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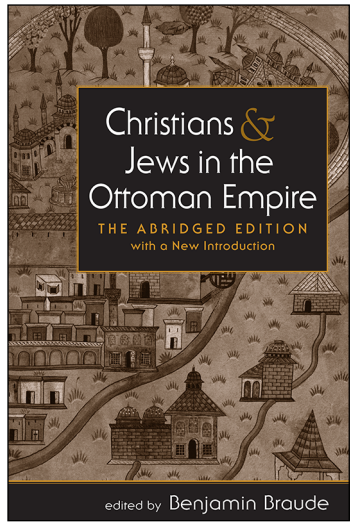
Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Abridged Edition

edited by
Benjamin Braude



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1

Introduction

Benjamin Braude

Thirty years ago the first edition of this book appeared. In the intervening decades the historical problems it addressed have become, if anything, even more timely. The salience of its themes has increased. Spurred by the collapse of the Soviet Union and its satellites, encouraged by the economic rise of an increasingly self-confident Turkey, inspired by the ferment of anti-autocratic movements in the Arab world, the quest for alternate political and social systems has sought a usable past. Decades of intermittent communal conflict in the former Yugoslavia, Libya, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Israel-Palestine—all territories formerly under Ottoman rule—have prompted a degree of nostalgia for the comparative stability that had prevailed during the centuries of that dynasty's dominion. Such nostalgia, however, is challenged by the charge that it was precisely the legacy of Ottoman policies that created those tensions.

Three gastronomic metaphors capture the contrasting views. The Ottoman Empire was a benign melting pot in which many communities came together to create a shared sensibility that still allowed differences to survive. Alternatively the Ottoman Empire was a pressure cooker that suppressed the natural instincts of its subjects with brute force. Once the empire's collapse removed the lid, its long suffering subjects reacted with pent-up fury. A third, more neutral metaphor is better known in French than in English. The empire was a macédoine, or macedonia, a fruit salad or a dish of mixed vegetables, sometimes raw, sometimes cooked. That gastronomic term gained special currency in the late nineteenth century when Ottoman Macedonia and its neighborhood—comprised internally of a bewildering kaleidoscope of ethnic, linguistic, and religious groups and externally all the adjoining states—erupted in notorious multilateral conflicts. The fraught character of Macedonia has continued into the twenty-first century. Due to the unprecedented insistence of its neighbor Greece, ever since the Republic of Macedonia joined the United Nations in 1993, it has been compelled to do business in that international body under a bizarre name—the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, abbreviated as FYROM.

In fact, the macédoine metaphor originated centuries earlier, well before the struggles that marked the closing decades of the Ottoman Empire and the breakup of Yugoslavia. And that eighteenth century reference was not to the Macedonia of modern consciousness but apparently to the sprawling and diverse ancient empire of history's most famous Macedonian, Alexander the Great.[1]

The persistence of a term suggesting the Empire of Alexander through the Empire of Osman, the eponymous founder of the Ottoman (or Osmanli) dynasty is hardly surprising. The territorial core of each was similar, although Alexander's lands extended farther east, and Osman's eventually farther west. Mutatis mutandis, both brought together comparably diverse populations. Osman's successors, most notably Mehmed the Conqueror and Suleyman the Magnificent, eagerly embraced the legacy of Alexander. Nonetheless the differences were also significant. Osman's political system proved more enduring, though its cultural permanence was less profound. Alexander and his successors Hellenized the eastern Mediterranean. For most of Ottoman history, no comparable effort at Turkification was ever successfully attempted. And when that policy was pursued as the empire collapsed, it was a disastrous act of desperation that rejected most of the Ottoman past, a departure very different in conception and results from Alexander's Hellenism.

Alexander's political heirs soon succumbed to the centrifugal tendencies of rapidly established empires. Typically they disintegrate into separate states ruled by the founders' heirs or lieutenants. The Ottoman political system was remarkably successful at avoiding such fragmentation—the fate of Genghis Khan's as well as Alexander's empires. To a degree, Ottoman success was due to a fortunate failure. Although eventually their empire reached a size comparable to the Macedonian's—it never achieved the expanse of the Mongol empire—their success was not as swift as either. Their more modest pace of expansion allowed time to establish the core principle of dynastic succession through the House of Osman.

Despite the brevity of Alexander's reign and political legacy, the thorough-going cultural transformation of the regions he ruled, particularly in the ancient near east, is practically without parallel. The Christianization and later Islamization and Arabization of much of that same region over the next millennium might seem to trump the Macedonian's achievement. But, in fact, they merely built upon and reinforced it. Hellenization was one indispensable step in turning the ancient Israelite scrolls and temple cult into the Judaism that helped create the succeeding Abrahamic traditions. The spread of Hellenic philosophical discourse created an intellectual framework that engaged Judaism and shaped Christian theology. The rise of Alexander's language as the lingua franca for the eastern Mediterranean fostered the translation and diffusion of Israelite holy writ through its Greek version translated in the very Egyptian city that the conqueror had estab-

lished, Alexandria. That work, known as the Septuagint, in turn shaped, directly and indirectly, Christian and Muslim scriptures.

Beyond the sine qua non of military conquest, there were two secrets to the success of Hellenism. Both were rooted in the universalism upon which the best aspects of Greek thought expounded. Despite its disdain for the Other—particularly directed against Persian rivals—the Greek philosophical tradition presented a relatively less ethnocentric world view than its near eastern counterparts, past and future. Even more significantly, the polytheism of Greek religion could syncretistically accept, integrate, and permeate the local polytheisms of newly conquered lands more easily than exclusivist Abrahamic monotheisms, a characteristic that the philosopher David Hume recognized millennia later. To varying degrees, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam did develop their own exceptional devices for accommodating other religions, but the process was at times in tension with their intrinsic values. The acceptance of Hellenism in the ancient near east anticipated the worldwide diffusion of its modern variant, the Enlightenment, of which Hume himself was a proponent. The cultural components of the Ottoman system never achieved the universal appeal that helped spread Hellenism.

And now we come to the second secret. Alexander was tutored by Aristotle. Whoever taught Osman has left little trace on world history. The Macedonian leader was formed in a region that produced wide-ranging, profound, and systematic insights of universal significance. By contrast, fourteenth century Anatolia was a cultural backwater. Over the generations the Ottoman dynasty did make Constantinople a great metropolis filled with aesthetic and intellectual monuments, but it never equaled the originality, brilliance, and broad appeal of what was achieved in ancient Athens and its offshoots. Such a comparison does not denigrate the Ottomans but rather underscores the exceptional achievement of one of that dynasty's imperial inspirations, Alexander. The Macedonian, while geographically the closest, was not the only model.

Islam's Role

From the perspective of Islam, the treatment imposed upon the conquered non-Muslim peoples by its first polities—led by Muhammad, then by his immediate successors, and eventually the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates—offer the foundation for Ottoman policy. These practices came to be codified in a relationship that scholars have called *dhimma*—that is, a contractual bond between Muslim ruler and non-Muslim subject, stipulating the conditions under which certain groups would be allowed to live and practice their religion. Those subjected to this pact were called in Arabic *ahl al-dhimma*—"the people of *dhimma,*" or the singular, *dhimmi*; in Modern Turkish, *ehli zimma* or *zimmi*. In theory, according to the Quran (2:62, 5:69,

and 22:17), the licit groups were supposed to follow the monotheistic scriptuary religions—Judaism, Christianity, or a third group of uncertain origin and belief, the Sabians. By contrast, for polytheists no such allowance was supposed to exist. Their choice was stark: conversion or the sword. The practical obstacles to imposing that drastic choice upon first the vast Zoroastrian and later Hindu populations who came under Muslim rule made it rare. Accordingly, the mysterious Sabians became the fig leaf to cover a multitude of theological sins. The *dhimma* relationship originated from three different considerations: theological, practical, and imperial.

Theological. The divine revelation to Muhammad, upon which Islam was based, understood itself to be the same revelation that had been vouchsafed his prophetic predecessors, notably the divinely inspired figures of scripture as reported by Jews and Christians. Any differences among the Abrahamic communities arose largely from faulty transmission: careless followers had mangled the word. At their core all three contained the same true divine message—though Islam's was the only correct version, as it was the only one to retain the original. Accordingly systematic persecution of such foundational traditions might break the essential chain of prophetic continuity that started with Adam, included Moses, David, and Jesus, among others, and culminated in Muhammad. That was the tradition of revelation upon which Islam rested. While both Christianity and Islam broke to a degree from their Abrahamic antecedents, the Islamic rupture was more nuanced and less categorical than the Christian.

Practical. The original practical consideration was the same as that which over the centuries prompted the periodic redefinition of the Sabians. During the expansion of the seventh century, Muslims conquered too many non-Muslims too quickly to contemplate mass conversion and assimilation. Still, an understandable wariness about the actions and loyalties of these new subjects, Christians in particular, persisted. Accordingly, the authorities took steps to prevent the newly conquered from becoming a fifth column by discouraging contact with ultramontane religious and political institutions. In symbolic and substantive ways, the state expected non-Muslims to behave with humility toward their Muslim lords. Christian and Jewish houses of worship were to be lower in height than mosques. Church bells and public religious parades were banned. While preexisting churches and synagogues could be repaired, new ones were prohibited.

In economic terms, early Muslim rulers imposed unique fiscal demands on non-Muslims. They alone had to pay certain taxes, notably a levy on land holdings, *kharaj* (Modern Turkish, *haraç*) and/or a poll-tax, *jizya* (Modern Turkish, *cizye*). The name and the exact terms of these taxes rarely remained constant. For instance, during the Ottoman period, customs duties were higher for non-Muslims. In general non-Muslims did not pay a signifi-

cant burden, at least in theory, imposed on Muslims, the tithe (*zakat*). The *zakat* was a percentage of wealth, while the *dhimmi* taxes were not means-based to the same degree. It seems that under Ottoman rule the *zakat* itself was abandoned. Because over centuries and countries the exact terms of all taxes varied, it is impossible to state categorically which group had the greater burden. However, the taxes clearly benefitted Muslims more than non-Muslims. In the first centuries, *dhimmi* taxes were the main source of revenue for the Muslim state, and the *zakat* was intended exclusively for the benefit of the Muslim community.

The Muslim state treated its non-Muslim subjects with at best benign neglect, allowing them considerable freedom in many spheres, not only religious practice, belief, and education but also laws of personal status—marriage, divorce, and inheritance. These communities acquired considerable autonomy, often under the leadership of their religious authorities.

Imperial. The imperial consideration may have been the most significant of all. Most of the policies adopted by the Muslim state drew upon the well-established precedents of the indigenous ancient near eastern empires. With some notable exceptions, Parthian and Sassanid rulers in ancient Persia welcomed Jews and heretical Christians fleeing from persecution in the Byzantine Empire. The Persian rulers allowed the refugees a considerable degree of communal autonomy. Persian administrative practice greatly shaped Islamic statecraft, as the Persian state was quickly conquered and completely assimilated into the Muslim empire. In addition, the people of Persia were the first to convert in large numbers, after the Arabs themselves, further reinforcing their cultural legacy. It was most manifest in the Abbasid caliphate, the longest-lasting and most influential of the classical Islamic dynasties. Such pre-Islamic policies thereby became so integrated into Islamic law and practice that their non-Islamic origins were soon forgotten.

Emerging Ottoman Policies

When the Ottomans began their rise to power in the fourteenth century they confronted Christian demographic dominance comparable to that which the first Muslims encountered seven centuries earlier, but the dynasty's policies and their consequences differed from that of their predecessors. The nature of the non-Muslim communities that each faced was different as well.

