounds as war correspondents, dedicated a notable span of their lives to immersing themselves in the political world of the Ottoman Empire. They successively spearheaded one of the Ottoman world's eminent newspapers, *The Levant Herald*, crafting their careers around this publication over many years. They generated perceptive journalistic pieces and authored profound and impactful works using their knowledge, experiences, personal insights, and extensive field connections.

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65 Ibid., 6, 7.

66 Ibid., 7–9.

McCoan's primary objective, as evidenced by his work, was to provide a comprehensive portrayal of the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, and the complex legal frameworks of the Capitulations in the region for a British readership. This target audience included policymakers, academics specializing in the Near East, and individuals interested in this geopolitically crucial region. McCoan's endeavor to present a grassroots understanding of the Near East's societal structures, economic situation, and cultural norms seems strategically designed to shape and enhance British awareness of this geopolitically significant area.

His writings showcase his observational skills and comprehensive capabilities regarding socio-political and economic conditions. The timeline of his publications, which coincides with a critical phase in his career and increased political engagement, suggests the dual motivations underlying his scholarly pursuits. These writings established his intellectual competence and helped carve out a position of influence within British political circles, especially in discussions and decisions regarding the Ottoman Empire. McCoan leveraged his expertise and in-depth understanding of the Near East to position himself as a respected authority on the subject. His intent appears to influence British policies and perspectives on the region while bolstering his status for upcoming elections. Therefore, it can be inferred that the aims of his works extended beyond academic discourse, as his books may have been intended to contribute to the political dialogue concerning this critical region and support his imminent political aspirations. Some of his early books received financial support from Khedive Ismail, indicating an agenda to shape public opinion in favor of the Khedive's interests.

Whitaker, in his comprehensive body of work, presented a detailed account of the evolving power dynamics in the Near East, with a particular focus on the escalating influence of Russia during a turbulent period of history. His examination of areas like the Balkans and Eastern Anatolia contributed to raising global awareness about the changing geopolitical landscape in this region. Striking a distinctive position that diverged from the popular stance of the Liberal Party, Whitaker voiced his opposition to the changing course of London's Near East policy. He emerged as a prominent figure who challenged Russian aggression and territorial expansion,

standing firm despite potential labeling as a conservative. However, he continually clarified that his critiques were aimed at the policies endorsed by the Liberals rather than a rejection of liberal ideals altogether.

Whitaker's writings reflect his understanding of the broader geopolitical implications involved. His ability to identify and articulate the deficiencies in London's Near East policies played a crucial role in establishing a clear connection between British interests, the stability of the Near East, and the potential threats an increasingly ambitious Russia poses. The inter-related nature of regional stability, Ottoman integrity, and British interests recurs as a theme in Whitaker's works, as he underscores the delicate balance that needs to be maintained to prevent the region from plunging into chaos, cautioning about the potential risks associated with unchecked Russian expansionism. Whitaker's works present a comprehensive and robust critique of London's evolving foreign policies, particularly in the wake of the Liberal Party's ascension to power. His contribution offers invaluable insights into the complexities of maintaining regional stability amid escalating international tensions.

While McCoan and Whitaker may have differed in their personal styles, their works exhibited many thematic overlaps. Both drew upon their firsthand experiences in their writings. For instance, McCoan's books about Egypt were grounded in his travels there and the wealth of information he gathered during these expeditions. Similarly, Whitaker employed the data and observations he collected during his assignments in the Balkans in his reports. Their perspectives diverged in terms of focus, as McCoan offered a broader analysis of the region, contributing comprehensive works on topics like the Ottoman Empire, the Levant, and the region's legal procedures. Whitaker, by contrast, narrowed his focus to specific events, locations, and incidents, delivering analyses of political shifts in the Balkans, the situation in Eastern Anatolia, and potential Russian takeover scenarios. Despite their common goal of influencing British regional policies, McCoan primarily sought to educate the British domestic population, whereas Whitaker aimed to raise international awareness.

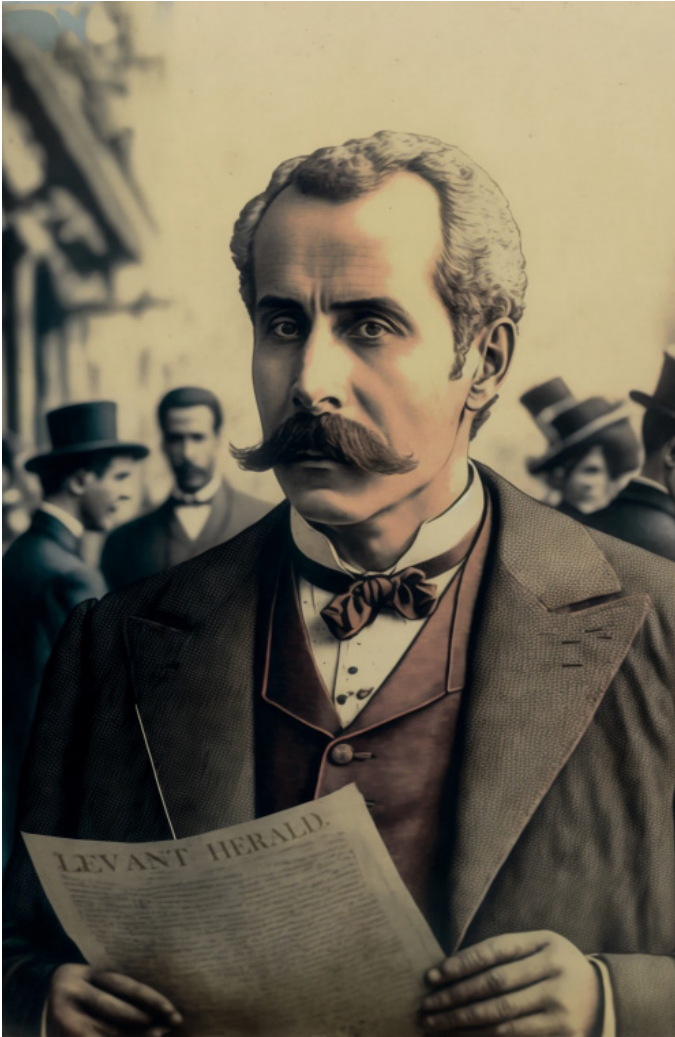
Both journalists concurred on the crucial importance of the shifting power balance in the region following the Ottoman-Russian war and

campaigns for Britain to uphold a pro-Ottoman stance in its foreign policy. They agreed on the necessity of maintaining the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. On the international political stage, McCoan moderated his viewpoint, adjusting it in accordance with London's evolving regional foreign policy. Whitaker, however, firmly resisted London's newly formulated approach to the region. While McCoan endorsed Britain's intervention in Egypt and eagerly sought support from liberals for his political career, Whitaker considered Britain's backing of the Ottomans inadequate, insufficient, and contrary to British interests and looked to receive support from the Porte. A shared perspective held by McCoan and Whitaker pertained to the Sublime Porte. Despite their critiques, they supported the implementation of reforms, arguing for the critical role of British support and encouragement for the Ottoman government. They concurred that, despite being potentially amenable to these reforms, the Ottoman administration lacked the capacity to implement them on its own.

Upon leaving *The Levant Herald* and returning to London, McCoan turned to writing his books and charting a new career path. Whitaker, on the other hand, composed his works amidst actively engaging in his journalistic career with *The Levant Herald* and living in the Ottoman territories. Given their differing circumstances, McCoan used this opportunity to delve into active politics, whereas Whitaker strove to secure support from the Porte for his journalistic and publishing endeavors. Their respective works ultimately established their positions as authoritative voices on the region within the international community.

McCoan and Whitaker have left an indelible mark through their extensive bodies of work. Their literary endeavors have served as invaluable windows into the Levant's multifaceted social, cultural, political, and historical aspects. Their insightful observations and commentary illuminated the challenges, triumphs, and complexities that defined the era, painting a vivid and nuanced portrayal of Levantine society. Their works stand as enduring testaments to the region's vibrant history, capturing its intricate engagement with broader global political dynamics.

## Appendix



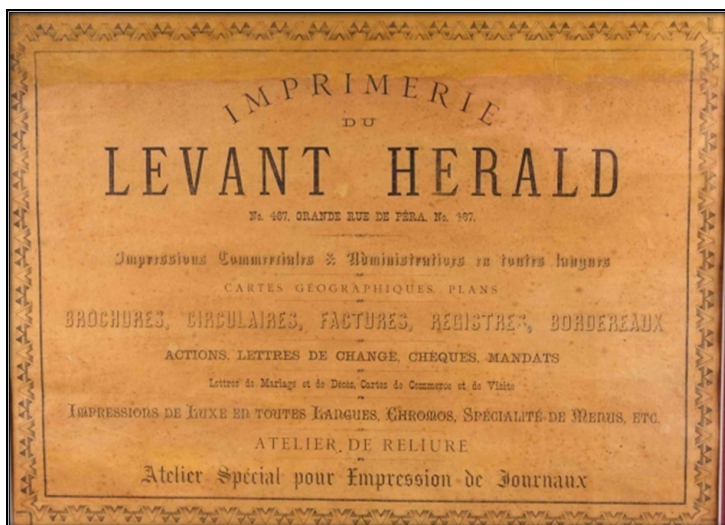
**Figure 1.** A contemporary artistic interpretation of Edgar Whitaker (1831-1903).

(Processed and Generated With Midjourney AI)



**Figure 2.** A contemporary artistic interpretation of James Carlile McCoan (1829-1904).

(Processed and Generated With Midjourney AI)



**Figure 3.** Advertisement showcasing the offerings of the Levant Herald Printing House on Grande Rue de Péra, annotated in French.

PRINTING HOUSE  
OF  
THE LEVANT HERALD  
GRANDE RUE DE PÉRA No: 467  
Commercial and Administrative Printings in All Languages  
Geographic Cards, Plans, Brochures, Circulars, Invoices, Registers, Shipping Lists  
Shares, Bill of Exchange, Checks, Orders  
Birth and Death Certificates, Business and Visit Cards.  
Luxury Printing in All Languages, Chromos, Special Menus, Etc.  
Bookbinding Workshop  
Special Workshop for Newspaper Printing

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# LEVANTINE PRINCE OF IZMIR: CHARLES SALZANI (1825-1916)

Süleyman Uygun\* — Hakan Güngör\*\*

## Introduction

Covering a rich array of issues, ranging from institutional transformations to the impact of policies and reforms on local societies and administrations, research on the late Ottoman Empire reflects various aspects of the vibrant atmosphere of the period. From certain perspectives, the period is characterized by the political, financial, and military decline of the state; on the other hand, the Empire also became the land of opportunity for European merchants and entrepreneurs. As Philip Mansel expresses in his work *Levant: Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean*, what is a disaster for one side can result in splendor for another.<sup>1</sup> The geography and ports of the Levant, which evolved and transformed with the direct expansionist and competitive ambitions of the Great Powers, witnessed a new era of change during the age of industrial capitalism. Until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Levantine classes strived to continue their activities through concessions and under the control and supervision of Ottoman political institutions. After this century, however, Ottoman political authority, power, and control gradually weakened over the international contests. Due to their central role in influential institutions, Levantine merchants began to take

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\* Ph.D., Ordu University, Turkey. Email: [suleymanuygun@odu.edu.tr](mailto:suleymanuygun@odu.edu.tr),  
ORCID: 0000-0001-6682-6698.

\*\* Ph.D., Ordu University, Turkey. Email: [hakangungor@odu.edu.tr](mailto:hakangungor@odu.edu.tr),  
ORCID: 0000-0002-8282-5481. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384837](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8384837)

1 Philip Mansel, *Levant, Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

control over the central and local administrations which, in turn, were increasingly shaped around an emergent free market economy. Modernization processes and bilateral trade agreements in the post-capitulation period to change the corrupt course of the Empire accelerated the spread of the modern capitalist system and its institutions to the Levantine ports and hinterland. Acting within this structure, the Levantine class carved out a wide-ranging, safe space for its activities. C. Laidlaw states the reason for the presence of British ambassadors at the Sublime Porte in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was to protect Britain's commercial position, preserve the capitulations, and to facilitate the commercial practices of British merchants in the Levant. Thus, their function was consular rather than strictly diplomatic.<sup>2</sup> Considering the vast network of relations between this Levantine class with the Ottoman Empire's non-Muslim populations, it can be said that financial power formed the primary basis of the Levant's fundamental economic structure and operation.<sup>3</sup>

Izmir was also one of the few major port cities of the Levant. Starting from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially with the appearance of steamships in the ports of the Levant, the attractiveness of well-established merchant cities such as Izmir began to increase. With this attraction, the immigration of Levantines and non-Muslims to Izmir gradually increased, and the cosmopolitan structure of Izmir became more consolidated. So much so that in this century, Izmir became one of the three main Levantine port cities of the empire with the largest Levantine and non-Muslim populations.<sup>4</sup> These privileged groups had a vital role in Izmir's trade economy and politics. According to the figures provided by Roch, the total population of Izmir in 1865 was 170,000. The population of the city consisted of

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2 S. Christine Laidlaw, *The British in the Levant: Trade and Perceptions of the Ottoman Empire in the Eighteenth Century*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), 18, The subject of Ottoman capitulations has been extensively studied and remains an area of academic interest. Though not the focus of this research, they are mentioned where relevant. For a detailed exploration of capitulations see Edhem Eldem, "Capitulation and Western Trade in the Ottoman Empire: Questions, Issues and Sources", *The Cambridge History of Turkey. Volume 3: The Later Ottoman Empire, 1603-1839*, ed. Suraiya N. Faroqhi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 283-335.

3 Jacques Thobie, *La France, l'Europe et l'Est Méditerranéen depuis deux siècles*, (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2007), 101.