During its foundational first centuries, until roughly the early sixteenth, the Ottoman realm comprised a Muslim minority ruling a Christian majority, adjacent on one flank to a band of Christian states. The subject Christian population and the surviving Christian dynasties were largely Orthodox, but the Christian states on the western periphery were Catholic. Though united in theology, the Balkan Orthodox were divided into a macédoine of ethnic

groups and hierarchies. At the upper reaches, the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church was Greek speaking, or, if not Greek by birth, at least Hellenized. The laity varied: principally Greeks, Slavs of various sorts, some Albanians, and other smaller groups, such as the Vlachs, who spoke a language related to Rumanian. Furthermore there was the significant distinction between the ethnically mixed Orthodox of the Balkans and the largely Greek Orthodox of Anatolia. Since 1071, after the Byzantines lost control of their eastern frontier as a result of their defeat by the Seljuk Turks at the battle of Manzikert (Malazgirt in Modern Turkish), Anatolia lay open to Turkish penetration. The Seljuks were the most powerful of these new Turkic elements—nomads, marauders, and organized warriors. Many other smaller Turkish groups as well steadily invaded westward from Iran and Central Asia, establishing local princedoms throughout the region, reducing ancient Byzantium to a rump state, limited to its capital and immediate periphery. The most dramatic humiliation Orthodox Byzantium suffered in these centuries was not, however, from Islam but from its Christian brethren. In 1203 the Fourth Crusade, intended to free Jerusalem from Muslim rule, was diverted by its principal backer, Venice, to lay siege to Constantinople. In 1204 the victorious Catholic armies conquered Greece and much of Byzantine Asia Minor. Not until 1261 were the last of the invaders finally expelled from what had become the Latin Kingdom of Constantinople. The legacy of Latin perfidy lasted much longer.

The effect of this two-front onslaught undermined Christianity in Asia Minor. The Orthodox Church lost its Byzantine patron and its followers lost their faith. Deprived of financial and institutional support, steadily much of its population turned Turk. What remained of the Greek Orthodox community was largely demoralized, with pockets of faithful scattered as minorities across the peninsula. By contrast the Balkans had remained an Orthodox, if not exclusively Greek, redoubt. The Turks did not penetrate Europe as thoroughly as they did Asia Minor. In the Fourth Crusade the Catholics had skirted the Balkan hinterland, raiding its coast on their way to the prize of Constantinople. Previously, as the Byzantine Empire declined, local Slavic regimes, originally imperial, religious, cultural, and political satellites, slowly gained more autonomy. The process increased dramatically during the decades of the Latin Kingdom. The Serbian Kingdom and Church were able to acquire unprecedented independence and the Bulgarian Empire received papal recognition.

In the aftermath of the Fourth Crusade, the Ottomans gained their early power in nearby northwestern Anatolia. Their first major prize, in the 1320s, was Bursa, an important link on the trade routes to Constantinople, now once again Byzantine. For the next three decades they expanded steadily, consolidating control over the southern coast of the Sea of Marmara. But in 1354 an act of God occurred, on the northern shores of the Dardanelles. An earthquake devastated Gallipoli, across the straits separating Asia Minor

from southeastern Europe. When the Greek population consequently abandoned the city, the Ottomans seized it, opening a bridgehead into the Balkans. They relentlessly exploited the opportunity handed them. Over the next half-century they conquered much of southern Slavdom. Their new capital, at this point Edirne, and their center of political power was now in Europe as well, where it remained for most of the dynasty's history.

In the mid-fourteenth century the Ottomans faced a non-Muslim population distinctly different from that which their fellow Turks ruled in Anatolia. Without centuries of Turkish immigration, the demographic balance was overwhelmingly Christian. Although the Slavic regimes had taken advantage of the humiliation that the Fourth Crusade had inflicted upon Byzantium, they remained weak and politically fractious. But their religious commitment had not been traumatized by the whipsaw of almost simultaneous Catholic and Muslim invasions. Still the Ottomans triumphed over them. Once victorious they confronted a new situation.

Ottoman and Early Arab Policies Compared

As previously noted the closest parallel was the Arab conquest of much of Byzantine Asia and all of both Byzantine Africa and Sassanid Iran within less than four decades. While the timetable roughly matched the Ottoman thrust into Europe, the seventh century expansion surpassed that of the fourteenth, both in territory conquered and in the variety of the populations brought under its rule. The similarities and differences are instructive.

Both paths to conquest were paved by past disputes and dissensions among the newly vanquished. Roughly a half century before the first Muslim rise to power, the Byzantines and Sassanids had fought a bloody and destructive war in the very regions that the followers of Muhammad conquered. For even more centuries, Byzantine Christendom had been ravaged by a destructive regional-theological civil war over the nature of Christ. The theological disputes between the central government in Constantinople and the provincial populations in Egypt and Syria (that is, historic Syria, made up of today's Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine) weakened the bonds of loyalty that the periphery might have felt for the core. Although all were Christians, the divisions between the Copts in Egypt and the Jacobites in Syria, on the one hand, and the so-called Orthodox, on the other, were so great that many of the non-Orthodox—after the initial chaos of military conflict—could almost welcome the Muslim invaders as liberators from the persecution they had endured under Byzantine theological oppression. The political nature of the dispute was signaled by the original name attached to the Orthodox by their opponents, Melkites (Kingsmen), as it were, loyalists to the Byzantine Empire. The flaws of a state-dependent religion were manifest even more clearly in Iran, where the defeat of the Sassanid dynasty

removed the major pillar of Zoroastrianism. Once so deprived, Persian Zoroastrianism within about three centuries became Persian Islam. It was the first conquered country to convert.

The Islamization of Egypt and Syria as well as formerly Sassanid Mesopotamia proceeded more slowly. The precise point when the majority tipped Muslim is less clear, but it was at least a century or two after Persia. Revealingly, even today those regions contain more variants of Christianity than existed at the time of the conquest and for that matter commonly exist in most of Christendom. Muslim rule has fostered greater Christian variation than has Christian rule because the former adhered to the rule of status quo ante, thereby preventing one Christian group from suppressing another. This created a theological deep freeze. The modern increase is largely due to the exceptional willingness of Ottoman authorities to allow Catholic and Protestant missions as long as they targeted only fellow Christians, thereby increasing the number of sects. While the theological variants of Christianity have survived and even grown over the centuries, the number of communicants has shrunk. Ever since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the end of European colonial and quasi-colonial rule, the numbers of Christians in Turkey and the Arab world have been precipitously declining.

A curiosity marked the cultural transformations that occurred in the aftermath of the seventh century Arab conquests. Two parallel processes were at work: Islamization and Arabization. Paradoxically they did not work in tandem. Iran, the region that accepted Islamization, stoutly resisted Arabization. Although the Persian language was transformed by the Arabic alphabet and language, in contrast to Zoroastrianism, it recovered from the shock of conquest and loss of state patronage to maintain its proud pre-Islamic heritage and reassert a distinctive continuing creative identity. Asia to the west of Iran accepted Arabization but delayed Islamization.

Since the Copts, Jacobites, and Jews had long survived in a hostile Byzantine environment, the relatively benign neglect of the Islamic state was a welcome relief. The Nestorians and other non-Muslims in Mesopotamia under the Abbasids eventually returned to something resembling the Sassanid status quo ante. However, the Orthodox in the Levant—like the Zoroastrians in Persia—were put in the unaccustomed position of losing state support. Unlike them however, their central hierarchy and the Byzantine state that had sustained it survived, albeit much weakened and on the other side of a hostile frontier. For these varying reasons the non-Muslims of Egypt, Syria, and Mesopotamia could resist Islamization longer than did the Zoroastrians. The process of turning to Islam took place very gradually over many centuries.

By contrast, in these central and western regions, Arabization proceeded much more quickly than did Islamization. The dominant pre-Islamic languages had been Aramaic, Coptic, and Greek. With the withdrawal of Byzantine rule, Greek lost crucial support, despite the far-reaching legacy of Macedonian Hellenism. Aramaic remained widely spoken and also con-

stituted the religious medium for Christians. Christian Aramaic, also known as Syriac, was the language of the Bible, exegesis, and liturgy for Jacobites and Nestorians alike. Aramaic was the lingua franca for Jews as well. Although they retained Hebrew for most of the liturgy and the public chanting of scripture, Aramaic became the principal language for expounding and interpreting it. In Egypt the linguistic divisions were different. Coptic, derived from ancient Egyptian, was both the lingua franca and the *lingua sacra*. In all these regions, by the eighth century, Arabic became the language of administration. By the ninth century, if not earlier, the language of administration became the lingua franca for all. Subsequently the preexisting languages survived in only remote settlements and as *linguae sacrae*. Why the difference between the acceptance of Arabic and the slower move to Islam?

The answers were multiple. To transact their affairs the non-Muslim subjects of this new state were forced to acquire at least a working knowledge of its language. For speakers of closely related Aramaic (as opposed to Coptic), that transition was not difficult. As Arabic increasingly became a language shared across a large, previously linguistically divided region, its utility for ever-wider commercial and cultural exchange made it even more attractive. For Muslim Arabs, study of Arabic, as the language of the Quran, was practically a sacrament. That had two contradictory consequences. On the one hand, for non-Muslims this sectarian tag made it potentially less appealing. On the other hand, as a practical development, Arab devotion to Arabic intensified their propagation of the language. In the end, that general devotion triumphed and encouraged Christians and Jews to adopt Arabic without adopting its sacred book. By comparison to Islam, Christianity has been linguistically promiscuous. One of its strengths as an evangelical faith has been that the truth of the Christian word can be expressed in any language. As a result, Christians had no religious objections to moving from one language to another.

The failure of Arabic to spread to Persia is more surprising. With neither a state nor a religion to maintain it, why did Persian survive? Paradoxically it may have been those very weaknesses that were the language's strength. The decapitation of pre-Islamic Persia was so quick and complete that the skeletal framework was left intact. In contrast to the choice open to Byzantine bureaucrats in their lost lands—escape along with their retreating armies—Sassanid bureaucrats had little choice but to stay. Spread thin over an enormous region, the simplest decision for the conquerors was to leave this framework intact, installing a new leadership and coating the preexisting administration with an Arab Muslim veneer. Once Persian notables and administrators converted to Islam there was even less reason to replace them. So Islamization in a sense undermined Arabization. The result was that Persian survived as the language of day-to-day administration, even if it initially disappeared as a written language.

Geography also determined the pattern of Arabization. The frontiers on sea and land between Arabia and its north and west are easily traversed. No obstructing mountain ranges or impassable deserts block the movement of peoples. It was relatively easy for the Arabs of the Hijaz and the Najd to migrate in significant numbers into the central and western lands of the newly conquered realm. Such population movements tend to be ignored in the chronicles of victorious armies and caliphs, but they leave as important a mark. Centuries later it was precisely such prolonged migration that was to help Islamize and Turkify Anatolia before the Ottomans came to power. The geography to the northeast of the Arabian Peninsula was very different from that on its other flanks. The Zagros Mountains to the east of Mesopotamia blocked large-scale Arab migration into the Persian heartland. The only region open to such an influx was to the south of those mountains, along the coast of the Arabian/Persian Gulf, now known as Khuzistan. Today that is the only Arab-dominated part of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Notwithstanding the importance of the first two elements, Persia's distinctive literary transmission of an imperial past may have been the most important single explanation for the failure here of Arabization. Persia has been even more important to Islamic civilization than Greece was to the Roman Empire. The Persian legacy took two principal forms: not only the literary but also the imperial bureaucratic. The second has already been noted. The first was articulated through a corpus of heroic imperial foundation myths able to survive Islamization because of a literary tradition that shaped Persian identity differently from Coptic or Aramaic. By the time Arab Islam conquered the Copts and the Aramaic-speakers, the imperial achievements of their ancient ancestors had been erased by centuries of Byzantium and Christianity. They preserved little of their Pharaonic or Mesopotamian imperial heritage, as their literary impulses had taken a religious turn. Immediately before the Arab conquest, the Sassanid dynasty still patronized an evolving tradition of epic poetry and story that after its demise maintained itself like other epics of the ancient world in both oral and written form. This heritage was hardy and recent enough to outlast conquest and religious conversion and to reemerge at the end of the tenth century through the 60,000 verses of the Persian national epic the *Shahnameh,* composed by the great reviver of the national heritage, Ferdowsi. So potent was this revival that it established Persian as the medium for belles lettres and imperial panegyric throughout the Muslim near east and south Asia. The literary language that Ferdowsi helped create was different from pre-Islamic Persian. It was written in Arabic script not cuneiform. Despite his fierce Persian cultural pride, Ferdowsi could not avoid hundreds of Arabisms, as by the tenth century they had become entrenched.

Between the seventh and the tenth centuries, Muhammad, his immediate successors, and subsequently the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates established a set of classic norms for treating the non-Muslim groups under

their rule. But even in these formative centuries the norms were not uniform, and their application was inconsistent. Accordingly, while the Islamic tradition as a whole did offer a broad set of principles subordinating Christians, Jews, and other non-Muslims to the state, the application of these principles readily evolved.

The Central Asian Factor

After the formation of the classical Islamic state and before the rise of the Ottomans, invasions from the central Asian steppe frontier transformed and revitalized the near east and the entire Islamic world. The invasions took two parallel but radically different forms. The first proceeded so gradually and initially on such a small scale that it was not immediately perceived as an invasion. The second has almost become a byword for swift, overwhelming, and awe-inspiring military might. Although both originated from the same region and penetrated the same region, they proceeded independently of each other. The first began as the gradual movement of Turks from Central Asia and the Caucasus into the near east, between the ninth and the early tenth centuries. The earliest Turks noted in the Arab chronicles arrived as mercenaries at the court of the Abbasid caliph. As they came in contact with missionaries from the religion's heartland, gradually more and more of these Central Asian migrants of varied religious heritage converted to Islam. By the mid-eleventh century their rising numbers and military prowess led to the formation of a dynasty that controlled much of western Asia, the Seljuks. As already noted, they opened Byzantine Anatolia to Turkish penetration in 1071, for the Turks did not come *from* Turkey; the Turks came *to* Turkey.

The other invaders were the Mongols. Although culturally and geographically related, the Turks and the Mongols were separate and distinct groups. The Turks were both the victims and the ultimate beneficiaries of this second invasion. In 1255 the Mongols, having swept across Asia and having seized Iran, invaded Anatolia, destroying the last outpost of Seljuk Turkish rule. Three years later they conquered Mesopotamia, sacking Baghdad and ending the Abbasid Caliphate, an institution that the Seljuks themselves had sustained in prior centuries. By destroying this symbol of Islamic continuity and unity, the Mongols left a vacuum of political-religious leadership in the near east. By demonstrating the all-vanquishing power of their armies, they raised the political and military prestige of all Central Asian peoples, Turks included.

Within three centuries the Ottoman dynasty emulated the military success of that other Central Asian invader and filled the power vacuum. Theirs was the most successful of the three new powerful Islamic empires to arise in the aftermath of the Mongols. The dynasty lasted the longest, 1300 to 1924, and at its height it ruled the largest expanse of territory—from

Central Europe to the Indian Ocean and from the Moroccan to the Iranian frontiers. The Safavid Empire, its rival to the east, rose to power in 1501, finally coming to an end in 1736. At its greatest, its domain was roughly equivalent to the current Islamic Republic of Iran, with the addition of the current Republic of Azerbaijan and parts of western Afghanistan. Farther to the east were the Mughals, who ruled from 1526 to 1757, though the last survivor of the dynasty did not lose his pretension to power, even when confined to the old walled city within Delhi, until 1857. At their greatest extent the Mughals controlled almost the entire subcontinent of India as far south as today's Karnataka.

All three not only arose in formerly Mongol-controlled territory but also owed much to the Mongol legacy, the Mughals most explicitly of all, as their name suggests, for they were in fact descended from Genghis Khan. Despite their genealogical creativity—at one point they claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad himself—the Ottomans asserted no such ancestry. But their closest and longest-lasting Muslim ally, the Giray Khanate of the Crimea, was in the line of that great Mongol khan. The Ottoman dynasty contracted marriage alliances with them. According to one tradition, if the Ottoman line was ever to be extinguished, succession would fall to the Giray Khans. In contrast to these Sunni dynasties, the Shiite Safavids avoided any such claims. They had no choice, since their legitimacy depended on their direct connection to Muhammad's son-in-law and cousin, Ali. Nonetheless even they pursued policies that reflected the transformational influence of the pagan hordes from Central Asia.

When the Mongols conquered most of Eurasia, they were not Muslims, but within a half century all of their dynastic descendants in the Islamic world were. As they made the transition from Buddhist, Nestorian, animist, and Other to Islam, they still retained much of their heritage. The Mongols thus contributed another layer to the classic Islamic palimpsest of *dhimma*, forging new tools in treating their subject non-Muslims. The result was a far more variable and brutally pragmatic policy toward the different communities under their rule than the letter of the Islamic legal tradition might suggest. Such a departure might or might not work to the benefit of the subjects affected. Most famously, Nestorian Christianity rose and fell as a consequence of the Mongols. Both the mother and the favorite wife of the grandson of Genghis Khan, Hulagu Khan, the despoiler of Baghdad, were Nestorians. Favored by the regime, these Christians successfully evangelized throughout the Mongol realm, reaching far into east Asia, rivaling Latin Christendom in geographic extent, wealth, numbers, and influence. However, after the politically motivated conversion of the Mongols in the near east, and consequently stripped of their privileged position, Nestorians were persecuted and the church largely confined to the backwaters of the Mesopotamian river valley.

This brutal pragmatism—in varying degrees—shaped the responses that each of the three post-Mongol empires pursued in solving the major

challenge they faced. Each confronted a majority population that in religious terms was different from themselves. As already emphasized, the Sunni Ottoman dynasty's first empire was overwhelmingly Christian. The Sunni Mughal dynasty ruled a substantial Hindu population who in the south formed the majority. Hindu dominance was one of the reasons that the Mughals never were able to push their frontier further south past Karnataka. The Shiite Safavids came to power in an Iran of incredible Muslim religious diversity where Shiites were in the minority. Consequently three different solutions emerged. The Ottomans pursued a mixture of the cooption of Christian elites, divide and rule, and the forced assimilation of potential opponents. The Mughal rulers, with some notable exceptions, attempted cooption of their Hindu elites, along with pursuing the highly heterodox patronage of Hindu-Muslim syncretism under the cover of the most malleable element in Islamic religious life, the Sufi fraternal orders, that is, organized mysticism. By comparison to the other two, the Safavids were again the odd man out. They alone ruled few non-Muslims. Since the *dhimma* principle offered no check whatsoever on the treatment of rival Muslim sects, they were free to pursue an exceptional policy of aggressive persecution and propaganda to force the conversion of all their Muslim subjects to their form of Shiite Islam. They succeeded so well that they created the only significant Shiite-dominated state in the world, a distinctive identity that has survived as the Islamic Republic of Iran. In the other two empires, the *dhimma* principle did impose a certain constraint upon their policies. Still, in both, it as well as elementary Sunni Muslim traditions were stretched past the breaking point to meet the needs of the state.

Ottoman Origins and Christian Influence

In the Ottoman case these fundamental facts have been obscured by a historiographical approach that neglects the Christian majority dominant during the formative two centuries. Ottoman court chroniclers and the most influential European scholarship of the early twentieth century have trumpeted the Ottomans as a *ghazi* state, dedicated to spreading and promoting Islam at its frontier with Christendom. This interpretation treats *ghaza* as synonymous with *jihad*. In fact, whatever jihad can mean, it carries a valence different from *ghaza*. Although the latter can mean a holy war in the cause of Islam, it also has a more generalized meaning of raid for the sake of spoils. That meaning persists in the etymologically related *razzia,* found in both English and French and often used to describe local marauding in Morocco and Algeria. Recent scholarship has challenged the original *ghaza* thesis, without necessarily constructing a simple alternative explanation for the rise of the Ottoman state. That is probably for the best. Given the complexity of the process of state formation and the sparsity of evidence, a simple alterna-

tive cannot exist, and it would be best to entertain different hypotheses simultaneously.

One of many alternatives turned the *ghazi* thesis on its head. More than seventy years ago, the prolific Rumanian historian and nationalist politician, Nicolae Iorga, published a slim essay, *Byzance après Byzance* (1848), as a quasi-elegiac postscript to his monumental history of the Byzantine empire. Its core argument asserted that Byzantium survived as a cultural and political reality through the Ottoman-controlled Principality of Moldavia and Wallachia. The Ottomans appointed its rulers, normally chosen from the wealthy Greek Orthodox families of Constantinople. More broadly, he argued that the Ottoman Empire itself represented a continuation of many Byzantine traditions and could not be properly understood without that heritage. Iorga was not the first to make this claim. In fact it had been part of the arsenal of arguments mounted by those very Ottoman-appointed Moldavian and Wallachian cultural and political leaders who further asserted, with some truth, that they were descendants of Byzantine aristocracy. It took a few centuries for it to emerge in the guise of the scholarly argument expressed by Iorga. For some Rumanian nationalists and historians, the tie to Byzantium and the Roman Empire was essential for the foundation myth of Rumania's origin. It supported the process by which they transformed themselves from Rumania to Romania; that is, from the land of Rum, the Arabized name for Byzantium and its varied regions and inhabitants of whatever identity—Muslim or Christian, Turkish or Persian, even Greek—to the land of Rome.

Although Rumanians were among the most persistent in asserting a form of Greek-Turkish condominium, even Greeks originally acknowledged a form of it. One of the first to suggest an Ottoman continuity of Byzantine and even Hellenic consciousness was the fifteenth century Greek biographer of Mehmed the Conqueror of Constantinople, Kritovoulos of Imbros. To be sure, his highly laudatory work should be seen more as a successful, if mendacious, job application than as a candid and accurate assessment. The manuscript itself survived in only one copy, housed in the Topkapi Palace Archives, largely unremarked until the nineteenth century. Knowledge of its contents today owes much to twentieth century Rumanian scholarship. Clearly its creation and diffusion depended on interested parties. But the attempt to imagine the Ottoman Empire in classical terms was not restricted to the occasional Greek. As already noted, the Ottomans, particularly during their most ambitious reigns, saw themselves as rightful heirs to the imperial traditions of Alexander the Great and all of Rome. They were content to call their capital Constantinople (or some variation thereof) among other names, despite its explicit recognition of the first Roman Christian Emperor, Constantine. The consistent adoption of Istanbul did not occur until 1924, when it ceased to be the capital of anything, after the Turkish Republic

moved its political center eastward to Ankara. Both geographically and ideologically, the Ottomans were the most European of all the Islamic empires. But for the conquest of Arab lands that definitively changed the Christian-Muslim demographic balance, the Ottoman Empire might have embraced a form of Muslim-Christian religious syncretism, along the lines of the Hindu-Muslim-Sufi synthesis promulgated in Mughal India under the Emperor Akbar.

Although Iorga's interpretation exaggerated Byzantine influence, it should not be completely discarded. Byzantine precedent was certainly one legacy upon which the Ottomans drew. The almost polar opposite view, promulgated by other Balkan historians, is the claim that the Ottoman state was a Muslim theocracy. The term literally defines a government whose ruler is god and whose divinely revealed laws are administered by a priestly order. Its espousal ignores the realities of the Ottomans and Islam. Some have employed the term to explain why the Ottomans turned to Christian and Jewish religious institutions in order to govern those communities. In fact, they did not do so consistently. But when they did, they were simply following the most practical path, as well as Muslim precedent rooted in ancient near eastern imperial practice. After the collapse of political and military structures, religious leadership constituted the only institution to survive. Furthermore the perfidious treatment of Orthodoxy by the Latin Church during the Fourth Crusade made the Eastern Church a particularly attractive instrument for Ottoman policy, as they were unlikely to offer themselves as a fifth column for the ever-present danger of a new Crusade from the Latin West.

Ottoman Institutions and the Non-Muslim Communities

Thirty years ago, before these essays were first published, the conventional interpretation argued that the framework in which Christian and Jewish communal authorities functioned under Ottoman rule was the *millet* system. *Millet* was a term that originally meant a community defined by religion. In Modern Turkish it has come to mean nation. According to this older view, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, Sultan Mehmed II appointed as patriarch of Constantinople a monk known for his opposition to rapprochement with the Latin West, making him and his successors the titular heads of all the Orthodox faithful in the empire. Mehmed was reputed to have granted the patriarch and his church a number of privileges that allowed fiscal and legal autonomy for his community. Tax payments to the central government were to be routed through the church. In return, the state supported the authority of the patriarch. Comparable arrangements were said to have been made with the Armenians and the Jews.