4 Philip Mansel, *Levant, Splendour and Catastrophe on the Mediterranean*, 1.

70,000 Greeks, 10,000 Armenians, 30,000 Jews, and 20,000 European Levantines.<sup>5</sup> Burnouf states that the number of French among the Europeans in Izmir increased to 10,000 by the end of the century.<sup>6</sup> This corresponds to approximately 5% of Izmir's population at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Izmir bourgeoisie and the city's non-Muslims generally imitated the social mores of the French and adapted to a "European" lifestyle, especially in regard to material culture.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, as was the case with competition and religious conversion among non-Muslims, members of the Levantine population could also attempt to change their identities, whether due to their economic or social interests or familial relations. The Salzani family of Izmir is one exemplary case: a family regarded as being of French origin, rather than their Italian identity. This family held a key position in Levantine sociality of Izmir. As a result of the personal efforts and initiatives of Louis Blaise Marie Charles Salzani, the family also adopted particularly Levantine Catholic stances towards the emergent national and secular state system at the end of the Ottoman period. Charles Salzani, who helped to ensure the rise of family companies in the adaptation of Izmir to the liberal industrial expansionist system of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in this sense also had an essential place in the organization and institutionalization of the French colony in the city. Charles Salzani, like his father Joseph Antoine Salzani (1795–1844), throughout his life encouraged the proliferation of French capital in Izmir and played a founding role in its civic institutions. Indeed, Salzani resided in the city for nearly a century (1825–1916), and was involved in a vast array of commercial, political, economic, and socio-cultural activities; these included, for instance, roles as the local agent for the Messageries Maritimes Company of Izmir, French Foreign Trade Council Member, founder and president of French Izmir Chamber of Commerce, Izmir French Society Deputy, owner of the trade house of Charles Salzani

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5 Max Roche, "Education, Assistance et Culture Française en Turquie (Constantinople, Smyrne, Brousse) de 1784 a 1868" (Ph.D. diss., University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, 1982), 272-273.

6 Em. Burnouf, "La France dans le Levant", *Revue des deux mondes* (1829-1971) 83, no 4 (1887): 898.

7 Oliver Jens Schmitt, "Levantins, Européens et jeux d'identité", *Smyrne, la ville oubliée?: memoires d'un grand port ottoman, 1830-1930*, ed. Marie-Carmen Smyrnelis (Paris: Autrement, 2006), 109-110.

& Cie., the founder of the French Izmir Hospital, the member of the Commission for Rescue of the Wounded (Comite de secours aux blessés),<sup>8</sup> the Judge of the French Consular Court, and the Judge of the Ottoman Mixed Commercial Court.<sup>9</sup> Through strategic marriages, the Salzani family established strong relations with international financial circles and political institutions. Their grandchildren and children were married to members of other deep-rooted Levantine families, such as Testa, Peron, Pagy, Cousinery, Alleon, and Bergasse, and with the children of the consuls of various countries. Thus, the Salzanis left permanent traces in the political, economic, and cultural life of Izmir. The politics, multi-faceted initiatives, marriages, and businesses that Charles Salzani pursued throughout his life for nearly a century are thus an excellent example of Levantine family life in the port cities of the Ottoman Empire.

### Roots and Activities of the Salzani Family

The Salzani family originated from the French Salzac family. The Salzacs immigrated to Italy during the Milano War, during the reign of François I. In 1745, together with Domenico Salzani who was the first settler of the Salzani family in Italy, they became citizens of Naples. Domenico was born in 1705 in the village of Cava, in Naples, after he completed his education, Le Marquis de Vergennes, at that time the French Ambassador to Istanbul, assigned him as the French Consul to Rhodes.<sup>10</sup> With this appointment, the career of diplomacy was opened up to the Salzanis. Domenico went to Istanbul from Rhodes in the 1740s, where he died in 1760 at 55 years old. Blaise François Salzani, one of his sons, was born in Istanbul in 1759. He lived there until 1813. On January 7, 1790, he married Marie Testa (born in Istanbul, 1763 – died in Izmir, 1829) the daughter of Jacob Giacimo Testa (Istanbul 1725–1804) one of the leading Italian-origin (Citadini) Levantine dragoman and consular families of Istanbul. Members of the Testa family in Istanbul served as consulates and dragomans for France, Britain, Venice, Prussia, Tuscany, and the Netherlands. Blaise François

8 *Journal Officiel, de la republique Française*, n. 161, 10 June 1871, 1296.

9 ANF. (Archive National de France) LH. 2451/76, 11 July 1897.

10 Henry de Bellaigue de Bughas, *Les Livres de raison d'une famille d'Auvergne, des croisades à l'âge atomique*, (Paris: Publibook, 2002), 51.

Salzani also held diplomatic posts like his father. He worked as a translator at the both the consulates of Naples and the Netherlands in Istanbul.<sup>11</sup> Just like the Testas, by the end of the century the Salzanis had attained a prominent position among the Neapolitan and Genoese merchants of the Ottoman capital.<sup>12</sup> Blaise François Salzani and Marie Testa had five children, four boys and a girl. Dominique Salzani (1792–1850), who was the first son of Blaise François Salzani (and Charles Salzani's uncle), played an active role in the 1840 trade agreement signed between the Ottoman Empire and the Netherlands [For the Salzani family tree, see appendix 3]. For his service in this post, the Porte presented him with a bejeweled medal.<sup>13</sup>

Joseph Antoine Salzani, the father of Charles Salzani, was born on 23 October 1795, in Galata. He would later move to Izmir. Although Joseph Antoine struggled to consolidate and strengthen the position of the Catholic Italians in the Levant, he also made great efforts to gain French nationality and a respectable position within the French Levantine colony. Like his father and grandfather, he studied French at a young age and was accepted to a French Catholic school due to his advanced knowledge of the French language. Joseph Salzani thought that the further development and rise of his trading house was dependent upon attaining French nationality and strengthening the French colony in Izmir. He applied to the French consulate three times to acquire French citizenship, but this would prove to be an arduous process. In the words of the French consul Pierre David (1819–1826), his marriage to one of the most respected French families in Izmir was one of the means that he could acquire this citizenship; in this case,

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- 11 Massimiliano Pezzi, "Feste e Regali Della diplomazia Europea a Constantinople in eta Napoleonica", *Africana Rivista di Studi Extraeuropei* 8 (2002): 130; Bughas, *Les Livres de raison*, 51; Frycsen Gustaf – Jörg Ulbert, "l'Histoire de la Fonction Consulaire jusqu'au debut de la premiere guerre mondial", *Cahiers de la Méditerranée* 93, (2016): 256; H. De Groot, "Drogomans Careers: The Change of Statut in Some Familles Connected With the British and Dutch Embassies at Istanbul, 1785-1829", *Friend and rivals in the East: studies in anglo-Dutch relations in the levant from seventeenth to early nineteenth century*, ed. Alastair Hamilton, (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 2000), 240-241.
  - 12 Marie Carmen Smyrnelis, *Une Société Hors de Soi, Identités et Relations Sociales a Smyrne aux XVIIIe et XIXe Siecles*, (Paris-Louvain: Peeters, 2005), 145.
  - 13 Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives, Ottoman Archives (T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi, hereafter BOA.) A. DVNSNMH.d. 11/316, 20 July 1840.

he e would always enjoy French protection because of the French consul's concessionary right to protect Europeans who were not represented in the Empire by their own respective consuls. Joseph Salzani also played an active role in the expansion and reconstruction of the Izmir French Hospital in 1822 and served in various positions in its administration. The building, which served as a naval hospital for a long time, had fallen out of use after 1798 due to its inadequate conditions, and the restoration of the building marked an important point in the consolidation of the city's community. This post also provided him with the opportunity to come closer to the city's French and merchants and made it easier for him to become a French citizen. Two French commanders, named Halgan and Rigny, initiated the renovation of this hospital. Further, the French trade deputies petitioned for the construction of this hospital on 13 November 1820, and Salzani served as the witness for this process.<sup>14</sup> The site of the hospital was purchased from an Izmir-based merchant named Marracini for 42,500 francs. The construction cost of the hospital was estimated as 120,000 francs. The Marseille Chamber of Commerce and the Izmir Levantine colony members covered the hospital construction costs.<sup>15</sup> The French consul reported that a wonderful hospital with fifty beds and a maximum of 100 patients was finally established in 1826.<sup>16</sup> The French Consul of Izmir, who played an active role in the construction and management of this hospital, and later Joseph Salzani's son Charles Salzani, who was also in the hospital administration, were both awarded the Legion d'Honneur.<sup>17</sup> Doctors belonging to the Capucin Order were active in the hospital. The hospital was generally

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14 "French Hospital in Smyrna," *Levantine Heritage*, <http://www.levantineheritage.com/hospital.htm> (accessed date: 10. 05. 2022).

15 There is a file in the archive of the Marseille Chamber of Commerce about the entire construction phase of the Izmir hospital. See, ACCIM. (Archives de la Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie Marseille) MQ. 51/40, *Ministre des Affaires etranger affaires Commerciales*, Paris le 14 August 1828, *Consulat Generale de Smyrne*, le 13 Nov 1820; MMSH (Maison Méditerranée des Sciences de l'homme) private archive and library, Max Roche, "Education, assistance et culture françaises en Turquie," 36, 86.

16 ACCIM. MQ. 51/40, *Ministre des Affaires etranger affaires Commerciales*, Paris le 14 Aout 1828, *Consulat Generale de Smyrne*, le 13 Nov. 1820; MMSH private archive and library, Max Roche, "Education, assistance et culture françaises en Turquie," 36, 86.

17 ACCIM. MQ. 51/40, *Monsieur David Consul Général d France Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur*, Marsielle, Le 13 Juin 1825.

built to combat epidemic diseases that disrupted trade. Joseph Salzani's efforts in the construction and administration of the hospital, alongside his advantageous marriage, earned him a place in the heart of the French colony and the families associated with it. Joseph Salzani married into the Cousineries, the leading French Levantine family in Izmir. He knew that this marriage would bring him significant gains. Blaise Marie Sextius Cousinery (Marseille 1766–Izmir 1845), a prominent merchant of Marseille, had played a leading role in settlement of the Cousineries in Izmir. He settled in this city in 1793 and opened a trade house to escape from the chaotic atmosphere of revolutionary France, as did many other members of the French bourgeoisie.<sup>18</sup> Because of the commercial and cultural ties he established between Marseille and Izmir, this family quickly became one of the most significant French Levantine families in the Ottoman Empire. Joseph Salzani married Sophie Marie Thérèse Cousinery, the daughter of Blaise Cousinery, on 13 October 1823, in the Church of Saint Marie in Izmir.<sup>19</sup> As a result of this marriage he became a French citizen, and afterwards he used *MM. Charles Salzani et Cie.* trading house to develop his company and its interests. His children and grandchildren continued this path even more successfully. Each new marriage opened the doors to further wealth and higher positions.

Lamartin, who left Marseille in 1832 to travel to the eastern ports, reached Izmir in May 1833, after traveling through the ports of Egypt and Syria. Joseph Salzani kept him company throughout this journey. Lamartin writes highly of J. Salzani in his *Voyage en Orient*.<sup>20</sup>

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18 “Laise Marie Sextius Cousinery,” *Geneanet*, <https://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=blaise+marie+sextius&n=cousinery> (accessed date: 05. 05. 2022).

19 “Joseph Antoine Salzani,” *Geneanet*, <https://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=joseph+antoine&n=salzani> (accessed date: 05. 05. 2022).

20 A Levantine sailor Lamartine rented a brig-style ship named l'Alceste of Bruno Rostant for his voyage to the east. He also placed his 500-volume library on the ship. P. Guiral – F. Reynaud, *Les Marseillais dans l'Histoire*, (Marseillais: Privat 1988), 216; For the voyage of Bruno Rostant and Lamartine see Süleyman Uygun, “Levant İskelerinde Yükselen Bir Fransız Burjuvazi Ailesi: Rostandlar ve Levant Nakliyat Kumpanyaları”, *Cedrus* 6 (2018): 573-596.

I landed in Izmir to wander around the city and its surroundings. I wandered around the city for three days with M. Salzani, the banker and merchant of Izmir, who was a very helpful, kind and educated person, and I harmed his kindness. We returned to our brig-style ship to sleep at the end of each day. Izmir was a city that did not meet my expectations of the eastern city at all. This city was like Marseille, located on the Anatolian coast. It was a very beautiful city with its endless and elegant trading houses and agencies, where the consuls and merchants lived as if they were in Paris and London, with the view of the bay and the cypresses on the top of the mountain.<sup>21</sup>

Salzani and Cousinery had five girls and two boys from their marriage. Louis Blaise Marie Charles Salzani, the first child of Joseph Salzani, succeeded in raising the position of the Salzani to a very powerful role in Izmir after the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Charles Salzani became the first Salzani born with French nationality. Among the Ottoman Levantines, and especially Levantines with French nationality, it was a requirement of custom and procedure that every newborn member be registered by the consulate of the country of origin and that he or she be given a legal identity. Joseph Salzani brought Charles to the French Consulate in Izmir as soon as he was born in order for him to become a French citizen instead of continuing as an Italian [Neapolitan] national. Consul Pierre Etienne David discusses about Charles's birth as follows:

He opened his eyes to the world at three o'clock on February 23, 1825. His father, Antoine Salzani, who was a merchant settled in Izmir Port, and his mother, Sophie Marie Therese Cousinery, came to the presence of Pierre Etienne David, the French Consul of Izmir and the holder of the Legion d'Honneur, to get their identity. His ID was handed over at 14:30. He declared that he showed M. Charles Auguste Parvy and Matlaie Roussi, residing in Izmir, as witnesses to this action, and that the state was acting as a public official. Signatures; Salzani, Parvy, Roussi, David.<sup>22</sup>

Jacques Pascal Marie Auguste Salzani, the other son of Joseph Salzani, was also engaged the trade like his brother. He died of typhoid fever at the age of 22 on 7 February 1850, without being able to marry. Thus, the Salzani lineage in Izmir continued through Charles Salzani.<sup>23</sup>

21 Alphonse Lamartine, *Un Voyage en Orient 1832-1835*, vol 7 (Paris: Charles Cosselin et Furne, 1836), 232, 239-240.

22 ANF. (Archives Nationales de France) LH. 2451/76.

23 See: "Jacques Pascal Marie Auguste Salzani," *Geneanet*, <https://gw.geneanet.org/marmara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=jacques+pascal+marie+auguste&n=salzani> (accessed date: 06. 05. 2022).

There were undoubtedly several reasons for Joseph Salazani's persistent desire to become a French citizen. First and foremost, the Salzani originally had a French background. After the French Revolution and the subsequent collapse of Venice in 1797, some Italian Levantines residing in the Empire felt that they required a new European identity. Izmir's Austrian, English, and Sardinian/Italian Levantines thrived in a rather diverse and somewhat liberal environment. In contrast, the French Levantines maintained a more organized status, akin to an institutional colony, tightly regulated by the consuls and the Marseille Chamber of Commerce. All of the merchant who sought to open a trading house in the ports of the Levant had to get approval from the Marseille Chamber of Commerce through a solid guarantor. However, the French Levantine merchants strongly criticized this practice by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when liberal laissez-faire economic sentiments were on the rise.<sup>24</sup> Wealthy and powerful merchants such as Abel, Bonfort, Cousinery, Coutier, Escalon, Giraud, Pagy, Fonton, Guys, Rocca monopolized trade and relations between Izmir and France.<sup>25</sup> In 1834, there were 15 French trading houses in Izmir. Although the French presence was extensive, it was considerably less dominant than it had been earlier: in 1785, for example, 50% of Izmir's trade was conducted with France. This percentage declined considerably during the restoration period in France. In 1835, the French carried out only 16% of Izmir's trade, and had dropped to fourth place. During this period, olive oil, cotton, and wool accounted for 50% of Izmir exports, sponges for 7%, and silk for 2%. The trade between Marseille and Izmir corresponded to 17% of the total trade and was worth 7 million francs between 1835 and 1839.<sup>26</sup> However, starting from the second half of the century, the French trade in Izmir recovered and rapidly developed. Firstly, the French Maritime Post Service and the Rostand Company started regular direct ferry services between Izmir and Marseille in of 1837. Furthermore, France's largest private ferry shipping company, – the Messari Maritim Company, for which

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24 ADBR/Marseille, (Archives Departementales Bouches du Rhône) Cote: 8 M 67, Report by Alexis Rostand, President of the Marseille Chamber of Commerce, on the Levant, 30 December 1834; Uygun, "Rostandlar ve Levant Nakliyat Kumpanyaları," 575.

25 Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Les Levantins Cadres de vie et identités d'un groupe ethno-confessionnel de l'empire Ottoman au long 19e. siecles* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2007), 127-128.

26 Max Roche, "Education, assistance et culture françaises en Turquie," 36, 86.

Charles Salzani was the local agent – and subsequently the steam shipping companies Fraissinet, Fabres, Paquet, and Phocéenne, established direct, regular, and fast ferry services between Izmir and Marseille, and this had an extraordinary effect on trade between Izmir and France.

### Louis Blaise Marie “Charles” Salzani

Charles Salzani was the only remaining son of Joseph Salzani, after the sudden death of his brother Pascal in 1850. The children of Charles became the sole heirs of the Salzanis and continued their lineage in Izmir. He, along with his children and grandchildren, continued their commercial and institutional activities in Izmir under French nationality. However, they maintained their loyalty to the Italian-origin Levantines in Izmir, due to their sincere and firm Catholic faith, and their dedication to the Pope. Even when the Piedmontese were made to choose between secularism and the church during the Italian Risorgimento, Charles Salzani managed to appease partisans of both by pursuing a balanced policy between the state and Catholic dignitaries. Levantines who thought like Charles found a way out of this dilemma by formulating a belief in the national colony, against both the interests of the church and the secular state.<sup>27</sup> Charles Salzani followed in the footsteps of his ancestors to create and strengthen his economic and political position in Izmir. Marriages resulted in significant benefits and opened up new opportunities. All of his children and grandchildren were married to local Levantine notables, as well as members of the prominent families of Marseille who had settled in the Ottoman Empire.

After consolidating his position in this structure as a member of the French colony of Izmir, Charles Salzani, married a woman from the Mornard family. The Monards had served as the consuls for both the French and the Spanish in the Empire. St. Charles Salzani and Louise Valentine de Mornard<sup>28</sup> were married in a magnificent ceremony in Polycarpe Church on 19 May 1853. Louis Mornard's father, C. Louis de Mornard, was the French Consul of Cadiz.<sup>29</sup> His brother, Antoine Henri de Mornard, was the French

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27 Oliver J. Schmitt, *Les Levantins Cadres de vie et identités*, 379-380.

28 The latter figure was born in 1831 and died in 1914, in Bornova, Izmir.

29 A. Fouquier and H. Despres, *Annuaire historique universel, histoire politique pour 1843* (Paris: Thoissier Desplaces, 1844), 402.

Consul in Thessaloniki.<sup>30</sup> Valentine de Mornard's grandmother's sister was the daughter of the Spanish Ambassador to Istanbul.<sup>31</sup> It seems that Charles Salzani did a great deal of research before choosing his wife. The marriage of Salzani and Mornard resulted in one son, Charles Louis Joseph Marie (1859–1943) and two daughters, Anne Marie Louise (1861–1937) and Therese Amelie (1865–1939).<sup>32</sup> Charles Salzani's children and grandchildren married well-known families. C. Louis Joseph Marie Salzani married Ernestine Marie Elizabeth Pagy, a member of a long-established French Levantine family. Pagy's father Octave Gabriel Pagy (Smyrna 1838–1912), and his grandfather Pierre Gabriel Pagy (Smyrna 1801–1867) had made significant contributions to the development and interests of the French colony in Izmir. Louise Salzani, the daughter of Charles Salzani, similarly married Joseph Armand Valentin, Count of Revel. *La France Illustrée* reported this marriage as an important day for Izmir.<sup>33</sup>

Joseph Salzani started his business career as a small-scale enterprise in Izmir under the name of Joseph MM. Salzani et Cie. Charles Salzani took over and managed this firm after the death of his father in 1841. Charles changed the company name to MM. Charles Salzani et Cie, and this soon became a leading multi-faceted trading house in the area.

Although the name of the Salzani company is mentioned in relation to a number of economic sectors in various sources, the company's main occupation was the import-export industry, and sea freight. A Marseille Chamber of Commerce registry dated 29 January 1845, demonstrates that the trading house of G. Couiturier Salzani Fils & Cie conducted exports and imports from Marseille through the trading company Rocca Freres. The company exported opium, a root dye called alizarin, cotton, beeswax, sponge, yellow seeds, olive oil, and silk, whilst it

30 Hubert Lavigne, *Société de l'histoire de l'art Français etat civil, d'artistes Français, depuis 1823 jusqu'à nos jours*, (Paris: Librairie de la Société, 1881), 35; "Luis de Mornard," *Geneanet*, <https://gw.geneanet.org/garric?lang=en&pz=maxime+raphael+m+edouard&nz=le+vavasseur&p=louis&n=de+mornard> (accessed date: 07.06.2022).

31 Henry de Bellaique de Bughas, *Les Livres de raison d'une famille d'Auvergne, des croisades à l'âge atomique* (Paris: Publibook, 2002), 51.

32 "Louis Blaise Marie Charles Salzani," *Geneanet*, <https://gw.geneanet.org/mar-mara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=louis+blaise+marie+charles&n=salzani> (accessed date: 07.05.2022).

33 *La France Illustrée*, no. 1217, 26 March 1898, 204.

imported coffee, sugar, indigo, cochineal, black pepper, cloves, and processed wood.<sup>34</sup> Additionally, the firm sometimes acted as a broker in the real estate market. Salzani et Cie regularly applied to purchase or lease property, for example renting a large, beautiful house and residence and shops belonging to V. Escalon in the French Quarter of Izmir.<sup>35</sup> As the real estate listing noted, *The building in the French Quarter, which is the property of Giovenelli, is for sale, just opposite the PP. Capuchins Church, which contains various shops and has a suitable land for constructing a large house, address: MM. J Salzani.*<sup>36</sup> The Ottoman Archives contains a copy of the Salzani family's sale transactions dated 4 May 1878. The document records the sale of the Salzani's house in Izmir and contains a request for their eviction from the property.<sup>37</sup> In another record, dated 1866, it is mentioned that Salzani participated in auctions in Istanbul and bought antiques, such as old cannons, that he deemed valuable.<sup>38</sup>

The advertisement in the *Journal de Smyrne* shows that the Salzanis also played an active role in the sale of furniture and processed marbles imported from Europe. The advertisements invited people to, “*contact with Joseph Salzani et Cie for your needs such as marble dressers of different sizes, medium tables, marble tops, round living room tables, column legs, slate, thin and ordinary chairs, marble stone, tombstone and so on from Europe, available in the furniture warehouse.*”<sup>39</sup>

After some time, the Salzanis brought their mercantile experience to the banking and financial sector. The Salzanis sold insurance policies to merchants on behalf of the Banque de Constantinople, was founded by Jacques Alleon and Emmanuel Baltazzi.<sup>40</sup> Salzani's trade house was one of

34 ACCIM. L. 19/14/121, Fonds Rocca freres Correspondance Passive Pays Etrangers Empire Ottoman Turquie, G. Couturier Salzani Fis et Cie.

35 *Journal de Smyrne Commercial: Politique et Litteraire*, no. 112, 19 April 1834; *Journal de Smyrne Commercial: Politique et Litteraire*, no. 209, 26 March 1836.

36 *Journal de Smyrne: Feuille de Commerce*, n. 326, 21 July 1838.

37 BOA. HR. MKT. 836/58, 4 May 1878.

38 BOA. İ. HR. 222/12960, 8 November 1866; when there was a delay in the delivery of these historical cannons, Salzani applied to the French embassy. BOA. HR. TO. 201/74, 15 August 1866.

39 *Journal de Smyrne: Commercial, politique et litteraire*, 26 September 1835.

40 See the record indicates merchant Salzani's claim to 800 Ottoman liras, being the value of an insurance policy he sold to Kokozlu, an Ottoman citizen residing in Iz-

the only addresses in Izmir for passengers wishing to travel onwards, and for freight transportation service to various domestic and international ports such as Istanbul, Marseille, Odessa, London, Sardinia, and Algeria. *The Journal de Smyrne* stated that the “Address for those who want to travel and transport goods on a brig-style ship called Orient, which will sail directly to Marseille under the command of Captain Marin, is J. Salzani et Cie.”<sup>41</sup>

The company also had connections with different shipping companies. For example, with the support of the Rhodes consuls, the merchants opened regular ferry services every 20 days between Izmir and Rhodes, starting from 1 October 1831. The agency of the company in Izmir was MM. J. Salzani et Cie.<sup>42</sup>

The experience that he gained in voyage and steamboat operations through his father’s trading house enabled Charles Salzani to become the head of one of the largest ferry companies in France. In 1852, he became the Izmir agent of the French Maritime Company. During this time, he carried out his business activities abroad and took on the responsibility of also representing Messageries, the largest ferry company in France, a position in which his prominence in the Izmir Levantine Catholic community surely played a role.

The Messageries Maritimes Company took over the service from the French Maritime Postal Service, had regular voyages between 1837 and 1851. The company preferred agents with experience and local influence, in order to maintain the route and book enough freight. Their choice would determine the fate of the company’s line in the Eastern Mediterranean basin.

Because of Salzani’s experience and good management, the business of the Messageries Company and the French trade in Izmir rapidly increased. Salzani’s position in the eyes of the Messageries executives and the French consuls in Izmir became highly valued. The headquarters of the company attached great importance to his offers and proposals regarding the

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mir. For more details, refer to BOA. HR. MKT. 544/86, dated 20 May 1866: Nursel Manav, “19. Yüzyıl Galatası’ndan Bir Banker: Darphane-i Amire ve Sefaretler Bankeri Jacques Alleon”, *Osmanlı Medeniyeti Araştırmaları Dergisi* 4, no. 7, (2018): 98.

41 *Journal de Smyrne Commercial, Politique et Littéraire*, no. 112, 19 April 1834.

42 *Journal de Smyrne, Feuille de Commerce*, n. 334, 15 September 1838.

business and immediately fulfilled them. Salzani established a monopoly in the passenger transportation of this port, especially along the Izmir-Marseille route, by making an agreement with leading freight and passenger brokers.<sup>43</sup> He reported that the ferries that had to stop by Izmir, should be high-tonnage cargo ships with very wide decks since he noticed the mail ferries visiting Izmir had been insufficient. He noted that freight and passengers were often lost to other companies due to the inability of mail ferries to transport sufficient quantities of commodities and passengers. He even informed the company headquarters that his suggestions should be applied not only for Izmir but also for all Levant lines.

Salzani proved effective in his role, and this included proposing new routes. For example, he proposed to extend the Syria-Izmir Messageries line to Istanbul in 1894. He also requested the opening of a new 22-hour line, travelling between the ports of Istanbul-Izmir-Alexandria, in competition with the Khedive Company. The administration of Messageries immediately accepted his proposals, improved these lines, and opened new routes.<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, he would remain in this role for over half a century, until 1905. Indeed, even beyond this date, he continued as an honorary agent of the Messageries until 1916.<sup>45</sup>

Salzani employed between eight to ten local agents at his business. These people had deep experience in their profession and were fluent in several languages. Most of them were of Greek, Italian or Armenian origin. His first assistant, Guillaume Alby, who started working at the agency in 1872, was fluent in Greek, French, and Italian. His second assistant, Gustave Alberti, spoke Greek, French, and Turkish. The salary of the agents varied between 7,000 to 10,000 francs and the payment of his first and second assistants ranged from 2,000 to 4,700 francs. Two Muslims, Osman, and Mehmet, worked in the agency at different times, both in the foreign

43 Süleyman Uygun, *Osmanlı Sularında Rekabet, Mesajeri Maritim Vapur Kumpanyası (1851-1914)*, (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2015), 150; AFL. (Archives de l'Association French Lines), 1997 002 4473, *Rapport General de Smyrne*, Chapitre 2, Secretariat, 1898-1904.