In the wake of the chapters presented in this volume (Chapter 3 by Benjamin Braude, Chapter 4 by Kevork Bardakjian, and Chapter 5 by Joseph Hacker) and subsequent publications expanding and modifying their conclusions, claims about these arrangements are now considered exaggerated. Extensive research into the records of the empire's court system has further deepened our view and has established that the so-called Muslim courts functioned as a judicial institution employed by all, not just Muslims. Legal autonomy and legal institutions did exist for Christians and Jews, but frequently they preferred to take their business to *shari'a* (Modern Turkish, *şeriat*) courts. Unfortunately it may be impossible to establish the relative popularity of one system as opposed to the other, since the documentation for non-Muslim tribunals is less abundant. Nonetheless, in practical terms, legal autonomy may not have had much practical consequence.

Rather than a uniformly imposed system, the Ottoman policy toward non-Muslims may be more accurately described as a series of arrangements, varying in time and place, that afforded each of the major religious communities a degree of legal autonomy and authority. Though not simply ad hoc, it responded to local needs and was accordingly variable. Actual leadership—lay or religious, formal or informal—varied. The degree to which communal autonomy was empire-wide or not also varied. Whatever the actual workings of these communal arrangements, much of the discussion, even over the past thirty years, has downplayed the elementary fact that the Ottomans did not begin to rule non-Muslims in 1453. In fact, they had done so for almost 150 years before they conquered Constantinople. When they finally seized that long-coveted prize they had to mesh previous policies with the new situation created by their control of the seat of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Examining the continuities and discontinuities before and after the conquest offers the best way to examine how the state and the non-Muslims interacted.

Ottoman Institutions and Non-Muslims

Central to Ottoman treatment of non-Muslims were their imperial needs. Accordingly the two most important institutions in dealing with the non-Muslim population, particularly before but even after the fall of Constantinople, were *sürgün* and *devshirme* (Modern Turkish, *devşirme*). Tax collection was certainly essential, but Ottoman practice, particularly during the periods immediately after the conquest of new territory, tended to maintain the existing fiscal system rather than impose the *shari'a*-sanctioned *dhimmi* taxes. Those distinctive taxes were eventually collected, but they were not instituted immediately. Dealing with the local bishop was necessary, but their petitions could easily be ignored.

The *sürgün,* a system of forced population transfer, had at least three sometimes related intents: (1) punitive deportation directed against specific

groups, (2) ethnic engineering affecting entire communities and regions, and (3) socioeconomic development. On the whole, Islamic legal opinion supported the first two on the grounds of security, but not the third. The Byzantines had pursued similar policies in the past, as had the Mongols and later the Safavids as well. The earliest transfers occurred after the Ottomans entered the Balkans in the fourteenth century: Christians were moved from the Balkans to Anatolia, and Muslims were moved from Anatolia to the Balkans. Because this was a battle zone, security could justify these forced population movements, but the intent was more far-reaching. The strategy attempted to replicate the Turkification and Islamization that, after 1071, had de-Hellenized Anatolia in the course of two centuries of marauding migration. Centuries earlier, a comparable process had aided the Arabization of the Levant during the rise of Islam. But there were differences. The cultural transformations effected by previous Turkish and Arab migrations were not guided by state directive. What the Ottomans were implementing was a conscious policy. The undirected process worked both because it was more or less spontaneous and because it was reinforced by the larger political-military-religious circumstances—the crisis of Greek Orthodoxy—detailed previously. The Ottoman state policy failed for many reasons, principally because there were not enough marauding migrants left after the previous influxes from Iran and Central Asia and because the Orthodox Church was much stronger in the fourteenth century than it had been in the thirteenth. The Balkans never came to be transformed into a new Turkish heartland. Some Christian communities in Bosnia, Albania, and Bulgaria converted to Islam, but these were exceptions.

Still concerned to integrate the Balkans into their empire, the Ottomans adopted a much more focused strategy: the forced draft of Christian boys, known as the *devshirme*. However the *sürgün* was not abandoned. Instead it was put to a purpose different from the ethnic-strategic goals of the fourteenth century. In the next century, particularly after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, it became a tool of socioeconomic urban renewal. As such it violated Islamic law and departed from the precedents of earlier empires. Nonetheless it proved highly effective.

As centuries-long conflicts began to ebb, the authorities turned to reviving devastated urban areas. The shift began during the reign of Mehmed I in the 1430s, when the Ottomans moved Muslim communities to repopulate what had been the second city of Byzantium, Salonica. It expanded dramatically after Mehmed II conquered the first city, Constantinople, in 1453. To renew the capital, deportation brought Turks from Aksaray and Karaman, Greeks from Euboea, Jews from Salonica, and Armenians from Ankara. This stage of the *sürgün* was not directed against Christians and Jews as such, and its long-term results were, for the most part, beneficial for both the empire and the peoples deported. However, the initial response it engendered was full of pain, and since the majority of Ottoman subjects were then not

Muslim, it was they who bore most of its burdens. Those who were subject to the edict of forced transfer regarded it as a disaster; it meant the destruction of long-established communities and the loss of lands and traditional places of business with no certainty that they would survive the move or that their new homes would be any better. Because it created such drastic disruption and because it often was the first Ottoman policy—after war itself—that directly affected the lives of those forcibly transferred, the *sürgün* had a much greater impact upon the attitudes of Armenians and Jews (see Chapter 5 by Joseph Hacker on the *sürgün* and the Jews) than did the benign neglect of communal arrangements, the so-called *millet* system. On the other hand, for the Greeks and the Orthodox in general, who formed the overwhelming majority of non-Muslims, the loss of their own political institutions was the primary impact of the new order, and the *sürgün,* along with captivity, were simply part and parcel of the general devastation.

The *devshirme* system was introduced toward the end of the fourteenth century after Turkification through forced population exchange failed. Recognizing that they lacked the massive resources required to effect wholesale ethnic and religious transformation, the Ottomans turned from the macro to the micro, employing a far more targeted technique, Machiavellian in its effectiveness. The problem was the demographic imbalance between Turks and Christians in the fourteenth century Ottoman realm. The Islamic state lacked sufficient loyal manpower to rule. Their first solution could not work. If they could not make every Christian turn Turk, then perhaps they could turn the talented few.

Regularly the Ottoman authorities dispatched agents, primarily into the non-Hellenic rural regions of the Balkans, to identify and draft promising youths who would be converted to Islam and trained for service to the sultan in the Ottoman military or administration. They collected perhaps one in forty. The particular groups they preferred were significant. In order to reduce friction with the overwhelmingly Greek-speaking hierarchy of the Orthodox Church, the Ottomans did not normally subject Greeks to the *devshirme*. Although most of the recruits were Albanian and Slavic-speaking Orthodox Christians, Bosnian Slavs who had converted to Islam were eligible to volunteer. Those Bosnians did not want to miss out on a good thing, for the opportunities for advancement in this system were substantial. All those recruited became members of the privileged *askeri* (military) class, who paid no taxes but instead benefited from them (see Chapter 2 by İ. Metin Kunt). They could advance to the highest ranks of the Ottoman administration and military. Relatively few reached those heights, but the prospect remained alluring for all. Although they lost communion with their church, they did not lose communication with their community. Recruits could maintain contact with their families and villages of origin, defending their interests, and helping others to join the service in turn. Sokollu Mehmed Pasha, originally an Orthodox Serb

recruited through the *devshirme* system, rose to become grand vizier under three sultans in the late sixteenth century. According to some accounts, he managed to revive the moribund Serbian Patriarchate of Pec, appointing a relative, perhaps his brother, to lead it. Whether or not the details of this oft-recounted story are true, it does illustrate a key lesson. The *devshirme* system reduced the alienation and subjugation that a subject population might otherwise feel toward an alien hegemon.

Although much of the Orthodox hierarchy—overwhelmingly Greek—decried the loss of souls to Islam, they were assuaged somewhat by the fact that most were Albanians, Slavs, and other non-Greeks, thereby weakening these rivals in the political struggles within the church. Even in the erratically autocephalic churches, Balkan non-Greek Orthodox could not advance socially or economically above their own rural status without undergoing one or another form of deracination and self-abnegation. If they sought advancement to the best endowed and most powerful positions in the church hierarchy, they had to abandon their native culture and become Hellenized. They also had to become monks, at least nominally celibate, although they did have the consolations of their faith. By contrast, if they wanted to advance in the Ottoman Empire, the terms were significantly easier. They could retain much of their native culture. There were no vows of celibacy, but they did have to undergo circumcision. All they had to acquire was enough Turkish to function at their pay level and abandon Christian Orthodoxy, the latter a conversion that was easier than it might initially seem. If Paris was worth a Mass, Constantinople was certainly worth a *shehadah*, and, at only seven words, the Muslim testimony of faith was much shorter. Religiously, the recruits did not always display the zeal of sincere converts. Those chosen for the sultan's elite infantry, the Janissary Corps, joined the heterodox Bektashi Sufi Order, whose godhead was shaped by a hash of mystical Sunni, Shiite, and Christian beliefs that easily accommodated whatever Christianity the youths had remembered. In practice they played fast and loose with the Quranic prohibition against wine, which most Muslims extend to include all alcohol. They were notorious consumers of fermented drink.

This Ottoman system had the simultaneous benefit of recruiting for imperial service the best, brightest, and most able of their Christian male subjects and denying them to the service of any potential opposition. The conflicts that undermined the empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries arose after recruitment had ceased during the seventeenth century. The connection between the two events was not simple and causal but the events were related. Subsequently, the Ottomans did employ Christians well into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, most notably as advisers on foreign affairs. Overall, however, the numbers now recruited were much smaller than had prevailed in the past, and their level of influence never

reached the heights of their converted predecessors (see Chapter 11 by Carter Findley). One cause of the breakdown was that the opportunities afforded by this system were too attractive. In theory those entering the system were not to pass their privileged positions to their sons, thereby opening the ranks to fresh talent. Instead, the offspring of these new Muslims were to seek new opportunities in other domains. However, in practice the *devshirme* recruits attempted to make their status hereditary. Perhaps the Christian hierarchy was wise to insist upon sexual abstinence? Still, even it was subjected to the demands of nepotism.

Even more clearly than the *sürgün* system, the draft and forced conversion of Christian youths violated Islamic law. Its persistence through four centuries challenges the claim that the Ottoman Empire was an Islamic state, *tout court*. The precedents for the *devshirme* system, must be found elsewhere. The likeliest source was the *ghulam* system, which, ironically, seems to have been imposed upon pagan Turkish and other slave soldiers recruited from Central Asia and the Caucasus for Abbasid armies in the ninth century. Islamic law prohibits the forced conversion of Christians and Jews living in established Muslim territory, but it does allow the enslavement and forced conversion of non-Muslims captured in war zones. Centuries later the Mongol military developed their own version of what the Abbasids had practiced on the Eurasian steppes. Mongol distinctive might was its own cavalry army, but it also conscripted from conquered peoples cannon fodder deployed in siege warfare. The Ottoman institution seems to have combined a more refined version of the Mongol draft with the Islamization imposed upon their ancestral fellow Turks.

The Ottoman Realm Expands

In 1453 Mehmed's conquest of Constantinople had far-reaching consequences for his dynasty's imperial pretensions, their relations with European Christendom, and their control over the Orthodox and other non-Muslim groups. Ruling Rome's eastern capital strengthened the Ottoman claim to the Christian and classical Roman and Greek imperial legacies. As already noted, it increased identification with the myths of Alexander the Great previously established in Islamic traditions. It spurred Ottoman dreams of seizing the first Rome, regularly attempted, but repeatedly rebuffed. Despite that failure this powerful Islamic state now became an integral part of the European balance of power, openly allying with one state against another—a relationship that was to have profound consequences for non-Muslims under Ottoman rule.