44 AFL. 1997 002 4473, *Rapport General de Smyrne*, Chapitre 4, Trafic, Chapitre 2, Secretariat 1893-1895.

45 *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne*, n. 180, 31 December 1907.

service.<sup>46</sup> Armenian employees proved essential as intermediary and broker merchants, connecting the Messageries agency and Salzani with contacts in Anatolia. The violence that took place during the Hamidian-era Armenian events, which spread across Anatolia from 1890s onwards, seriously damaged the company's import and export activities. As Salzani stated, *the recent events in Anatolia (Armenian events) affected the economic situation in the country, damaged commercial businesses. European industrial products that feed the traffic will find fewer buyers and consumers if security is not ensured and calm is not established as soon as possible. This is worrying.*<sup>47</sup> Salzani drew attention to the Armenian events and how it deeply affected the trade of Izmir. He also proposed administration to find a solution to the trade movements.

Charles Salzani also used his influence for expressly political purposes. He mobilized all of his resources for France during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871, for example, when France was decisively defeated by the Germans. The French official gazette stated that Salzani was the second name, after Izmir consul Comte Bentivoglio, in the commission for rescuing the wounded (Comite de secours aux blessés) in Izmir, and that he donated 500 francs to the commission. The French consul and Salzani ultimately collected 26,439 francs from the French colony in Izmir to support veterans wounded during the Franco-Prussian War.<sup>48</sup>

One of the most important institutions that Salzani headed was undoubtedly the French Chamber of Commerce in Izmir (La Chambre de commerce français de Smyrne), which was established through his intense initiative and efforts. The French Chamber of Commerce, established in Istanbul in 1884, spread to many Levantine port cities such as Alexandria, Thessaloniki, and Beirut in a short time.<sup>49</sup> Salzani and his friends founded

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46 AFL. 1997 002 4473, *Rapport General de Service Exercice de Smyrne, Chapitre 1, Personnel, annexée*; 1889, 1902, 1904.

47 AFL. 1997 002 4473, *Rapport General de Service Exercice de Smyrne, Chapitre 2, Secretariat*, 1895.

48 *Journal Officiel, de la republique Française*, no. 161, 10 June 1871, 1296.

49 Süleyman Uygun, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e İstanbul Fransız Ticaret Odası'nın Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri", *Osmanlı Mirası Araştırmaları Dergisi* 7, no 18, (2020): 488; *İstanbul and the Black Sea Coast Shipping and Trade (1770-1920)*, eds. Edhem Eldem and Sophia Laiou (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2018), 77-78.

the Izmir branch of the chamber with six members in 1889.<sup>50</sup> The initial executive board consisted of President Ch. Salzani, treasurer G. Trost, secretary Arthur Bon, and members E. Guiffroy, A. Bonnal, and A. Farkoa. Salzani was the leading figure, and afterwards other companies, such as Cousinery, Pagy, Tissot, Courson, Vidal, Whittal and Belhomme, became members of the chamber.<sup>51</sup> The purpose of establishing the chamber was to collect scattered statistical information about the origin of exported and imported products, and to reveal each country's share in the trade; even if such a task was likely impossible in the very dynamic commercial space of Izmir. Nevertheless, it was hope that the members could acquire some general statistical information about trade in the city, and to learn the reasons for the earlier decline and increase in French imports and exports.<sup>52</sup> The French Chamber of Commerce started to publish its own monthly newsletter under the name *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne* in 1893.<sup>53</sup> The Chamber made information available to its readers, members, and interested parties by periodically publishing the newsletter. Over time, the Chamber grew to over one hundred members and its annual income increased to 5,679 francs.<sup>54</sup> Foreigners who wanted to invest in Izmir, especially French merchants and investors, tried to get information by contacting chamber members directly or through consulates.<sup>55</sup>

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50 Correction Notice: In the article titled "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e İstanbul Fransız Ticaret Odası'nın Kuruluşu ve Faaliyetleri" (Foundation of the Istanbul French Chamber of Commerce: from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic), we previously mentioned the establishment date of the Izmir Chamber of Commerce as 1893, correlating it with the publication of its first newspaper. However, Chamber Secretary Arthur Bon asserted in a 1907 issue of the French Izmir Chamber of Commerce magazine that the Chamber was in fact established in 1889. For reference, see *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne*, no. 180, 31 December 1907, 1140.

51 *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne*, no. 2, 28 February 1893.

52 ACCIM. MQ. 55/104. Rapports Commerciaux des agents diplomatiques et consulaires de France, Année 1895, n. 271, Turquie d'Asie, Mouvement commercial de Smyrne pour l'année 1893.

53 *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne*, no. 2, 28 February 1893.

54 *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne*, no. 180, 31 December 1907, 1140.

55 *Bulletin Mensuel de la Chambre de Commerce Française de Smyrne*, no. 180, 31 December 1907, 1139.

The Chamber of Commerce enabled French institutions to become more organized and active. Traders and investors from all corners of the world requested information from the Chamber and contributed to Charles Salzani's relations and business circle. This meant that French interests grew stronger and more competitive in the city. A Levantine who had devoted his life to the French colony of Izmir to such an extent also won the praise of the Elysee Palace. On 11 July 1897, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded Charles Salzani with Chevalier de la Legion d'honneur by decree. The medal was presented to him on 7 November 1897.<sup>56</sup> In the Legion d'Honneur file, the positions Salzani held and the services he provided were summarized as follows:

He served as the president of the French Chamber of Commerce in Izmir for eight years, since its establishment.

He has served as the Izmir Agency of Maritim Company for 45 years.

He has been a Judge of the French General Consular Court (Tribunal de Consulat général de France) for 40 years.

He was a Tribunal mixte du commerce Ottoman Judge for three years.

He served as the National Depute (Depute de la Nation de Smyrne)<sup>57</sup>

As a short interview published in the bulletin of the Chamber of Commerce in Istanbul regarding the award given to Charles Salzani stated, "*We welcome the award of this well-deserved honor; we extend our sincere wishes and respect to M. Salzani.*" After this, the bulletin of the Chamber posed a question to Salzani:

Is a Frenchman morally obliged to make his choice in favor of the French product when he buys any goods?

Yes, he is obligated if this purchase does not primarily harm his interests. These are the French interests that urgently need to be protected. If I can buy the same product elsewhere for considerably less than the price of a French product, I will buy it without hesitation if it serves the same purpose. However, if the French product is the same price, I have a moral obligation to prioritize national production. A similar situation applies to the store: if the conditions are equal, I must agree

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56 For Charles Salzani's Legion d'Honneur file, see, ANF. LH. 2451/76, 11 July 1897; This medal given to Salzani was also reflected in the official records of the Ottoman Empire. In the telegram dated October 1, 1897, it was reported that the Messageries agent Salzani was awarded the Legion d'Honneur. BOA. Y. PRK. 15/16, PT. 1 October 1897.

57 ANF. LH. 2451/76, 11 July 1897.

with my citizens as customers. This is reflected in the suggestion given by a small brochure on my desk. In this brochure, it is written the current price of the French manufacturers' association (Société des Producteurs de France). The range of French stores is very rich, with a few exceptions, all products are French made, the large quantity of products makes it possible always to offer fresh products, and their weight is always precise and clear. French trading houses are quite reliable.<sup>58</sup>

Salzani's response to this question reveals the particular approach and perspective of a French citizen settled in a Levantine port-city, and in particular his sense of an obligation to protect French prospects and interests.

The documents in Salzani's Legion d'Honneur file also show that, beyond his career as a merchant and ship owner, he also held an important legal role. The French Consular Court and the Ottoman Mixed Commercial Court addressed most of the commercial cases in the Empire and were among its most important institutions. The members of these courts had to be experienced, impartial experts in both Ottoman and international law. After their appointment, they were subjected to a regular review and elimination process, which was an old Ottoman tradition.<sup>59</sup> The fact that Salzani was a judge on the General Consular Court and later the Ottoman Mixed Commercial Court for more than 40 years was a testament to his legal expertise.

In a significant number of Eastern Mediterranean cities, local French Levantine communities formed assemblies under the leadership of the French government and consular officials. Izmir was one of these cities, and Salzani served as a long-time deputy in its assembly (Les députés de la nation française de Smyrne). He was elected first in 1911 and assigned as the chief deputy of the entire French colony in the city; Joseph Vidal became the vice-deputy.<sup>60</sup> Salzani was a versatile and experienced French Levantine who played an essential role in the development and growth of the French colony of Izmir. He achieved most of the goals that he had set out

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58 For the full text of the interview with Salzani, see, *Chambre de Commerce Française de Constantinople Bulletin Mensuel*, n. 7, 20 October 1897, 133-135.

59 Feraud-Giraud, *De la juridiction Français dans les échelles du Levant et Barbarie*, I, (Paris: A. Durant Libraire, 1856), p. 68, There are many official records in the Ottoman archive about the procedures for the election of council members. BOA. HR. MKT. 507/28, 10 January 1865; BOA. HR. TO. 186/17, 10 February 1865; BOA. HR. MKT. 515/9, 3 April 1865.

60 *Correspondance d'Orient, Revue bimenselle de politique étrangère*, no. 55, 1 January 1911, 31.

to accomplish throughout his life. In the first place, he established a trade house, developed the company's interests, and provided essential positions and income for his family members. Further, he created a business network, and in the process expanded the influence and trading prospects of the French colony in Izmir. He brought the colony up to a more institutional, organized, and competitive standard. Despite his health problems and old age, he continued as an advisor and consultant with an honorary status and was well-regarded for his advice and ideas. Although he remained a devout Catholic, he never compromised his secular stance vis-à-vis the nation-state. Charles Salzani died on 30 September 1916. After the ceremony, which was held in Bornova Santa Maria Catholic Church, he was buried in the accompanying cemetery. His wife, Louis Salzani, died a year later and was buried next to him.<sup>61</sup> *Le Croix*, announced the news of his death to the Catholic world by stating that *our brother, the owner of the Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur, the agency of Maritim Company, passed away in Izmir at the age of 92.*<sup>62</sup>

## Conclusion

The opportunities provided by the capitulations, and the constantly developing trade in the Levantine ports under the protection of European consuls, paved the way for the permanent settlement of European merchants, sailors and entrepreneurs in the port cities of the Eastern Mediterranean. Although this bourgeois class was a minority, they adhered to their identity and citizenship based on their self-interest. They determined all of their occupations and activities, from trade to economy, their daily lives to marriages, based on the interests of the state and colony, alongside their personal beliefs, determined every aspect of their lives: their occupations and trade connections, their marriages and domestic activities. The commercial, economic, and socio-cultural activities of Charles Salzani were shaped within the humble Italian and French colony in Izmir, one of the most important port cities of the Levant. With the collapse of Venice, and

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61 "Louis Blaise Marie Charles Salzani," *Geneanet*, <https://gw.geneanet.org/mar-mara2?lang=en&pz=mathilde&nz=d+andria&p=louis+blaise+marie+charles&n=salzani>; (accessed date: 19. 04 2022)

62 *La Croix*, no. 10321, 28 October 1916.

the gradual emergence of the secular Italian nation-state, Joseph Salzani, Charles' father, predicted that it would be more fruitful to align the family with France, which promised greater stability and organization. He arranged his marriage with this political purpose in mind. Charles Salzani was thus born a Frenchman and devoted his life to developing the French colony in Izmir. His career would make him one of the leading figures of the colony, although he maintained common bonds with Italy. Throughout his life, for nearly a century, Charles Salzani took on important positions in various institutions and businesses, in fields ranging from maritime transport to trade, real estate, banking, agency, brokerage, as well as managerial, judicial or executive roles a variety of diplomatic and welfare institutions. Due to his contributions, the French Levantines of Izmir developed a vast network of trade relations and a flourishing business culture, as well as gained a more organized, institutionalized, and competitive socio-economic structure. The French Levantines, as a result, became a robust and influential class in Izmir's economic, political, religious, and socio-cultural life. Research focused on prominent individuals in Izmir and the Levantine community significantly illuminates the Ottoman Levantine world and helps to fill the existing knowledge gap. Charles Salzani, being one such influential figure in Izmir and the Levantine, underscores the importance and contribution of these studies to the field.

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BOA. HR. TO. 186/17.

BOA. HR. TO. 201/74.

BOA. İ. HR. 222/12960.

BOA. Y. PRK. PT. 15/16.

**ANF. National France Archives (Archives Nationales de France).**

ANF. LH. 2451/76, 11 July 1897.

**ADBR. Departmental Archive of Bouches-du-Rhône (Archives Departementales Bouches du Rhône) Marseilles, France**

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## Appendix



**Figure 1.** Final Resting Place of Charles & Louis Salzani  
(Located within the confines of Santa Maria  
Catholic Church in Bornova, Izmir).



**Figure 2.** Charles Louis Joseph Marie Salzani - A Moment Frozen in Time  
(This photograph, from the personal archive of Helene Grout de Baaufot Salzani, granddaughter of Charles Louis Marie Salzani and daughter of Jacques Salzani, offers a glimpse into the past).

# THE WHITTALL FAMILY AND THE MAKING OF BRITISH COMMERCIAL INTERESTS IN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Semih Gökatalay\*

## Introduction

At the annual meeting of the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey (BCCT) in April 1908,<sup>1</sup> its members applauded Sir William Whittall for his years-long commitment to preserving and defending British interests as the chair of this association. The formation of the chamber in 1887 coincided with the economic advance and enrichment of the Whittall family in the Ottoman Empire. While different families, such as the Blacks, had acquired a dominant position in British-Ottoman relations prior to the Crimean War, the Whittalls came to prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century. William Whittall soon became the most influential voice of the British business community in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> The chamber and the British business community at large benefited immeasurably from his decades-long chairmanship as he and other Whittalls acted as intermediaries between it and the British and Ottoman governments.<sup>3</sup>

With a specific focus on the Whittall family and the BCCT, this study investigates the role of British communities who resided in the Ottoman

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\* Ph.D. Candidate at University of California, San Diego, USA. Email: sgokatal@ucsd.edu, ORCID: 0000-0002-1524-7079. [doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8378005](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8378005)

1 The chamber was named “the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey and the Balkan States” in 1913. For the sake of consistency and simplicity, the BCCT is used throughout this text.

2 George Young, *Constantinople* (London: Methuen, 1926), 206.

3 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, May 1908, 142.

Empire in the making of British commercial interests in the Middle East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While considerable work has been done by historians and researchers to uncover the family story and social life of the Whittalls,<sup>4</sup> their role in the BCCT has largely remained outliers in such works.

The present study revamps the historical understanding of the family in relation to its position in the broader British mercantile community, British-Ottoman relations, and its ability to use the BCCT as an institutional vehicle to interact with British business groups across the world. The chamber sought to facilitate bilateral trade between the British and Ottoman Empires and articulate the collective interests of British businessmen in and around the Ottoman Empire. It became a forum for providing a voice for those engaged in business soon after its inception.

This chapter puts emphasis on the members of the family who resided in the Ottoman Empire and excludes those who did business in the United Kingdom and British colonies.<sup>5</sup> The presence of the Whittall family in the Ottoman Empire stretched back deep into the early nineteenth century. Their links with other Levantine families, British officials, and the Ottoman government enabled the Whittalls to become established in Ottoman markets despite their humble beginnings. The family diversified their businesses into various areas, including finance, mining, commerce, and shipping sectors over decades. Family members owned a number of companies in the Ottoman Empire, such as Whittall & Co. J.W.; Whittall, Saliel & Co. Ltd.; and Whittall & Co. C., that operated in Istanbul, Izmir, and Thessaloniki.<sup>6</sup> All these enterprises became members of the chamber,<sup>7</sup> giving more voice and power to the Whithalls in it. The family members were

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4 The most detailed studies are Osman Öndeş, *Modalı Vitol Ailesi* (Istanbul: Tarihçi Kitabevi, 2012); Zeynep Naz Simer, "Impacts of a Levantine Bourgeois Family; The 'Whittalls' in the 19th Century Ottoman Empire" (Master's Thesis, Istanbul Bilgi University, 2014).

5 The number of family members changed over time. By 1891, there were forty-seven Whittalls, 23 men and 24 women, in the Ottoman Empire, with fourteen of them being adults and the rest minors. For details, see The National Archives, Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office Records from 1782 (FO) 195/1732, 20 February 1891.

6 Joseph Nalpas, *Annuaire des commerçants de Smyrne et de l'Anatolie* (Izmir: Journal de Smyrne, 1893), 264.

7 *Istanbul* (Istanbul: British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey, 1911), 9–11.

further affiliated with different companies as managers and shareholders. For example, as “one of the leading members of the mercantile community,” J.W. Whittall served on the board of managers of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, since the 1870s.<sup>8</sup>

Based on a rich trove of primary sources, this study argues that the BCCT exercised a profound influence on business life despite periodic tension with political authorities, European imperialist competition in the Middle East, little support from the home government, and a series of wars and social unrest by channeling much of its efforts towards influencing the political and administrative processes both in the British and Ottoman Empires, forging enduring partnerships with other business communities, and cooperating with British chambers of commerce in the rest of the world.

This influence should be located within the historical linkage between the Ottoman Empire and Western countries. Great Britain and other great powers had already dominated the Ottoman economy through unequal commercial treaties, capitulatory rights, and the exploitation of raw materials before this chamber was born. This disparity paved the way for the further opening up of the Ottoman market and bolstered up the authority of foreign diplomats, especially the British, who used their power to safeguard the interests of both their respective citizens and protected subjects.<sup>9</sup> The control of Cyprus in 1878 and of Egypt in 1882 extended the frontiers of British influence in the Middle East. The BCCT put the Whittalls and other Levantine families conducting business in an economically underdeveloped part of the world that was constantly exposed to Western military pressures and economic penetration under one roof.

The next section provides a historical survey of its formation and operation. Sections 3 and 4 explore the protection of British commercial interests by the BCCT vis-à-vis British and Ottoman governments, respectively. Section 5 turns the attention to intermingled networks between the BCCT members and other business groups in the Ottoman Empire. Section 6 explores the multilayered connections between the BCCT and other British business associations in the international arena and the crucial role

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8 “Affairs at Constantinople,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 October 1876, 6.

9 Uygur Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları: İngiliz Belgeleriyle Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'ndaki İngiliz Konsoloslukları (1580-1900)* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayıncılık, 2004), 50.

of the chamber in facilitating the transfer of information between the Ottoman Empire and the rest of the world. Section 7 deals with the survival of the chamber during the transition to the Turkish Republic.

## The Formation and Growth of the Chamber

The formation of the BCCT was part of an international trend. As with other imperialist states, Great Britain began to set up chambers of commerce overseas in the late nineteenth century. Following the lead of the one in Paris in 1873, hundreds of British chambers sprang up around the globe. By 1914, almost all countries and empires surrounding the Ottoman Empire had at least one British chamber.<sup>10</sup> All these chambers exerted themselves in the service of British interests across the world.

As elsewhere, British businessmen in the Ottoman Empire aspired to unite in a chamber to enhance their collective power. Individuals and enterprises from Great Britain had been involved in the Ottoman economy, particularly in financial sectors, since the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> The BCCT gave them a unified and powerful voice in the Ottoman and British Empires. As business owners in a foreign land, it was important for such men to build formal connections with like-minded professionals.

Although the membership was open to all “traders, financiers, manufacturers, shipping and insurance agents,”<sup>12</sup> high-profile business leaders run the administration. Alfred Baker, Sydney La Fontaine,<sup>13</sup> Sidney Nowill, John R. Thomson, and Thomas C. Tucker were among the managers of the chamber in its early years. These figures came from prominent Levantine families and intertwined with one another through business partnerships.<sup>14</sup> They engaged

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10 Chambers in Alexandria, Cairo, Odessa, St. Petersburg, and Warsaw were among them (United States Federal Trade Commission, *Report on Cooperation in American Export Trade* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1916), 85).

11 Philip L. Cottrell, “A Survey of European Investment in Turkey, 1854-1914: Banks and the Finance of the State and Railway Construction,” in Philip L. Cottrell (Ed.), *East Meets West: Banking, Commerce and Investment in the Ottoman Empire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 60–61.

12 The National Archives, Records of the Board of Trade and of Successor and Related Bodies (BT) 58/829, 1887, 2.

13 The La Fontaine family originated from France and had close contact with the Whittall family in the empire.

14 Examples were Société anonyme ottomane de Fabrication de fils et d'étoffes en coton et laine (*Osmanlı İplik Mamulâtıyle Mensucat-ı İmtiyazlı Anonim Osmanlı Şirketi*)

in a variety of economic sectors, ranging from banking and transportation to insurance and commerce. Like other Levantine families, their businesses were headquartered on the Westernized commercial centers of Istanbul.<sup>15</sup> The networks that held these figures together further rested on personal contacts. Marriage strengthened the bond between the Whittalls and other British families, which gave rise to the growth of the former over time.<sup>16</sup>

The BCCT emerged as an Istanbul-based trade body and slowly, but steadily, extended its influence over major commercial hubs in the empire. British businessmen established a second branch in Izmir under the presidency of Richard Whittall in 1909.<sup>17</sup> Although this new branch stayed connected with the BCCT, it claimed to represent “a commercial life and trade routes quite separate from those of Istanbul.”<sup>18</sup> As with the chamber’s center, it aimed to “promote British trade generally and foster British union and combination in commercial matters.”<sup>19</sup> Another branch was formed in Thessaloniki in 1910.<sup>20</sup> The Izmir and Thessaloniki branches emerged out of necessity to concentrate on the concerns of their members at the local level.<sup>21</sup> With their proliferation, the BCCT represented larger segments of the British business communities. The number of its members raised from 212 in 1909 to 244 and 303, in 1910 and 1911, respectively. This increase

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(1886), the Anglo-Eastern Cooperative Company Limited (*İngiliz Şark Kooperatif Şirketi*) (1893), and the Oriental Carpet Manufactures Limited (*Şark Halı Şirketi*) (1907) (Edgar Pech, *Manuel des sociétés anonymes fonctionnant en Turquie* (Paris: np, 1906), 227; Edgar Pech, *Manuel des sociétés anonymes fonctionnant en Turquie* (Istanbul: Gérard Frères, 1911), 274, 283–284.

15 *Annuaire Oriental (ancien Indicateur oriental) du commerce, de l'industrie, de l'administration et de la magistrature* (Istanbul: Cervati Frères & Cie Co., 1891), 378, 390, 447, 451, 479–480.

16 Fatma Tanış and Carola Hein, “Space, Representation, and Practice in the Formation of Izmir during the Long Nineteenth Century,” in Christina Reimann and Martin Öhman, eds., *Migrants and the Making of the Urban-Maritime World: Agency and Mobility in Port Cities, C. 1570-1940* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 48.

17 FO 195/2331, 17 April 1909, 156.

18 “The Smyrna Chamber of Commerce,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 May 1909, 6.

19 *Daily Consular and Trade Reports*, 15 April 1909, 12–13.

20 Frank Walter Raffety, *Modern Business Practice Volume 3* (London: Gresham Pub. Co., 1912), 44; Isaac Pitman, *Theory and Practice of Commerce: A Complete Guide to Methods and Machinery of Business* (London: Pitman’s School, 1914), 533.

21 Such diversification was not limited to the BCCT but was a common strategy in other regions as well. For example, there were thirteen British chambers of commerce in China, which was a much more vital market for the British, in the same period (Frank M. Dudeney, *The Exporter’s Handbook and Glossary* (New York: I. Pitman, 1921), 113).

enabled the chamber to financially sustain its activities, acquire international prominence, and keep pace with its expenditure needs.<sup>22</sup>

Another major development in these years was the reorganization of the chamber. Although the chamber's managers had intended to incorporate it under British law since its formation,<sup>23</sup> it remained as a non-incorporated entity for a quarter-century.<sup>24</sup> The managers applied to be registered as a limited liability corporation in 1912.<sup>25</sup> It was incorporated under the Companies Act on August 22, 1913 and renamed the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey and the Balkan States.<sup>26</sup> The greatest material benefit of this change was the right of the chamber to "subsidize, or amalgamate with any local institutions, unions, or associations having objects altogether, or in part similar to the objects of the Chamber." This right, at least in theory, gave the chamber more freedom to engage in the Ottoman economy. The incorporation of the chamber as a British company also brought it several symbolic benefits, including the use of the British Royal Arms in their correspondence.<sup>27</sup>

This alteration further marked an important stage in the geographical reach of the BCCT. As its new title suggested, the chamber expanded its activities to the Balkans. The main motivation behind this goal was the territorial changes accompanied by the Balkan Wars. Since the Ottoman Empire lost most of its European provinces, the BCCT had difficulties maintaining its ties with commercial centers in the region. Soon after its reformation, the chamber appointed representatives in Balkan capitals to set up branches, foster British commercial presence, and ameliorate conditions for British business communities through interactions with local authorities.<sup>28</sup> New branches in Athens and Bucharest came to life in 1913 and 1914, respectively.<sup>29</sup> All these developments illuminated the ability of the BCCT to adapt to shifting economic and political dynamics in the

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22 *Istanbul*, 22.

23 BT 58/828, 5 September 1884, 1.

24 BT 58/827, 22 August 1912, 1.

25 BT 58/827, 17 September 1912, 1.

26 BT 58/824, 9 October 1913.

27 BT 58/824, 18 August 1913, 3.

28 *The Board of Trade Journal*, 2 October 1913, 15.

29 BT 58/824, 1 October 1913; 17 October 1913; *Österreichische monatschrift für den Orient*, 1914, 52.

Ottoman Empire and surrounding areas. As the subsequent two sections discuss, however, it was far from easy for it to cultivate and maintain good relations with political authorities.

### The BCCT and the British Government

As clearly stated in its charter, politics had no place in the BCCT.<sup>30</sup> The chamber and its members nonetheless became closely intertwined with the political process. Indeed, many of the members were personally involved in politics. For example, William Whittall, as well as W. George Gapheral, A. A. Hill, and Stephen Howill, who were the directors of the BCCT, were active members of the Administrative Reform Association,<sup>31</sup> a staunch advocate of English radicalism in the Victorian era in Great Britain.<sup>32</sup>

The preservation and promotion of British commercial interests necessitated the frequent interactions of the BCCT with British officials.<sup>33</sup> A diplomatic network of more than seventy consuls grew up to serve British interests in the Ottoman Empire in the early twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> Close contact between the BCCT and British diplomats in the empire, thus, allowed the chamber to enjoy a firmly-established empire-wide network to coordinate its activities and recruit new members more effectively. The BCCT made British consuls aware of its opinion on business issues and requested actions when its members needed assistance.<sup>35</sup> It occasionally received support from the home government to reinvigorate its economic activities. For example, the British government formed post offices in Istanbul, Izmir, and Thessaloniki to transfer money between the two empires more easily in the 1890s upon the request of the chamber.<sup>36</sup>

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30 BT 58/829, 1887, 8.