It also introduced a new element in the architectonic of Muslim–non-Muslim relations. Heretofore the Ottomans had every reason to ignore the

pretension of the Greek Patriarchate in Constantinople to ecumenical authority. Within their realm Ottomans encouraged the autonomy of local bishops in opposition to a hierarch who was under the control of the Byzantine rival. When the Ottoman state seized the seat of that very same hierarch, the political equation had to be recalculated. Now the Constantinople Patriarchate was transformed into a useful instrument for imperial pretension and authority. On the one hand, for the Orthodox, such empire-wide authority existed, at least in theory, even if Constantinople had to contend with the episodic autonomy of Bulgarian Ohrid and Serbian Pec. On the other hand, after the conquest of the Arab lands in 1517, the Orthodox Patriarchates of Jerusalem, Alexandria, and, at least initially, Antioch, richer in history but poorer in souls, proved less resistant to the dictates of their new capital as they came under Ottoman rule. Constantinople's claim to authority over all Orthodox Christians in the empire, consistent with its ecumenical pretensions to universal authority, dovetailed with the Ottomans' own claims to imperial authority.

As a result of this new Ottoman view, millions of communicants of the Eastern Orthodox Church—speakers of Slavic, Romance, Arabic, and other languages, and natives of Europe, Asia, and Africa—all came to be designated administratively as Rum, literally "Roman," meaning Orthodox. It might seem strange that these peoples who in more recent times have variously asserted distinct Serbian, Greek, Bulgarian, Vlach, Montenegrin, Herzegovinian, Macedonian, Albanian, Yugoslavian, Rumanian, Arab, Syrian, Lebanese, Palestinian, or Jordanian national identity should have in the past accepted this all-embracing communal designation. Of course, to a degree that designation was not of their own choosing; the Islam-inspired understanding of the Ottomans recognized that the primacy of religious affiliation and the expansionist imperative inherent in an Ecumenical Patriarchate together ensured that Constantinople eagerly received the souls whom it regarded as rightfully its own.

The acceptance of Rum, however, was not merely submission to the edicts of the capital of both see and state. It conformed to a perception that at least some Rum (notably the wealthier and more educated) had of themselves. Among the Rum people there appeared a disdain for Latin and heretical rivals and a certain pride in the imperial heritage of Byzantium and the Constantinople Patriarchate (see Chapter 6 by Richard Clogg). In the peoples of the near east who spoke first Aramaic and later Arabic, those Christians who retained their loyalty to the Byzantine Church were after all Kingsmen. Following the Vatican's later success in gaining the conversion of some Arabic-speaking Orthodox to Rome, the term now also included Arabic-speaking Catholics of the Greek rite. Although at first intended as an insult by local rivals, the term carried a certain nobility, a pretension to empire, which its adherents could claim with pride. During the nineteenth

century this was successfully exploited by the Romanov Empire, the third Rome, which stirred among the Arabic-speaking Orthodox, notably within the Patriarchate of Antioch, a strong attachment to the tsar, the Russian motherland, and the Church of St. Petersburg. In southeastern Europe it was a Greek-speaker, perhaps of Vlach origin, Riga Velestiniul (1757–1798), as he was known in the Rumanian language (Rigas Velestinlis or Pheraios in Greek), whose revolutionary activities on behalf of a revived Byzantium earned him death at Ottoman hands. Whatever his origins, he has been claimed as an early martyr for modern Greek nationalism.

Although the ethnic composition of the other communities was simpler, administrative arrangements for Armenians and Jews proved more complex. They had different needs and traditions, which made acceptance of the Greek Orthodox precedent of Constantinople-based leadership difficult. The traditions concerning Mehmed's grant of privilege to Armenians and Jews are even more uncertain. Even if such grants had in fact been made to the communal leaders in the capital, it is not likely that they would have thereby gained power over all their coreligionists within the empire.

Unlike the Greeks, the Armenians had no patriarchate in Constantinople before the conquest (see Chapter 4 by Kevork Bardakjian). Their ecclesiastical centers, each headed by a catholicos, the structural equivalent of patriarch or pope, were either the newly strengthened see of Etchmiadzin in the Caucasus or the see of Cilicia, both of which were then beyond the Ottoman borders. Since Mehmed had little desire for his subjects to be under an ultramontane authority, he fostered the development of an Armenian ecclesiastical center in his own capital. But this Istanbul Patriarchate faced indifference and even opposition from the Armenians whom it was supposed to guide. Subsequently in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the Ottomans conquered Anatolian lands, southward and eastward, where the bulk of the Armenians lived.

For the Jews, the lack of a preexisting authority within the empire was less of a problem; there was no ultramontane authority either. The so-called Chief Rabbinate of the Ottoman Empire, which arose after 1453, was an institution whose authority probably did not extend beyond the borders of Istanbul and whose existence did not survive the centrifugal pressures introduced by the large-scale immigration of Iberian Jewry during the early sixteenth century.

In that same century, Sultan Selim's expansion into Syria, Arabia, and Egypt in 1516 and 1517 incorporated into the empire the heartlands of Islam, numerous Jewish communities, and the oldest Christian communities. Copts, Maronites, Jacobites, Nestorians, and other smaller sects now entered the Ottoman fold. There were significant differences between the *ahl al-dhimma* of Syria and Egypt and those in the Balkans. For nearly a millennium they had lived under Islam, and the Ottoman conquest merely exchanged one Muslim master for another. Since they had long been

Arabized, their distinctiveness was less obvious. Despite their centuries-old experience of Islam, the Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews did not take an independent lead in dealing with Ottoman authorities. Rather, from the sixteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries, they increasingly accepted the lead of their wealthier and more numerous coreligionists outside the Arab lands. The patriarchates of Alexandria and Jerusalem, for instance, were henceforth held by ethnic Greeks, though as noted previously Antioch took a different path. On the other hand, the Copts, who had no comparable external allies, remained the most isolated of all Ottoman Christians (see Chapter 15 by Doris Behrens-Abouseif).

Misrepresentations of Ottoman Rule

The arrangements that prevailed from the early centuries of Ottoman rule rarely shaped the content of communal life. European views of day-to-day life under Ottoman rule have been distorted by a number of misconceptions. For Christendom and its heirs, the words Turk and Turkey have complex emotional associations over and above those suggested by Islam; for east Europeans, in particular, the traditional picture of the Turkish oppressor has become part of the national folklore. This image of the Turk has several sources. The first is fear, imprinted on the European mind during long periods when the Turks were thrusting into the heart of the continent and threatening the very existence of Christendom. Later European travelers, failing to recognize in Turkish society the familiar virtues of their own countries, were blind to the real but different merits of the Ottoman order and found confirmation for their dislike in the hostile tales of the Christian subjects of the sultans, who were their main informants. Even more recent observers, whose sympathies were with Islam, tended to identify it with the Arabs and to blame the Ottomans for political and military weakness that they did not cause and that, in fact, they had reversed.

A good example of the way in which travelers and other observers misunderstood and misinterpreted the conditions of non-Muslim life is provided by the word *raya*. According to the accounts of most European travelers the word *raya* means cattle and was applied to the Christian subjects of the Ottoman state, whose predatory attitude toward them was expressed in this term. However, Ottoman usage until the eighteenth century applied the term not to Christians as such but to the entire productive taxpaying population of the empire, irrespective of religion—in fact, to all who were not part of the civilian and military apparatus of government, that is, the *askeri* class. Thus Muslim peasants were *raya*, but Christian cavalrymen were not. The word is derived from an Arabic root meaning "to graze" and might better be translated not as "cattle" but as "flock," expressing the well-known pastoral idea of government to be found in the Psalms and shared by Christendom

and Islam. The extent of subsequent European influence on Turkey may be seen in the fact that from the late eighteenth century onward, this misinterpretation of the term passed to the Turks themselves—as will be demonstrated later in this introduction—who began to apply it in this sense. European distortion was further elaborated and more widely disseminated during the nineteenth century as the result of the struggle of the Balkan peoples against the Ottoman Empire to achieve independence. The movements against the Ottomans strongly reinforced the prevailing stereotype of the Muslim as oppressor—this time embodied in, and typified by, the Ottoman Turkish Empire.

Exceptionally, some nineteenth-century European mythmakers worked on behalf of the Turks. Among Jews in particular there developed a tinge of philo-Ottomanism, which even colored the writings of a pioneer in modern Jewish historiography, Heinrich Graetz (1817–1891). Often this tinge became evident in political sympathy for the Ottoman Empire. Jews and those of Jewish origin sometimes came to be regarded and denounced in Europe as a pro-Turkish element. In Great Britain, William Gladstone's 1876 electoral campaign against the pro-Ottoman policy of Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli over the Ottoman policy popularly known as the "Bulgarian Horrors" contained an undertone of that charge.

Greeks Under Ottoman Rule

Of all the peoples seeking to overthrow Ottoman control, the first to appeal to western Europe were the Greeks. The Hellenic past, however remote from the historical consciousness of the Greeks, had been, ironically enough, an inspiration for early Ottoman rulers and subsequently became an essential element within European thought. Through its perspective, Europeans saw the struggle of the Greeks against the Ottomans. The emerging Greek view thus gained ready acceptance. Depopulation, impoverishment, instability, insecurity, corruption, venality, intrigue, and deceit were all seen as faults of Ottoman origin. The more advanced observers might claim that those faults that could not be traced directly to the Turks should be ascribed to the Orthodox hierarchy, whose authority was, however, itself attributed to Ottoman so-called theocracy. In the course of their own struggles, other subject peoples—the Slavs, Albanians, Wallachians, and Moldavians—accepted and adapted the Greek indictment. However, they added the Greeks themselves to the list of the accused, for they, as both laymen and ecclesiastics, often functioned as junior partners to the Turks in their dominion.

Clearly the Greek relationship to the Turks was the most complex. The proto-nation-statist view of history does not do justice to the very real achievements of the Greeks under Ottoman rule. Over several centuries, the

Ottomans allowed the Greek community to maintain its physical existence, language, sense of history, cultural traditions, and religious integrity.

For many the empire presented a wide field for personal advancement and success. In its service these Greeks were willing to work and make important contributions. Accordingly, some leading Greek figures of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were more sympathetic to Ottoman rule than were their descendants in the twentieth century. The wealthy and lettered were oftentimes beneficiaries of Ottoman largesse and protection. As for the church hierarchy, its authority was often bolstered by the Ottomans who enforced its edicts when it suited them to do so. Its members had reason to be pro-Ottoman. To the extent that we know the feelings of the unlettered and the poor, it would seem that, though their life was hard, they were not anti-Turk pure and simple, for their anger was as much directed against the Greek grandees.

It would thus be more accurate to discuss several Greek relationships (note the plural) to the Turks. Different elements of the population had different privileges and responsibilities. Some regions—notably those that were all-Greek—had varying degrees of autonomy verging on effective independence. In addition, the day-to-day life of the Greeks depended upon both the general conditions of Ottoman power and administration and the status of other minority groups in the empire.

At the risk of overgeneralization in an area where much more scholarly research is still needed, the following rough scheme of Ottoman Greek history is presented. The earliest period, from 1300 to 1450, was characterized by a degree of syncretism at the popular level in the absence of strong Greek leadership. The relationship between Greek and Turkish leaders showed a shifting pattern of alliance and hostility. After the conquest of Constantinople there emerged a structure of patriarchal leadership (1450 to 1600) within a stable political setting, in which, however, the lot of the church was by no means easy. Closely tied to the Constantinople Patriarchate were wealthy Greek merchants—some with pretensions to Byzantine aristocracy. From 1600 to 1800 the wealthy Greek families of the Phanar, an Istanbul district to which the patriarchate was moved in 1601, assumed increased wealth and political influence both within their own community and the empire at large. Among Greeks, the Phanariotes manipulated the selection of the patriarch and his officials to suit the interests of their competing families. In the empire the Phanariotes controlled the revenue-producing principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia, in addition to the influential chief dragomanate (literally, office of interpreter), which helped shape Ottoman foreign policy, and the post of "dragoman to the fleet," who served the Ottoman high admiral and administered many of the Aegean Islands.

During these two centuries, 1600 to 1800, western European influence—religious, economic, intellectual, and political—upon the Greeks increased. Protestant and Catholic missionaries and their protecting embassies jockeyed

for primacy in Constantinople. Greek merchants who previously concentrated their foreign ventures in the Orthodox lands of eastern Europe now drove their trade westward.