31 *The Nineteenth Century*, November 1900, 863, 873-874.

32 For details, see Olive Anderson, "The Janus Face of Mid-Nineteenth-Century English Radicalism: The Administrative Reform Association of 1855," *Victorian Studies* 8, no. 3 (1965): 231-242.

33 For example, it was obliged to provide trade-related information if British officials demanded (BT 58/829, 1887, 9). British officials were also present at the chamber's meetings (*Stamboul*, 15 February 1893, 2).

34 Kocabaşoğlu, *Majestelerinin Konsolosları*, 157.

35 For example, the chamber had good relations with Sir Henry Fawcett, who was the British Consul-General and Judge in Istanbul (*Stamboul*, 2 March 1893, 1).

36 William Miller, *Travels and Politics in the Near East* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes, 1898), 395.

Tensions nonetheless run high between the BCCT and British officials from time to time. The support given by the British government and its officials was rarely satisfactory to the BCCT. For example, the Austrian, French, and Italian chambers of commerce secured financial endorsements from their own governments, but the BCCT did not receive any official backing from the British government.<sup>37</sup> As a result, it had to be a “self-supporting” association with £112 of revenue per year while other chambers had an annual income of £200-340 in the 1880s.<sup>38</sup> Gladstonian fiscal orthodoxy, allied with the commitment to free trade that characterized the Victorian era, can help explain the limited support for the BCCT.<sup>39</sup> The BCCT was not alone in the lack of such an official endorsement. The British governments of the period did not respond to the demands of global British enterprises, including oil companies, to receive protection in the international arena until World War I.<sup>40</sup>

The dissatisfaction of the BCCT with the limited support from home led to plenty of grumbling about the British government. In his speech at the annual meeting of the chamber in 1901, for example, William Whittall stated that he made personal visits to Ottoman ports and realized that other foreign powers subsidized the steamers of their subjects for carrying their goods and mail whereas the British government subsidized only the transport of mail. On behalf of the chamber, he called for a variety of measures by the British government to “promote the interests of British traders and capitalists” in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>41</sup>

The construction of the Baghdad railway - arguably more than all other issues - added strain to ties between the BCCT and the home government. Even though Great Britain and France had received the lion's share

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37 “British Chamber of Commerce,” *The World's Paper Trade Review*, 29 September 1893, 5.

38 “The British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 June 1888, 4.

39 For details on British commercial diplomacy of the period, see T.G. Otte, “A Kind of Black Hole?: Commercial Diplomacy Before 1914,” in John Fisher, Effie G. H. Pedaliu, and Richard Smith (Eds.), *The Foreign Office, Commerce and British Foreign Policy in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 53.

40 Geoffrey Jones, *The State and the Emergence of the British Oil Industry* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1981), 79–80.

41 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, June 1901, 137.

when it came to the construction and operation of railways in the Ottoman Empire in the mid-nineteenth century, Germany began to threaten their positions after the 1870s. The question of the Baghdad Railway demonstrated the inter-imperial rivalry between Germany and Great Britain since the former made concentrated efforts to obtain a concession from Sultan Abdülhamid II to build such a lengthy and militarily vital rail line, thereby providing Germany access to the heart of the Ottoman markets.<sup>42</sup> Once completed, it could threaten the interests of Great Britain not only in the Middle East but also in India.<sup>43</sup>

As the voice of British businesses in the Ottoman Empire, the BCCT saw the project as an unsettling extension of Germany's rising power in the Middle East. It wanted British enterprises and politicians to be involved in the project as a counterweight to Germany. Some other business groups reacted strongly against any involvement. An anonymous article in *The Spectator* in April 1903, for example, questioned the project's profitability. While the rest of the British Empire and dominions, such as Canada, India, and South Africa, were full of opportunities for railway investment, the article asked, "who would give his money to lay lines in Mesopotamia, a land which on the death of the present Sultan or the break-up of the Turkish Empire may quite conceivably be overrun by the fierce tribesmen of Arabia?"<sup>44</sup> This article was emblematic of the general approach of big businesses in Great Britain towards long-term investments of enormous sums of money in the Ottoman Empire. An overarching concern for many British enterprises was that the British government would not promote their objectives in times of political turmoil and social upheaval in the Middle East.<sup>45</sup>

The BCCT was quick to reply to these ideas that discouraged British involvement in the Baghdad railway project. As the president of the chamber, William Whittall wrote an article for the same newspaper. He claimed that the German monopoly in the railway company would safeguard German trade networks and adversely affect British communities

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42 Murat Özyüksel, *The Berlin-Baghdad Railway and the Ottoman Empire Industrialization, Imperial Germany and the Middle East* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2016), 2.

43 Özyüksel, *The Berlin-Baghdad Railway*, 44.

44 *The Spectator*, 11 April 1903, 560–562.

45 John Burman, *Britain's Relations with the Ottoman Empire during the Embassy of Sir Nicholas O'Conor to Porte, 1898-1908* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2010), 188–189.

whose businesses very much depended on the transfer of any sort of British material into and from the empire. This scenario, he continued, would not only divert millions of trade to Germany but also decline the British volume of trade in the region. Whittall gave a personal example from his companies to persuade his target audience, i.e. British politicians and businesses at home: He had requested facilities for the transfer of goods by a German railway company, but the Germans denied his request. Since the Ottoman guarantee to the German lines already yielded sufficient revenue, they did not need Whittall's money. If Great Britain did not involve in the railway, he concluded, it would "commit a most serious and irremediable blunder."<sup>46</sup>

The unanswered pleas of Whittall demonstrated the conflicting visions of the BCCT and the British government about the promotion of British interests in the Middle East. While the Whittalls and other British entrepreneurs sought to secure and increase their economic presence in the region, the Ottoman Empire was not an utmost priority in the minds of most British policymakers. Instead, British officials put the consolidation of their influence in Egypt high on their list of concerns in this period.<sup>47</sup> In the words of Lawrence James, "the center of British influence in the Middle East shifted from Constantinople to Cairo" after 1908.<sup>48</sup>

Against this backdrop, the question of the Baghdad Railway came to the agenda of the BCCT and the British government during the Second Constitutional Era. The Unionist government initially viewed German investors with suspicion since they had cultivated close ties with Sultan Abdülhamid II.<sup>49</sup> The Whittall family and other members of the BCCT saw the opportunity to involve in the strategically imperative project and, if possible, take the Germans' place. As a director of the National Bank of Turkey, for example, Edwin Whittall held meetings with German bankers.<sup>50</sup> These attempts led to no substantial results for him and the BCCT. He and

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46 *The Spectator*, 2 May 1903, 697–698.

47 Burman, *Britain's Relations with the Ottoman Empire*, 22–23.

48 Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 344–345.

49 Boris Barth, "Anatolian and Baghdad Railways: Investment and Foreign Policy before the Great War," in Philip L. Cottrell (Ed.), *East Meets West: Banking, Commerce and Investment in the Ottoman Empire* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 168.

50 Özyüksel, *The Berlin-Baghdad Railway*, 108.

other members of the chamber failed to convince the British government to the assertion that the future progress of imperial interests in the Middle East depended on the British involvement in the railway. Namely, their canvases were not as expansive as they desired because of the limited support of the British government to them.

## Relations with the Ottoman Government

The promotion of British commercial interests required the chamber's active interactions with the Ottoman government where the decision-making power over local affairs lay. BCCT members tended to use British diplomats as the main conduit of influence on local state authorities since these diplomats operated inside the formal expression of British state power.<sup>51</sup> As with their counterparts in China, British businessmen in the Ottoman Empire had to "depend upon the mediation of diplomats."<sup>52</sup> British diplomats met with Ottoman ministers, including the Grand Viziers, and convinced them to consult with the chamber on matters concerning the British business community.<sup>53</sup> These efforts produced significant results in influencing the opinions of Ottoman policymakers in favor of the BCCT. For example, when the constitutional government prohibited the transmission of messages in the A.B.C. telegraphic codes in 1909, the chamber put pressure on it through the British Embassy; as a result, the government allowed the use of these codes.<sup>54</sup> As another example, the Unionists prohibited foreigners from fishing in Ottoman waters in 1913. The chamber advocated its revocation and sought to influence the government via the British Ambassador. Consequently, the government rescinded its decision.<sup>55</sup>

Apart from official circles, the managers of the chamber established ties with Ottoman state authorities through semi-official and private channels. They embraced issues ranging from trade license tax and customs duty to shipping and transportation difficulties by meeting high-ranking politicians and bureaucrats in person. The members of the Whittall family both

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51 BT 58/829, 1887, 9; *Stamboul*, 5 April 1894, 1.

52 John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 130.

53 FO 371/1234, 18 August 1911, 1.

54 "News Notes from other Lands," *American Exporter*, August 1909, 15.

55 "Trade with Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1913, 8.

in Istanbul and Izmir played a notable part in influencing the Ottoman decision-making process.<sup>56</sup> They directly afforded protection to British enterprises if they had problems with Ottoman customs authorities when they loaded and unloaded their cargo.<sup>57</sup>

The chamber's relations with the Ottoman officials significantly improved after 1908 as the end of the absolute monarchy recalibrated its relations with Ottoman political elites. The chamber publicly claimed that the business atmosphere that the constitutional era created sharply contrasted with that of the Hamidian rule.<sup>58</sup> During the 31 March Incident when pro-Sultan groups aimed to take over the constitutional rule, the politicians who were afraid of being murdered by rioters found refuge in the houses of the chamber's members. For example, Ahmed Muhtar Pasha hid in the Whittall mansion in Moda,<sup>59</sup> which was illustrative of individual Ottoman statesmen's friendliness toward British business interests.

Such close tie-up and friendships with politically influential people not only improved access to official circles but also brought real advantages to the chamber after the political tumult came to an end. For instance, an empire-wide boycott against goods and commodities originated from the Kingdom of Greece began in 1908 in protest of the incorporation of Crete into the kingdom. Certain British enterprises were targeted by the boycotters due to their connections with Greek enterprises. C. Whittall's and Co's Lighters was dropped from the list of boycotted firms thanks to the close relations of its owners to the Unionists.<sup>60</sup>

The members of the BCCT further launched new companies whose management was made up of prominent personalities close to the government and members of the Ottoman dynasty. For example, Edwin Whittall and Adam Block were members of the board of directors of the National Bank of Turkey, which was formed in 1909. Prince Ahmet Lütfullah Bey was among the founders of the bank, and Hüseyin Cahit Bey, a Unionist

56 "The British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 June 1888, 4; FO 195/2383, 1 March 1911; FO 195/2383, 22 November 1911.

57 FO 195/1808, 21 August 1893; FO 195/1808, 12 September 1893; FO 195/1808, 23 December 1893; FO 195/1850, 7 March 1894.

58 "Turkish Government Tenders," *American Exporter*, October 1909, 12.

59 Young, *Constantinople*, 323.

60 FO 195/2383, 19 August 1911, 1.

leader, was a director.<sup>61</sup> Likewise, Edwin Whittall obtained the concession to establish the Paşabahçe Tile and Brick Factory Ottoman Joint Stock Company (*Paşabahçe Kiremit ve Tuğla Fabrikası Osmanlı Anonim Şirketi*) in 1910.<sup>62</sup> Emmanuel Carasso (Karasu), a prominent Unionist, was one of the managers of the company.<sup>63</sup> Such enterprises identified the common interests of British businessmen and Ottoman political elites since they brought reciprocal economic gains for both sides.

Although the relationship between the chamber and different Ottoman governments generally went well, it was still not free from tension. British businessmen had actively engaged in philanthropy in the Ottoman Empire even before the formation of the BCCT. Guided by humanitarian ideals, they sought to extend every possible assistance to non-Muslims who were believed to be in need of help.<sup>64</sup> For example, the chamber contributed to relief efforts after the Earthquake of 1894 in Istanbul. According to Muslim residents of the capital, the chamber clearly favored non-Muslims, and Muslims could not receive any help from the chamber. Upon their complaint, the Ottoman government warned the chamber about its alleged discrimination.<sup>65</sup>

Such tension became more evident during and after the Balkan Wars in line with the bewilderment between Great Britain and the Ottoman Empire. On the one hand, the resurgent economic nationalism, which aimed to decrease the dependence of the Ottoman economy on the Western Powers, became more outspoken. The promotion of indigenous enterprises and the enactment of measures to advance national interests threatened the ability of British businesses to prosper in the Ottoman markets. On the other hand, the chamber's members hoped to act freely without any restrictions from

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61 Gündüz Ökçün, *1909-1930 Yılları Arasında Türkiye'de Bankacılık Alanında Kurulan Anonim Şirketler* (Ankara: Hacettepe Üniversitesi, 1973), 5-6.

62 T.C. Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Osmanlı Arşivi (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey Directorate of State Archives, Ottoman Archives) (BOA) İ.M.L., 90-49, 10 November 1911, 1.

63 Pech, *Manuel des sociétés anonymes fonctionnant en Turquie* (1911), 308.

64 Michelle Tusan, "At Home in the Ottoman Empire: Humanitarianism and the Victorian Diplomat," in Barry Crosbie and Mark Hampton, eds., *The Cultural Construction of the British World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 78.

65 Sema Küçükalioglu Özkılıç, "1894 Depreminin İstanbul Üzerindeki Etkileri (Deprem Sonrası İmar Faaliyetleri)" (Ph.D. diss., Marmara University, 2011), 145.

the Ottoman government. For example, they were against the trial of British subjects in Ottoman courts but demanded the settlement of commercial and other disputes by British officials.<sup>66</sup> From the vantage of Ottoman politics, however, such desire clearly undermined the state authority.

Relations between the chamber and the Ottoman state, which had already shown signs of deterioration, ceased with the Ottoman entry into World War I on the side of the Central Powers. Ottoman declaration of war against the Allies gave rise to endless complications for the operation of the chamber. Its British members were expelled from the empire. The unilateral abrogation of capitulations by the Ottoman government created further resentment in British businessmen since they wished to preserve their economic advantages over local enterprises. The chamber became the focal point of campaigns run by those frustrated by the abolition. It sent a letter to British officials, stating that the end of concessions would adversely affect British subjects. Their reasoning was that “the Ottoman law and customs were based on the Islamic law,” which, in their opinion, was “very different from those of Western civilization and cannot be applied to Western peoples.”<sup>67</sup>

As such, when the Ottoman leaders had proved willing to allow the ICOC more freedom, British businessmen found little cause to oppose government policies prior to 1912. Once it confronted any policies that began to threaten its privileges in Ottoman markets or the government imposed any controls and restrictions on the British population, however, the chamber directly attacked the Ottoman government and its institutions. In the end, the BCCT sought to protect the financial livelihood of its affiliates whereas the Ottoman government aimed to secure the empire’s economic independence and designated the abolition of capitulations as a core issue of imperial interest.

World War I brought a sudden shift in the relations of the BCCT with both the British and Ottoman governments. Although British businessmen remained formally excluded from Ottoman provinces,<sup>68</sup> branches in

66 “Trade with Turkey,” *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1913, 8.

67 *The Capitulations: Memorandum Submitted on Behalf of the non-official British Community in Constantinople* (Istanbul: np, 1914), 4.

68 *Commercial Year Book* (Derby: Derby Chamber of Commerce, 1916), 97.

other places, such as Athens and Bucharest, flourished.<sup>69</sup> The new branches sought to secure mutual trading agreements between the Balkan countries and Great Britain.<sup>70</sup> They even began to bear responsibility for British chambers in the Russian Empire following the Bolshevik Revolution.<sup>71</sup> The one in Athens was formed as an independent chamber towards the end of the war. Prominent businessmen, such as Charlton Whittall, served on the board of directors.<sup>72</sup> British men of business had a broader reach and deeper relationships in business communities across the Balkans in the midst of the war thanks to these chambers of commerce.

The return to peace and the Allied occupation of the Ottoman capital restored the activities of the BCCT in its former center. Unlike the pre-war period, the chamber cultivated good relations with British officials in Istanbul. For example, Rear-Admiral Sir Richard Webb, who was the Assistant High Commissioner, attended the annual general meeting of the chamber in 1920.<sup>73</sup> The BCCT's members demanded indemnities from the Ottoman government because they claimed that Ottomans "forcibly occupied and damaged" British properties during the war. They put pressure on the high commissioner.<sup>74</sup> As another difference from the pre-war period, they established good relations with other foreign business groups and became a member of "Union Permanente," which was an umbrella institution for foreign chambers of commerce to secure the interests of American and European merchants in occupied Istanbul.<sup>75</sup> The chamber enjoyed an increase in the number of members throughout the Armistice period thanks to this favorable economic and political atmosphere. With its six hundred members, it had affiliations not only in the Balkans and the Middle East but also in the South Caucasus and South Russia.<sup>76</sup>

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69 *Commercial Year Book*, 119; *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, 17 September 1920, 214.

70 *Business Equipment Topics*, June 1917, 102.

71 *Business Equipment Topics*, June 1917, 106.

72 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, August 1918, 192.

73 *Journal of the British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey and the Balkan States*, June 1920, 1.

74 *The Near East*, 21 July 1921, 93.

75 *Mohammedanism: Turkey in Asia (I)* (London: H.M. Stationery Office, 1920), 109.

76 Eliot Grinnell Mears, *Modern Turkey: A Politico-economic Interpretation, 1908-1923* (New York: Macmillan, 1924), 350.

Likewise, the chamber furthered its activities in Izmir and surrounding areas with the Greek invasion of Western Anatolia. Arthur Whittall, who was a high-ranking military officer, had good relations with non-Muslim communities in the region.<sup>77</sup> British entrepreneurs expanded their business interests in Izmir in this favorable atmosphere. For example, British merchant families in this city, including the Whittalls, purchased the Ottoman Steam Navigation Company in Izmir (*İzmir Körfezi Osmanlı Vapuruları "Hamidiye" Anonim Şirketi*), which had been owned by Muslim and non-Muslim Ottomans. All these developments proved that the BCCT was remarkably adaptable in the face of enormous economic and political changes in the final years of the empire.

### The BCCT and Other Businesses in the Ottoman Empire

The BCCT promoted itself as an inclusive avenue, rather than one targeted at only British subjects. It welcomed businessmen of other nationalities as long as they featured as agents of British enterprises.<sup>78</sup> Accordingly, its reach extended to provinces through the involvement of indigenous merchants. The Whittalls had already enjoyed intimate connection to Ottoman businesses in Istanbul and the rest of the empire before the formation of the BCCT because their success in business depended on indigenous commercial networks in Ottoman provinces. Their familiarity with local cultures and customs helped the Whittalls establish cordial relations between the Ottomans and the British,<sup>79</sup> granting this family an advantage over their local and foreign competitors. The formation of BCCT gave them and other British families the opportunity to engage with local economic actors more energetically and strengthen commercial links between the two empires.

As with other foreign business associations, the BCCT had much sounder relations with non-Muslims than Muslims, though. In principle, all people of business, regardless of their ethnic and religious affiliations,

77 Engin Berber, *Sancılı Yıllar: İzmir 1918-1922 - Mütareke ve Yunan İşgali Döneminde İzmir Sancağı* (Ankara: Ayraç Yayınevi, 1997), 106.

78 "The British Chamber of Commerce in Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, 20 June 1888, 4.

79 Sidney Whitman, *Turkish Memories (1896-1908)* (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1914), 242.

were eligible for membership. Nonetheless, only a handful of Muslim merchants were affiliated with it. For example, it had only one Muslim member (Muhammed Fazıl Hacı Abdullah) in 1911.<sup>80</sup> The exclusion of Muslims was deeply bound to the relations of British officials and civic figures with non-Muslim communities over decades. British diplomats protected the commercial interests of Protestant and Jewish subjects of the empire not only in the capital but also in provinces.<sup>81</sup> British businessmen further had close economic and social ties with their Greek-Orthodox counterparts, particularly in Istanbul.<sup>82</sup>

On the eve of World War I, however, the attitude of the chamber towards non-British members began to change. The chamber still welcomed them but did not permit them to serve in the administration. By 1913, only British subjects had the right to be included in the board of directors whereas others could be invited only for consultative purposes without a right to vote in decisions.<sup>83</sup> The relative weakness of the chamber in its early years dictated the involvement of non-British members in the administration. As the chamber grew in power and number, however, its reliance upon these businessmen diminished.

The strength of the BCCT at any given moment was linked to its relationships with local business groups. Its leading members had cultivated strong relations with other business associations in Istanbul and commercial centers of the empire even before the formation of the BCCT. They primarily aimed to forge good connections with local business groups. When the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICOC) was founded in 1882, William J. H. Whittall not only joined it but also took part in management as a member of the administrative committee.<sup>84</sup> Bedrik Güldenkyan and George Sivastopulo served in the administration of both chambers.<sup>85</sup>

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80 *Istanbul*, 10.

81 Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882: Studies in Social, Economic, and Political Development* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), 60.

82 Whitman, *Turkish Memories*, 204.

83 BT 58/824, 18 August 1913, 1.

84 Hakkı Nezihi, *50 Yıllık Oda Hayatı 1882-1932* (Istanbul: Sanayii Nefise Matbaası: 1932), 63.

85 *Stamboul*, 30 July 1891, 1.

The Commercial Club of Istanbul was another forum for the BCCT members to cultivate close ties with local business leaders. The board of directors included both Ottoman and foreign men of business, such as William Whittall, as well as Mehmed Abud Efendi, Sinekerim Manukyan, and Dikran Karagözyan, all of which were among the managers of the ICOC.<sup>86</sup> Such affiliations helped the BCCT members have a solid network of fellow businessmen.

Officials were instrumental in bringing Ottoman and British business groups closer. For example, the Ottoman government received a copy of the commercial report prepared by the British Consuls in Baghdad, Izmir, and Thessaloniki and the chamber, on the current state of the Ottoman economy in 1909. It sent out the report's copies to Ottoman chambers of commerce in provinces for them to take the information into account.<sup>87</sup>

While this officially endorsed collaboration increased the relations between the British and Ottoman chambers of commerce, the BCCT had fierce competition with its Western counterparts since each strove to enhance the competitiveness of its own members in the local markets.<sup>88</sup> It waged a campaign against the competition of other European and American businesses. According to American businessmen in the Ottoman Empire, the BCCT members propagated against American goods and told Ottoman customers that “the Americans were dumping all of their worthless trash” into the Ottoman markets and that the Americans brought only products that “could not be sold in any part of the world or that had been returned as defective or damaged by other countries” to Ottoman customers.<sup>89</sup>

As it sought to compete against American and European rivals, the BCCT encountered a major problem. While other business groups garnered the support of their respective governments, it did not receive the

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86 *Annuaire Oriental*, 486.

87 BOA, DH. MUI., 28-13, 30 October 1909, 1.

88 The Whittalls and other British families were not the only Levantine family that sought to build trans-imperial connections in the Ottoman Empire. One such family was the Poche-Marcopolis. For details, see Malte Fuhrmann, *Port Cities of the Eastern Mediterranean: Urban Culture in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 301. The Giraud family of Izmir was another example. For their relations to the Whittalls, see Tanış and Hein, “Space,” 44–61.

89 “The Harbor at Smyrna,” *American Exporter*, July 1909, 97.

official endorsement of British authorities in London and the Ottoman Empire. This difference led the BCCT to lag behind its counterparts. Other chambers not only recruited more members but also sold their journals to a higher number of readers, both of which contributed to the financial success of these associations. For example, the French and Italian Chambers of Commerce in Istanbul had 883 and 335 subscribers to their journals, respectively, in 1903, whereas the official journal of the BCCT was sold to 115 people, including those in Izmir and Thessaloniki.<sup>90</sup>

When British businessmen attempted to expand their sphere of influence at the expense of their rivals, the absence of direct support from the British government prevented them from expanding their reach. With the support of their own governments, for example, Hungarian and Romanian businessmen organized exhibitions of their respective products in the Ottoman Empire, which accelerated their penetration into local markets. The British Chamber of Commerce at Izmir, however, intended but failed to arrange a similar showroom for British items because of the “insufficient support” of the British government.<sup>91</sup>

**Table 1.** The Value of Trade between the Ottoman Empire and the United Kingdom (1894-1912) (\$) <sup>92</sup>

	1894	1900	1906	1912
Exports from the Ottoman Empire to the United Kingdom	25,238	24,264	27,851	20,506
Imports from the United Kingdom to the Ottoman Empire	39,842	36,564	48,366	43,762

The main rival of the BCCT and its members was German enterprises operating in the Ottoman Empire. German influence on the Ottoman economy and politics steadily grew in the late nineteenth century, which

90 Josef Grunzel, *Bericht über die wirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse des Osmanischen Reiches* (Vienna: Aus der k. k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1903), 143–144.

91 *Mohammedanism*, 104.

92 These statistics included only goods and commodities that were directly shipped between the two states. When they were transferred via other regions, the transfer was accredited to intermediaries (Mears, *Modern Turkey*, 349).

loomed the British-German rivalry larger. The relative decline in the power of Great Britain alarmed not only the BCCT but also certain businessmen in England.<sup>93</sup> As the German influence increased in the Second Constitutional Era, the chamber urged its members, the business community at home, and the British government to take steps against German ascendancy.<sup>94</sup> In a speech at the annual meeting of the chamber in 1910, Sir Adam Block, the president of the chamber, complained about the increasing share of Germany in Ottoman imports. While the British export to the Ottoman markets increased in the same period (Table 1), their share declined because of German expansion. Block criticized not only the home government but also the “take-it-or-leave-it style” of British entrepreneurs who did not take concrete actions to put an end to the growing gap between Germany and Great Britain.<sup>95</sup> When Hugo Dieter Stinnes, a German industrialist and politician, aimed to introduce German coal to the Ottoman Empire in 1914, the BCCT likewise perceived it as a step to “oust” the British from the Middle Eastern markets.<sup>96</sup> The lack of government support for the chamber and the advent of World War I, however, prevented the BCCT from taking important strides to increase the British influence on the Ottoman economy at the expense of the Germans.

### The BCCT and Other British Business Associations

One of the BCCT’s main objectives was to come into direct contact with other British chambers of commerce elsewhere in the world.<sup>97</sup> The BCCT took steps to strengthen its outreach to business circles at home soon after its formation. The North of England Branch, which worked under the supervision of the chamber, was entrusted with this goal. It became a vehicle for companies based in England to access a business network throughout the Ottoman Empire and neighboring areas.

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93 Richard Davey, “Constantinople - Stamboul, Old and New,” *Journal of the Society of Arts*, 15 November 1895, 354.

94 “Foreign Chamber of Commerce,” *Weekly Consular and Trade Reports*, 25 June 1910, 805.

95 *The Electrical Review*, 15 April 1910, 578.

96 *Gas and Oil Power*, 7 May 1914, 173.

97 BT 58/829, 1887, 9.

Another critical point of communication between the BCCT and other British business groups was the Association of Chambers of Commerce, an international union of British chambers of commerce around the globe that acted on behalf of their constituents. By 1915, 109 chambers in England and abroad and their 28,000 members were affiliated with the association.<sup>98</sup> This association convened biennial congresses in London and the colonies, starting in the late nineteenth century. Representatives from chambers discussed their business-related issues and problems that they encountered in and outside the British Empire. They searched for ways to exert influence on the British government. The BCCT, which was a permanent member of the association, sent representatives to these gatherings.<sup>99</sup> As with other components of the association, it declared its opinion about potential changes in the British government's economic and foreign policies.<sup>100</sup> Affiliation with the association, thus, gave the chamber a unique opportunity to get their ideas and concerns across in the international arena.