The success they achieved had a remarkable effect on the Habsburg Empire in particular. For much of the eighteenth century, Ottoman merchants—mostly Greek Orthodox—dominated the international commerce of this Catholic empire. One official reported with great alarm that "the import and export trade between the Hereditary and Ottoman lands, at least as far as the Austrian littoral is concerned, is now handled by Turkish subjects without any, or with only the slightest, participation by our merchants."[2] Concerns such as this prompted the Habsburg government to break with its long-standing intolerance of non-Catholics. Exceptionally, it imitated the successful Ottoman policy of encouraging the establishment of religiously diverse communities to create commercial entrepôts. Overcoming their deeply held religious convictions, the Habsburgs made Trieste a free port on the Adriatic, open to settlement by merchants of all nations who were allowed to practice their own religions openly and freely.

Although they succeeded in establishing Trieste as a major center of international trade and shipping, the Habsburgs never overcame the natural affiliation that the Greeks and other Orthodox had for the rising empire to the east, the Romanovs. Russia promoted itself as the natural protector of the Greeks and, even more so, the Slavs. Russian influence drew upon primordial appeals very different from the emerging western European notions of Enlightenment. The longstanding religious divisions between Christian West and Christian East had created a barrier that prevented the Habsburg dynasty or any other Catholic realm from acting as an inspiration for the Ottoman Orthodox. The supposedly universalist post-sectarian claims of the Enlightenment sought to overcome such divisions, but even when successful they appealed largely to the émigré elite. For the mass of the Orthodox population, the preference was for their Russian coreligionists. During the eighteenth century the rise of Russian military power was matched by the growing assertiveness of its Orthodox hierarchy. To a degree, Russia's Orthodox Christianity enabled Russia's appeal to the entire ecumene of the Constantinople Patriarchate. The signal event in this process was the First Russo-Turkish War of 1768–1774, fought largely within the lands of the Ottoman Empire and its close Muslim allies. The strategic consequences of Ottoman defeat, ratified in the 1774 Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca, were disastrous. Russia consequently achieved a diplomatic breakthrough. It skillfully came to parse this diplomatic instrument as the justification to assert a protectorate over all Ottoman Orthodoxy.

The corrosive notions of the European Enlightenment did start to penetrate Greek intellectual life, but largely through the newly wealthy and acculturated members of the commercial diaspora. The Greek ecclesiastical

hierarchy viewed these developments with suspicion and distrust, but because the most disturbing of these trends flourished outside the empire, well beyond the confines of patriarchal authority, there was little the clergy could do, although they tried.

In the fraught year of 1798, the Greek patriarch of Jerusalem, Anthimos I (1717–1808), published in Constantinople a short tract that simultaneously offered an apologia for the quasi-concordat between the Orthodox Church and Muslim state and a critique of the revolutionary ideas fashionable in western Europe.

> See how clearly our Lord, boundless in mercy and all-wise, had undertaken to guard once more the unsullied Holy and Orthodox faith. . . . He raised out of nothing this powerful empire of the Ottomans, in place of our Roman [Byzantine] Empire which had begun, in a certain way, to cause to deviate from the beliefs of the Orthodox faith, and he raised up the empire of the Ottomans higher than any other kingdom so as to show without doubt that it came about by divine will, and not by the power of man. . . .
>
> The all-mighty Lord, then, has placed over us this high kingdom, "for there is no power but of God," so as to be to the people of the West a bridle, to us the people of the East a means of salvation. For this reason he puts into the heart of the Sultan of these Ottomans an inclination to keep free the religious beliefs of our Orthodox faith and, as a work of supererogation, to protect them, even to the point of occasionally chastising Christians who deviate from their faith, that they have always before their eyes the fear of God. . . .
>
> Brothers, do not be led astray from the path of salvation; but as you have always with bravery and steadfastness trampled underfoot the wiles of the devil, so now also close your eyes and give no hearing to those newly-appearing hopes of liberty "for now is salvation nearer to us." . . . But let us analyse more scientifically the very name of this "liberty." . . . True freedom is A, that disposition of the rational soul, which by the grace of God, leads man to the good without, however compelling him. Such liberty is called "freedom of the will." B, it is freedom for man to be able, unhindered, to put into practice the appetites of his desires, which is insubordination. C, it is called freedom for someone to live according to divine and human laws, that is to live free of every reproach of conscience and free of civil discipline. . . . The only praiseworthy liberty is the third noted above. . . . Let us have steadfastness and prudence, let us not lose the unfading crowns of eternal blessedness for a false and non-existent liberty in this present life. Let us not deprive ourselves of the inexpressible rewards.[3]

During the last century and one quarter, from just before 1800 to 1923, further changes occurred, beginning with the French occupation of the formerly Venetian-held Ionian islands bordering Ottoman Greece, followed by the Greek War of Independence (1821–1832), and ending with the forced migration of Greeks, after the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), from Turkey and

Bulgaria to Greece itself. Over this same period the Orthodox Church in Slavic and Arabic-speaking areas grew increasingly restive under Greek domination and more sympathetic to Russian influence. A period that began with the first articulation of the Great Idea—the notion that Greece should control all the territories that had been under its sway in the past, a kind of neo-Byzantium—ended in ignominious withdrawal from all settlements back to its rocky outpost at the end of the Balkan peninsula.

Background to the Greek Uprising

No less profound than the political and geographical transformation of the Greeks was the change in their historical consciousness and identity. In the eighteenth century, a Greek such as Patriarch Anthimos claimed the heritage of Rome, but in the nineteenth century the new leaders imagined themselves as Hellenes. The turning point in this transformation was the creation of an independent kingdom of Greece. Prior to its creation, most Greeks of the Ottoman lands saw themselves as Romans, that is, as East Romans, heirs of Byzantium. The men of the Greek Enlightenment propagated notions of Hellenism, a return to the glory of ancient and pagan Hellas. A key figure was Adamantios Koraes (1748–1833), a scientist, scholar, and man of letters who played a crucial role in the Greek intellectual revival.

But the intellectuals and merchants who formulated such notions in the distant European centers of the Greek diaspora—Koraes spent many years in Montpelier and Paris—were not the men who did battle. The Greek mountaineers and peasants, pirates and brigands who fought the Ottoman forces through years of protracted struggle would have found a return to Hellenism as alien if not as repulsive as conversion to Islam. The popular cry was for a return to the Romaic past, that is, Christian Constantinople and not pagan Athens. The remains of classical Greece were as mysterious to the Greek peasant as were the monuments of pharaonic Egypt to the fellah, who thought them the work of an ancient race of giants or genies. The claim to these legacies by latter-day Greece and Egypt developed from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as a consequence of European archaeological discoveries and European concepts of ethnic and territorial nationhood.

The external element that proved an impetus for these new ideas was the French Revolution, for liberty and equality were clearly disruptive of the traditional order. For example, they had helped inspire Koraes and challenged Anthimos. When coupled with French military success, these ideas became one more dangerous force challenging the Ottoman Empire at the end of the eighteenth century. In 1797 the Treaty of Campo Formio partitioned the Republic of Venice and bestowed upon France many former Venetian possessions along the Ottoman Adriatic coast. From these islands

the French launched a propaganda campaign directed at the empire's Greek subjects. They organized speeches and ceremonies that recalled the ancient glories and liberties of Hellas and promised their restoration. More significant, French intelligence made contact with rebels on the mainland, and rumors abounded that the French planned an invasion to annex parts of Greece. It was ultimately Egypt, not Greece, that was France's target, but the mere presence of France along the borders of Ottoman Europe proved disturbing.

The immediate cause of the Greek rising, which eventually produced the independent Greek kingdom decades later, may be seen in the centralizing policies of Sultan Mahmud II during the first third of the nineteenth century, a counter to the Russian threat. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Greek maritime and mercantile communities had prospered greatly. The Ottoman flag, neutral during some of the crucial years of the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, had given them considerable commercial advantages; the loose and highly decentralized administration of the Ottoman Empire in that period allowed them the opportunity to develop their own administrative, political, and even military institutions. The local rulers and dynasts who governed much of Greece were for the most part Muslims. They presided, however, over largely Greek principalities, were served by Greek ministers and agents, and even employed Greek troops. The attempt by Mahmud II to restore the direct authority of the Ottoman central government thus represented, in effect, a severe curtailment of liberties that the Greeks already enjoyed, and it was the defense of these liberties, as much as the acquisition of new ones, that motivated the struggle of the Greeks against Ottoman rule. The French occupation of some of the Greek lands had additional significance, for it presaged a process of occupation, agitation, and rebellion that was to afflict the empire in its last century. The French in Ionia, the Russians in the Balkans and the Caucasus, and the British in Egypt, each in different ways, used territory they had seized in or adjacent to the empire as a base from which to stir dissident elements to rebel. Decades later the Russians supported an Armenian revolutionary movement.

In each instance of rebellion the external power aided and abetted in the recreation of a mythic past that bore little relation to the actual consciousness of the rebels but which took on a life of its own once the struggle was over. Although the contribution of the Hellenic revival to the popular struggle against the Ottomans was small, in the end it was Hellenism that took over the cause. Unfortunately for the dreamers of a revived Byzantium, the notion of Hellas excluded the non-Greek-speaking Orthodox peoples whom they regarded as barbarians. Thus the ties that had previously brought together the Serbs, Bulgars, Macedonians, Moldavians, Wallachians, Greeks, and others now started to fray. The transformation of the Greek

self-image and reality had an even more penetrating impact upon the position of millions of Greeks who remained within the empire. For many of these the politics, ideals, and even language of the new Greek kingdom were alien. Nonetheless, the creation of this new state rendered the position of the Ottoman Greek community increasingly difficult and eventually helped sound its death knell.

The central theme of Greek history through centuries of Ottoman rule was a sense of imperial loss. Greece's golden age was Byzantium; the classical past was rejected as barbarian paganism. Under the Ottomans, the Patriarchate of Constantinople represented, à la Iorga, a successor state to Justinian's empire. Its effective bounds were the boundaries of his empire. Under Ottoman aegis the Orthodox leadership could pretend to its greatest territorial extent. The emergence of Hellas redeemed shattered the pretense and ambiguity of the Greek position under the Ottomans. Dreams of empire could not survive the humdrum realities of statehood. Eventually the Greeks were forced to choose the constricted reality and lose—if not forsake—the larger dream. Ironically the trajectory of Greek history, in fact, anticipated the Turkish, a century later.

Status of the Armenians

The gap between Armenian reality and Armenian dreams was even wider. The Armenians have been caught in the midst of nearly every struggle in near eastern history and more often than not have chosen, or had chosen for them, the losing side. At one time or another, the Greeks, the Persians, the Arabs, the Mongols, the Russians, and the Turks have invaded their lands. Periods of Armenian independence have been brief and distant. Armenia's proudest moments have been the early adoption of Christianity and the determined adherence to a Christology—deemed heretical by Catholics and the Orthodox—it shares with the Copts of Egypt and the Jacobites of Syria.

Although Armenians, like Greeks, dreamed of a return to their own rule, the recollection of that rule has been much dimmer. The dispersal of the Armenian people following their repeated losses further complicated their dreams. While the Greeks could hold millenarian beliefs for the recapture of Constantinople, the Armenians had no single center to reclaim. The process of conquest, exile, and political revival on new soil—the moves from the Armenia of Van and Ararat and later Cappadocia to the Lesser Armenia of Cilicia during the eleventh century—preserved the territoriality of the Armenians. However, they complicated their historical memory by creating new and conflicting national centers. Furthermore, their moves rarely gave them respite. They fled to Cilicia to escape the Seljuk Turks, but their new homeland became a base for the Crusades. Those who remained

in historic Armenia suffered centuries of war as the Seljuks and Byzantines, marauding Turcomans, and then the Ottomans and Safavids fought over this land. The process of dispersal continued by *sürgün* and voluntary means, sending Armenians to the Black Sea region, the Balkans, and eastern Europe, as well as Iran and India.