The BCCT benefited from other avenues to reach out to its counterparts elsewhere. The official publication of the association, *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, provided a forum for its members to write articles and send the summary of their meetings. For example, William Whittall urged British businessmen to become more aggressive in the Middle Eastern markets by adapting themselves to "the altered trade conditions of the world" in 1908.<sup>101</sup> He further sent letters to business associations in the United Kingdom to put more pressure on the British government to financially back the BCCT.<sup>102</sup> Sir Adam Block, who assumed the position of Whittall in 1910, reiterated his call.<sup>103</sup> The BCCT also sent delegations to imperial business conferences. For example, Richard Whittall, the President of the British Chamber of Commerce at Izmir, and delegates from Istanbul participated in the Imperial Motor Transport Conference in 1913.<sup>104</sup>

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98 United States Federal Trade Commission, *Report on Cooperation in American Export Trade*, 85.

99 "The Empire's Trade," *The Globe*, 28 April 1896, 5; *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, June 1900, 3.

100 *The Metric System of Weights and Measures* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1902), 163.

101 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, May 1908, 127.

102 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, August 1908, 236.

103 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, May 1910, 128.

104 *Motor Traction*, 7 June 1913, 539.

The BCCT's ability to share its knowledge of local markets with the outside world strengthened the regular communication between it and other British chambers. As clearly stated in its founding charter, the chamber was "to provide information which shall be useful for British traders."<sup>105</sup> One way for spreading information for such associations was through trade journals. The Hamidian era saw the emergence of commercial journalism, mostly by foreigners. Concurrently with the French Chamber of Commerce, the BCCT began to publish its own journal in 1887.<sup>106</sup> The American and Belgian chambers later followed in their footsteps.<sup>107</sup> While the journal had been initially printed in London, its publication was done in Istanbul after 1911.<sup>108</sup> The BCCT retained a network of correspondents in major commercial centers and the empire's outlying regions who supplied it with the latest news and recent developments in the Middle East. Through its journal, as well as local and international media outlets in English, the BCCT gave information about the decisions of the Ottoman government with respect to customs duties, taxes, and other bureaucratic regulations.<sup>109</sup> Its main purpose was to attract British capital into the empire through information on trade opportunities in Ottoman provinces.<sup>110</sup> The frequent references to the BCCT's journal in international trade journals suggested that it was seen as a reliable source of business intelligence and information on investment issues.<sup>111</sup>

The provision of information to other British business groups was not confined to the BCCT's journal. The chamber sent its annual reports to both trade journals and popular newspapers in the Anglo-Saxon World.<sup>112</sup>

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105 BT 58/829, 1887, 9.

106 The Izmir branch began to publish its own quarterly trade journal in 1909 ("The Smyrna Chamber of Commerce," *The Manchester Guardian*, 5 May 1909, 6.

107 Enver Ziya Karal, *Osmanlı Tarihi VIII. Cilt: Birinci Meşrutiyet ve İstibdad Devirleri (1876-1907)* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2000), 444.

108 *Istanbul*, 22.

109 *The Economist*, 14 November 1914, 869; *The Economist*, 19 December 1914, 15.

110 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, May 1908, 126; *al-Muqtabas*, 1912, 80; "British Chamber of Commerce of Turkey," *The Athenaeum*, 10 May 1913, 522.

111 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, May 1908, 133; July 1908, 208; November 1908, 299.

112 "Trade with Turkey," *The Manchester Guardian*, 4 May 1913, 8; "Turkey's Trade Openings Shown in British Report," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 14 May 1914, 3.

These reports provided detailed accounts of Ottoman markets.<sup>113</sup> Furthermore, the BCCT was willing to share any peculiar information about local conditions with investors and exports in the imperial center and colonies upon request.<sup>114</sup> It provided sector-specific analyses that were designed to assist the special needs of a particular branch of the economy. For example, the BCCT elucidated the market for electrical machinery in the Ottoman Empire by sending a letter to the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. It pointed to the growing interest of industrialists from Belgium and Germany in Ottoman markets, which could jeopardize British interests in the region. The chamber stated its eagerness to provide relevant information to English businessmen by sending their queries to George Thomas, who was the secretary for the North of England Branch.<sup>115</sup>

Since the chamber safeguarded the overall interests of the British in the Middle East, other British chambers appreciated and backed its efforts. The London Chamber of Commerce, for example, agreed to raise its causes at home, such as establishing a launch system, reducing the insurance and sanitary dues, promoting official protection for its members, and re-fashioning the British commercial attacheship in Istanbul in a way to foster relations between the British government and commercial communities in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>116</sup>

The interests of individuals, however, occasionally came into collision with the established interests of the BCCT, as evidenced by the question of the Istanbul lighthouse. The chamber closely worked with the North of England Steamship Owners' Association to advance the interests of British shipowners.<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, certain groups were not satisfied with the efforts of the chamber. As the representative of the West of England Steamship Owners Protection & Indemnity Association Ltd., for example, George Saldji accused the chamber of discarding the demands of British enterprises to reduce the lighthouse dues in an open letter in 1903.

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113 *Asian Review*, 1909, 390-391.

114 "British Chamber of Commerce," *The World's Paper Trade Review*, 29 September 1893, 5.

115 *The Manchester Guardian*, 12 June 1907, 10.

116 *The Chamber of Commerce Journal*, December 1903, 301.

117 "The Constantinople British Chamber of Commerce," *The Manchester Guardian*, 28 March 1896, 9.

In response, Whittall wrote an article in *The Syren and Shipping*, a London-based weekly trade journal. He claimed that the chamber had done its best to keep the cost of dues as low as possible, and indeed, contributed its deduction by 25 percent. The current duty, he continued, was decided upon by a committee of international business representatives, including Adam Block of the BCCT. Since all parties involved advocated the “maintenance of the status quo,” Whittall wrote, the dues could not be changed in the short future.<sup>118</sup>

As a spokesperson for his company, Saldji brought up this issue during the Second Constitutional Era. He sought to reduce the charges and, if possible, obtain the lighthouse’s concession. He met in person with and received a warm response from Ottoman officials. Minister of Finance Mehmed Cavid Bey promised Saldji to take the issue to the notice of the government and Ottoman shipowners and contacted the Ministry of Marine to resolve his concerns. In a letter written to *The Nation*, Saldji wrote that both the British Embassy and the chamber showed no concern whatsoever about the demands of shipowners and were against “the legitimate desire of the British shipowners.” For him, it was difficult to comprehend their attitude even though their duty was “to support British interests” in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>119</sup> Namely, the actions of the BCCT did not always suit all British merchants and shipowners but instead promoted the interests of certain Levantine families, such as the Whittalls, who dominated its administration.

## Conclusion

The Whittall and other leading Levantine families were central to the operation of the BCCT. They periodically gathered to discuss the important issues that concerned the members of the chamber in particular and the British community in general. All of them, albeit in different ways and to different degrees, contributed to the vitality and strength of the chamber. The fact that they generously gave their time and expertise to this chamber and its missions demonstrates the importance of determining policies and setting goals for the British business community through the BCCT.

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118 *The Syren and Shipping*, 29 April 1903, 222.

119 George A. Saldji, “Light Dues at Constantinople,” *The Nation*, 22 January 1910, 678.

Chamber members met with political authorities, Ottoman and British, to get a solution to their business-related and other problems. It is true that the BCCT labored to strengthen British influence over the Middle East. The fact that the BCCT acted in support of British imperial interests, however, did not necessarily mean that it enjoyed the benevolent attention of the British government. Its managers often complained about the disinterest of the home government in the well-being of British businesses in the Ottoman Empire. As a self-interested association, it was likely for the chamber to exaggerate the lack of official endorsement. Nonetheless, a number of other accounts provided similar observations about the indifference of the British government to the BCCT,<sup>120</sup> which confirmed the validity of its claims. Taken as a whole, the Ottoman state appeared more receptive than the British one to the demands of the chamber until the Balkan Wars. Only thereafter, the chamber developed close working relationships with British officials until the final days of the Ottoman Empire.

Although Britain was not directly at war with Ankara, the Turkish victory over the Greek army constituted an intractable problem for the BCCT after 1922. They were alarmed by the news about the termination of capitulations during the negotiation of the Treaty of Lausanne.<sup>121</sup> They spoke out publicly about this possibility as an “irreparable injury which would be inflicted upon” the British business community.<sup>122</sup> Though each had its own ambitions in the former Ottoman Empire, the American, British, French, and Italian chambers of commerce harmonized their aims to sustain capitulations. They held meetings with and put pressure on the High Commissioner.<sup>123</sup> The BCCT’s open opposition to the abrogation of capitulations found an echo abroad. The Association of British Chambers of Commerce and its affiliates made a request to British politicians to take action on capitulations.<sup>124</sup>

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120 Miller, *Travels and Politics in the Near East*, 494-495; Whitman, *Turkish Memories*, 190; *The Quarterly Review*, July 1917, 311.

121 *The Near East*, 31 August 1922, 273.

122 *The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Journal*, 15 December 1922, 806.

123 *The Near East*, 19 October 1922, 501; *The Near East*, 2 November 1922, 572.

124 *The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Journal*, 15 August 1922, 549; *The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce Journal*, 15 November 1922, 740.

The BCCT, however, lacked the economic power and the political means necessary to nullify the Treaty of Lausanne and reinstate capitulations.<sup>125</sup> When the Turkish Republic was formed, the remaining British communities in the country looked for ways to maintain its activities and reach an understanding with the new political elites.<sup>126</sup> The Whittalls and other British families decided to compromise with the Kemalists in order to maintain their business interests in Istanbul and other Turkish provinces.<sup>127</sup> They remained an important - if no longer dominant - component of the mercantile community of Istanbul in the republican era as well. As with the closing decades of the Ottoman Empire, members from these families continued to serve in numerous leadership roles in the BCCT.<sup>128</sup>

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125 *The Export World & Commercial Intelligence*, August 1923, 570.

126 For details, see Kate Fleet, "Money and Politics: the Fate of British Business in the New Turkish Republic," *Turkish Historical Review* 2, no. 1 (2011): 18-38.

127 Mears, *Modern Turkey*, 350.

128 For example, Kenneth E. Whittall was in the management of the chamber. The Bakers, the La Fontaines, the Nowills, and the other notable British families held positions in management as well (H. T. Montague Bell, *The Near East Year Book and Who's Who* (London: The Near East, Ltd, 1927), 787).

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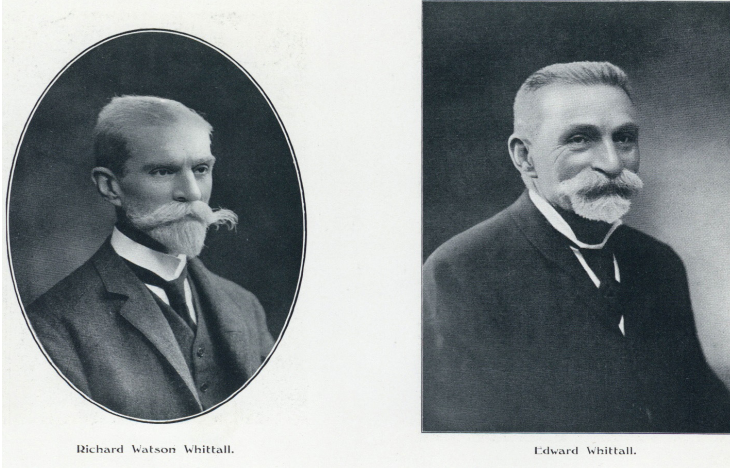
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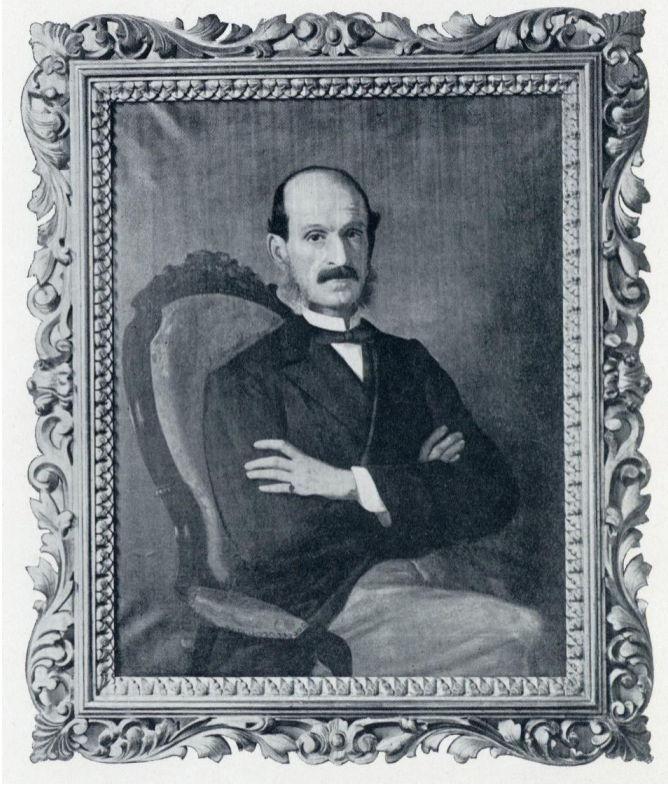
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## Appendix



**Figure 1.** Portraits of Richard Watson Whittall (1847–1920) and Edward Whittall (1851–1917) (Salt Arařtırma, Whittall Arřivi, AFMWHTBK00105).



**Figure 2.** James Whittall (1819–1883)  
(Salt Arařtırma, Whittall Arřivi, AFMWHTBK00104).

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