In the heyday of Ottoman power, the fifteenth to early seventeenth centuries, the Armenians do not seem to have played a prominent role (see Chapter 8 by Robert Mantran). The privileges extended to Armenians by Shah Abbas, leader of Safavid Iran, who was building a great trading center in his capital, Isfahan, drew them eastward. The strength of Jewish merchant activities in the Ottoman Empire discouraged significant Armenian mercantile movement westward. In the eighteenth century, after the decline of the Safavids, the reduction of Iran to the chaos of warring factions, the Ottoman expansion into formerly Persian-held territory, and the weakening of the Jewish position in commerce, the Armenians began to rise to prominence in the life of the empire. Their position improved even more in the nineteenth century. Their wealthiest became the intendants of customs houses, the bankers to local pashas, the purveyors of luxury goods, the minters of coins, and the practitioners of long-distance trade.

Even during this period of increased activity in the entrepôts of Istanbul, Aleppo, and Izmir, the bulk of the Armenian population remained as they had been for centuries, lowly peasants in Anatolia. In this region a figure who was to initiate a major movement for Armenian revival received his earliest schooling. Mekhitar of Sivas (1676–1749) founded an Armenian Catholic religious order that was to help lead the cultural transformation of his people. The Mekhitarist Fathers revived the Armenian language, cultivated Armenian literature, spread European ideas through translations, established scholarly and popular journals, instituted a network of schools and printing presses, and laid the foundation for modern Armenian historiography. All this was directed from monasteries outside the Ottoman Empire to which the Fathers had been exiled by the hostility of the established Armenian Gregorian Church. Characterized by even less contact than the Greeks with western Europe, the Armenian Church had no need to produce an attack on the Enlightenment comparable to Patriarch Anthimos's tract of 1798. Instead their major intellectual challenge came from the Catholic-tinged cultural revival inspired by the Mekhitarists.

In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, a second challenge emerged to the traditional leadership of the Armenian community. It arose from the parvenus of wealth—the bankers, minters, and merchants, who came to be called the *amiras*. The *amiras* gained power and prestige within the Armenian community. Servants and advisers to Ottoman officials in both the capital and the provinces, they were in a better position to represent the Armenians than were the leaders of the church (see Chapter 7 by

Hagop Barsoumian). During the eighteenth century the Armenian hierarchy parried the challenge of the *amiras* by sharing power with them. In fact, the Constantinople patriarchs used the influence of the capital's *amiras* to advance their own positions over that of the rival church centers.

Although radical political and religious ideas never threatened the Armenian hierarchy to the same degree as they did the Greek, the church did on occasion confront them. The circumstances were very different, but nonetheless equally revealing.

Joseph Emin (1726–1809), a would-be Madras-based Armenian liberator, inspired by his years of military service in England, embarked upon a secret mission in the mid-eighteenth century to raise a revolt of his brethren against Ottoman rule.[4] In 1759 he made his way to Aleppo and hired Armenian servants, joining a caravan heading north into Armenian Anatolia. However, he soon tired of this large traveling party and set out on his own, accompanied by only his servants. He was supremely confident, for he had two "instruments of guidance": "a map of Asia made at Paris" and a compass, "the fruits of European wisdom." His servants, if his own account can be believed, were now in awe of him, for he was "in every village respected by the Turks." Unlike "the poor Armenian merchants" of the initial caravan, he "behaved in such a domineering way, that the Turks imagined he was a great Armenian, a favourite of the sultan, with a firman in his possession." At their next halt he separated from his entourage to visit on his own a small Armenian village. Here his identity and reception came to be reversed: "When the [Armenian] countrymen saw him mounted on a fine grey horse, they took him to be a Turkish trooper; but when he spoke to them in their own language, it made them very angry; they ran to . . . beat him heartily, using menacing language, and asking, How he durst travel alone without a caravan, since he was a Christian?" He escaped the beating only by convincing his compatriots that he was in fact an Ottoman Turk. Immediately "the poor creatures were frightened out of their senses . . . down upon their knees, begging for mercy . . . expressing their fidelity to the Othmans, who are the only people able to travel alone." Eventually he was able to arrange a private session with the priest and village headman of whom he asked, "You, Christians, what is the reason of your objecting, if any of your countrymen should take a fancy to be a warrior? And why are you not free? Why have you not a sovereign of your own?" The response, "Sir, our liberty is in the next world; our king is Jesus Christ." Emin said, "How came that about? Who told you so?" They answered, "The Holy Fathers of the Church, who say, the Armenian nation has been subject to the Mahometans from the creation of the world, and must remain so till the day of resurrection; otherwise we could soon drive the Othmans out of our country."

At this point Emin revealed himself as a Christian. He noted that the Christians of "Frankestan" are not great slaves to the "Mahometans." He

urged his fellow Armenians to rise up against their Ottoman lords. As the harangue continued the priest interrupted to exclaim, "He is in the right," and called all the villagers out to praise and embrace their erstwhile victim; then added, "love and respect him; for he is the very man prophesied by St. Nerses the Great, about six hundred and thirty years ago, who will be the instrument of delivering us from the hands of our oppressors, and of the enemies of our faith." The headman was startled by this change of attitude and demanded, "What was that you pronounced? Or why are we kept in ignorance?" The priest replied,

> My dear people, what signifies pulling off shoes and stockings before we reach the bank of the rivulet; everything in good time; besides, the holy prophecy is for 666 years to be fulfilled; during that period, we must continue as in subjection; 638 years are expired, there remain 28 years more to complete our persecution; then we shall become free; then no power in the world can oppress us. Our guest must have seen a great deal of the world, as we may judge by his conduct as well as by his great Father; you may be judges yourselves: you were frightened at first, when you imagined he was a Turk. . . . I say, he is the very man; but he must wait, and go through various scenes of life twenty or thirty years more. I tell it to his face; it is not he that does these things, it is the great God above.[5]

In the best Don Quixote tradition, Emin was delighted with this response, commenting by way of summary in his characteristic third person, "In this method he sowed the corn grain of true religion, and planted the admirable zeal of military spirit every where he travelled." The priest skillfully diffused what might have been a nasty confrontation. The priest doubtless realized that in twenty or thirty years his flock would die, or Emin would die, or the priest himself would die. And indeed while Emin still lived fifty more years, he never returned to the village to harvest "the zeal of military spirit" that he had planted. And no one else in the remainder of the eighteenth century did either.

This episode demands multiple levels of analysis. Paradoxically, Emin as an Armenian is treated better by the Turks, while Emin as a Turk is treated better by the Armenians. And then there is the esoteric quality of Armenian millenarianism and the subtle dueling between the priest and Emin. So subtle is the duel that he misinterprets a sly and skillful rebuff as endorsement. Emin's contradictory receptions reveal the interplay of ethnicity and class in the structure of Ottoman society. Contrary to oversimplified claims that one's position was determined solely by religious identity and that all non-Muslims were constantly subjected to abuse and degradation from all Muslims, there was, in fact, a mix of two elements. Religious identity clearly played a role and, other things being equal, non-Muslims were inferior to Muslims, but other things were rarely equal. Proximity to power could elevate a non-Muslim to a status that could command more respect

than a Muslim. Access to the sultan was the single most important criterion in determining social standing. Thus a proud and haughty Armenian, Joseph Emin, as if a member of the sultan's entourage, could command Turkish respect. However, that very same pride and haughtiness on the part of an upper-class Armenian could arouse a very different reaction on the part of lowly Armenians. They knew all too well that they might ultimately have to pay the price for his uppity behavior. The sultan's Armenian favorite himself could get away with it, but Muslim indignation and resentment would then be directed at his powerless coreligionists whose awareness of the consequences of such behavior caused them to lash out, defensively, against Emin. It was this very element of risk and precariousness of position that paradoxically led to the rise of Armenian financial advisers and bankers who served Ottoman officials in the eighteenth century, in the first place. Contrary to some claims, Islamic law, particularly as it was interpreted in the Ottoman Empire, placed no significant restrictions on Muslim financial activity.[6] It was not the limits of Islamic law that gave Armenians an opportunity as court bankers. Rather it was the shifting balance of power between the sultan and his high-ranking Muslim subjects who by the eighteenth century had so successfully entrenched themselves in different sectors of Ottoman life—witness the decline of the *devshirme* system—as to be almost immune from their ruler's will. By contrast Armenians and other non-Muslims had no comparable independent base internally and proved far more loyal servants.

Armenian Conflicts

Although Emin failed, other challenges confronted Ottoman-Armenian relations. The Mekhitarist Fathers and the missions they pioneered succeeded in converting enough Gregorian Armenians to Catholicism to create a diplomatic cause célèbre. They were more successful than intermittent Catholic efforts in the past directed at the Greek Orthodox. Emboldened by their efforts, they demanded Ottoman recognition as a separate religious community, *millet* in the language of the day. Finally, in 1830, supported by the government of France, they succeeded. Though the Armenian Catholic problem seemed at least on the surface resolved, countless internal disputes remained to plague the Armenian community throughout the nineteenth century. For most of the period, Armenian passions were directed more within the community than without. Inspired by the ideas of the Enlightenment and the successive political revolutions of Europe, some Armenian thinkers in the mid-nineteenth century opposed the authority of the ruling *amira*-clergy coalition. The established leadership supported itself by appealing to the Divine Truth of the Bible, which they claimed

demanded obedience to both the Armenian and Ottoman authorities. The forces arguing for constitutional restraints also sought to bring their liberal notions to the population at large by educating the Armenian peasants in Anatolia, whose welfare had been long neglected.

In the midst of these disputes, the leaders of the Armenian establishment, who had evolved an effective modus vivendi with the Ottoman authorities, found their position challenged from an unexpected quarter—the very Ottoman state to which they urged obedience. The Ottoman Reform Decree of 1856 had a greater impact upon the Armenian community than it did on any other within the empire. The issues of clerical versus lay control, participation by the community at large in selection of religious leaders, the nature of hierarchical authority, the notion of a constitution itself—issues that had provoked deep divisions among Armenians—were now addressed directly by the Ottomans. Among the Greeks and Jews, such matters had not been the subject of prior controversy, so the Ottoman-sponsored reforms, which these communities eventually accepted, did not affect them in the same way. However, in the Armenian community, the issue of reform was to be resolved with the Ottoman government, publicly at least, arrayed initially on the side of the new thinkers, the liberal constitutionalists, and the opponents of the traditional leadership. This emerging coalition of reform did not last long, but its existence for even a short time disturbed the traditional methods of political and social control that allowed Ottoman society to function. A constitution was drafted and eventually enforced, which formed the basis for the organization and representation of the Armenian people for most of the remaining decades of Ottoman rule.

During the early constitutional period there was much reason to expect that the position of the Armenians in the empire would continue to improve. Implementation of the Ottoman reform decrees opened up new possibilities for government service. The penetration of the economy by European firms opened up new jobs for people who had the skills that many possessed. Theater, music, and the arts attracted Armenians of talent to the capital (see Chapter 10 by Roderic Davison). The Armenian National Constitution seemed to inaugurate a new period of hope and opportunity for all Armenians in the empire. Indeed it was a remarkable document: it recognized the right of all members of the community to have some voice in determining its affairs, and it institutionalized a high degree of autonomy. By contrast, the neighboring Armenian community in the Russian Empire seemed worse off. All their bishops were nominated by the tsar, who also had the right to choose the head of the church from a final list submitted by an Armenian assembly. In addition, the Russian government appointed a procurator who supervised and even directed the Catholicos of Etchmiadzin. Later the Russian government took even harsher steps by compelling Armenian schools to use Russian as the language of instruction

and forcibly confiscating all the properties of the Armenian church, state intervention alien to Ottoman norms.

Nonetheless Russia laid claim to be the protector of Ottoman Armenians. When Russia conquered the Caucasus early in the nineteenth century and created a province of Armenia with Armenian administrators and Armenian soldiers on the borders of the Ottoman Empire, hopes were stirred among some Armenians who had imbibed the new idea that together they might restore independence. In all likelihood, the movement for national independence would have gained strength whatever the Ottomans did, but Ottoman support for policies that inadvertently undermined the authority of the traditional leadership in Istanbul contributed to the weakening of those elements that had cooperated with the government. Instead, in opposition to the Ottomans, nationalist-inspired Armenians and the Armenians of the eastern provinces, who had suffered the depredations of Kurdish and Turkish elements encouraged by the policies of Sultan Abdulhamid II, now came increasingly to gain support in the Armenian community.

Tragically for the Armenians, their hopes for national independence arose at the end of a century-long succession of Christian uprisings in the Balkans. And their aspirations were centered in Anatolian territory that the leaders of the Ottoman Empire in its last decades came to regard as the last bastion of what remained of their empire. They were forced to accept that the empire could lose Greece, Serbia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Albania, and even the Arab lands and still have a territorially viable state. To a much greater degree than other Christian peoples, the Armenians were integrated with the Muslim population. Their misfortune was that in the past centuries they had got along well enough with Kurds and Turks to inhabit some of the same towns and villages. No compact minority begging partition, they shared much of eastern and southern Anatolia with their Muslim neighbors. After the triumph of the Committee of Union Progress (CUP) in 1909, an ideology of Turkish nationalism gradually supplanted the earlier liberal inclusive Ottomanist alternative. Under the CUP's triumvirate of Talat, Enver, and Jemal, a fateful turn occurred. To lose the lands that the Armenians inhabited, territory stretching from the Caucasus on the northeast to the Mediterranean on the south, would abort their vision of the empire. It would also block Enver's emerging dream of a pan-Turkic empire from the Aegean to the frontiers of China, devastating their old enemy the Romanovs. Even before World War I the government attempted to reduce by population exchange, expulsion, and more drastic measures Christian populations within the empire. After the war erupted, constraints on those drastic measures were lifted. The triumvirate feared that Russia, supported by its own Armenian forces, would instigate an Armenian uprising within Anatolia that would destroy what was left of the Ottoman realm. A bloody struggle between the Ottomans, Russians, and Armenians broke out. The Ottoman

government used this occasion to pursue a policy of moving and murdering enough Armenians to reduce their numbers so that never could they pose a political or military threat to the sovereignty and integrity of the state. The goal was to reduce the Armenian population to less than 10 percent in any part of the empire. One and a half million Armenians lost their lives to this 10 percent solution.

Jewish Difference

The pattern of Jewish history under Ottoman rule ran contrary to that of the Greeks and Armenians. The heyday of Ottoman Jewry was during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the community lost influence. The most iconic date has long been 1492, the year of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Prior to the influx of Iberian Jews during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Ottoman Jews were few, poor, and spoke either Greek or Turkish. The Jews were divided into a Rabbinite community, that is followers of Talmudic Judaism, who were Greek speakers, and a small Turkish-speaking Karaite community, a sect that traced its origins to a break with Talmudic Judaism in the eighth century. Along with other Ottoman subjects, both were liable to forced migrations. The lot of the Jews improved when for practical reasons the Ottomans opened their lands to the Iberian exiles. Of all the states in the Mediterranean basin, the Ottoman Empire was the only one that had a need for skilled urban populations and possessed the administrative apparatus for absorbing thousands of migrants. Most Christian rulers denied them entry. While Morocco received some, their absorptive capacity was limited. Although there is no record that the Ottoman Empire applied the formal *sürgün* to these new immigrants, it was accustomed to managing large population movements. This combination of need and ability made it possible for Jews to be received.

The numbers and cultural sophistication of these immigrants soon overwhelmed the indigenous Jewish communities, which subsequently, with few exceptions, became assimilated into Iberian Jewish culture. They abandoned Greek and Turkish for Ladino, that is, Judaeo-Spanish. They also integrated the history of Iberian Jewry into their own. Of all the *dhimmi* communities, the Iberian Jews alone were Ottoman subjects by choice, not by conquest. This characteristic clearly distinguished them from the Christian communities and proved a source of suspicion in the eyes of their fellow subjects and of acceptance in the eyes of their masters. Jewish sources of the sixteenth century reflect a perception of the empire as a haven during times of trouble and persecution. This perception dominated in the centuries that followed. Curiously, it was so strong that it even influ-

enced the self-image of those Jews who in fact were subjects by conquest, those of the Arabic-speaking lands after 1517.

Through the early post-expulsion period, the self-image of Ottoman Jewry was of a confident community. Its cultural and material achievements certainly justified this belief: the establishment of trade and industry, the growth and flowering of intellectual life, the participation of Jews in the mainstream of Ottoman commerce, and, within limits, their perceptible role in science and in political and diplomatic affairs. Toward the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth, this picture of progress, wealth, and influence started to change. Jewish immigration to the Ottoman Empire, and thus contact with Europe, had diminished and emigration had begun.

The reason for this was twofold. Simply put, the major source of migrants, Spanish and later Portuguese Jewry, was drying up. Those who moved eastward had done so, and the fewer in number who were allowed to settle in Europe and the New World were by now well established. Second, economic opportunities within the empire were diminishing. By the seventeenth century, the woolen textile industry in Salonica, which was the largest single employer of Jewish labor in the entire country, was beginning to experience a series of crises from which it never recovered. The result of this decline was to reduce the material base of the community and render it more subject to the economic vagaries at a time when patterns of trade and production were shifting. The ties that Ottoman Jews established with their coreligionists in Italy became less profitable as Atlantic commerce supplemented Mediterranean. Ottoman Jews were not able to shift their networks into central and eastern Europe. While there were large Jewish communities in those areas, they were Ashkenazi and therefore less likely to provide the ties of family in which a Sefardi network typically functioned. The Greeks and Armenians had ethnic and family ties in eastern Europe that proved superior to the Jewish network.

This brings us to another cause of Jewish decline—the increasing competition of the Christians, particularly the Greeks and Armenians, but later also Arab Christians. The Christians had the advantage of numbers—there were far more of them than there were of Jews—and of education, in that they sent their children to Christian schools and often to Europe and European universities. By contrast the Jews, with their commercial ties to Europe diminished, were increasingly dependent on their own resources within the Ottoman Empire. The Christians had the advantage of patronage both from their church hierarchies (which the Jews lacked) and from Christian Europe, which naturally tended to favor Christians at the expense of Jews, and by now it was the favor of Europe, not of the Turks, that counted. Thus early in the seventeenth century, to quote one example among many, an Armenian replaced a Jew as customs intendant of Aleppo, aided in

his appointment by the French consul. Later, in the seventeenth century, a major crisis afflicted the Ottoman Jewish community. It came at the time of a shift in the economic base against a background of increased competition and loss of confidence. Nationalism never found as receptive an audience among Jews as it did among other communities of the empire, but the combination of mysticism and messianism that culminated in the Sabbatian movement of the late seventeenth century was at least as widespread and, in its own way, inimical to Ottoman authority.

Mystical study and speculation had been well-established in Jewish culture for centuries. Ottoman Jewry cultivated the study of Lurianic Kabbalah with its emphasis upon the messianic imperative. It was this doctrine—widely disseminated from Safed in northern Palestine—that offered the basis for the messianic claims of the Izmir-born Sabbatai Sevi to gain a mass following in the mid-seventeenth century. As news of "the messiah" spread, the Jews both within and outside the empire prepared themselves for his arrival by performing acts of repentance, special fasts, and prayers. The more practical-minded sold their goods, packed their bags, and prepared for the ingathering of the exiles to Palestine. The Ottoman authorities in Istanbul, preoccupied as they were during the 1660s with the campaign against Venetian Crete, did not immediately attempt to suppress the movement. Eventually they quelled its more disturbing elements by arresting Sabbatai Sevi and ultimately forced him to embrace Islam. The more overt agitation now subsided. Some of his followers adopted Islam outwardly, emerging as a controversial element in late Ottoman politics. The majority remained Jews, though many still retained faith in him.

The social background and effect of Sabbatianism have not been as thoroughly examined as has the spiritual. During much of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, the Jewry of the Ottoman Empire was the largest in the world. However, in the course of the eighteenth century, it underwent a precipitous decline in population so that the Jews of northeast Europe, primarily Poland-Lithuania, soon outstripped it in size and intellectual creativity. It has been claimed that in the aftermath of the messianic exhaustion and disappointment, Ottoman Jewry reinforced the power and authority of rabbinic leadership and in the process lost the wellsprings of its cultural and economic vitality. Since the signs of decline had first appeared somewhat earlier, it is more likely that the Sabbatian outburst hastened and exacerbated an ongoing process.

Among the Ottoman Jews there was no intellectual revival comparable to those that renewed the cultural life of the Greeks and the Armenians. Neither in Hebrew nor in any of their vernaculars did they produce scholars or writers comparable to the Greek Koraes or the Armenian Mekhitar, either in quality or in influence. The nearest approach was of a Bosnian rabbi called Yehuda Alkalai (1798–1878), who from 1834 onward produced a series of books and pamphlets proposing the establishment of Jewish

colonies in Palestine as part of a program of Jewish self-redemption. This attempt to apply the lessons of Greek and Serb political movements was entirely without impact among Ottoman Jews. It was not until much later that Alkalai acquired some retrospective attention as a precursor of Zionism.

In the nineteenth century, the Jews, like the Christians and the Muslims, went through a phase of conflict—the struggle between reformers and conservatives. Among the Muslims, the Greeks, and the Armenians, the reformers won but, among the Jews, they lost. For this the Jews paid a price. Compared with their Christian neighbors they fell steadily behind.

The Jews had cast their lot, not surprisingly, with the conservative elements within Ottoman society. The destruction in 1826 of the Janissary Corps, the old military order, with which the Jews had important links, was a heavy blow. The rise of Russia and the growth of Russian influence were also not helpful to Jews in the Ottoman Empire. Later in the century, an upswing was fostered by the entrepôt trade of Salonica and improved education, which was encouraged most notably by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, a civic improvement philanthropy sponsored by French Jewry. The fate of the Ottoman Jews, however, was not in their own hands. They were caught in the circumstances that led to the end of the Ottoman Empire and the transformation of the entire region.

Turkish Not a Lingua Franca

As has already been noted, after roughly two centuries of Arab Muslim rule, with the notable exception of Iran, Arabic became the *lingua franca* in the near east. Despite six Ottoman centuries in the Balkans and four in the Arab lands, Turkish never achieved equivalent dominance. For the most part, the pre-Ottoman languages still survived after the empire disappeared. The language changes that did occur were not toward Turkish. Certainly the innovation of printing limited linguistic transformation. A Hebrew press was established in the late fifteenth century and Armenian in the next, but printing came late to the major communities within the empire; the first Turkish and Greek imprints did not appear until the eighteenth century despite an abortive attempt to establish a Greek press in 1627. However, books from Europe did freely circulate. Notable were religious texts in eastern languages, particularly those produced by the warring Protestant and Catholic camps in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This missionary effort increased in the following centuries, creating an intellectual beachhead on Ottoman land. The schools and printing presses, which the missionaries then founded, helped disseminate the new ideas of Europe. The effect of the printed book was to strengthen and standardize certain languages, even as the logic of the market undermined those languages not sustained by num-

bers and supportive wealthy institutions. During the early centuries of Islam, the absence of printing and the book trade had certainly eased the path to Arabization.

Technology alone does not explain the difference. Key was the role and nature of each language. Arabic was more important to the Arabs (and, for that matter, the Turks as well) than Turkish was to the Turks. Arabic was the language of the revelation transmitted from God through the angel Gabriel to Muhammad, ultimately realized in the Quran. That divine literature could not truly exist in any other language. So every Muslim who has ever wished to study the Quran in its full meaning can only do so through the original Arabic. Because Turkish could never achieve the prestige of Arabic, it had to compensate. It came to be written in the ill-suited Arabic script. Its formal high culture version, Ottoman Turkish, comprised Arabic (for Islamic learning and spirituality) and Persian (for belles lettres) as well as a Turkish core. Such a language was intended to be exclusive, the mark of the mandarinate. To spread it to a wider population would dilute its prestige and undermine its purpose. So Ottoman Turkification of the conquered peoples made no sense. Instead the empire pursued a policy toward language that was even more laissez-faire than its attitude toward religion.

In view of the role conventionally ascribed to language in determining national identity in Europe, its relative lack of importance in the Ottoman context is significant. Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, as well as Copts and non-Orthodox Christians in Arab lands each had a distinctive liturgical language. However, the language of ritual was not necessarily the language of the street or the home. While most of the hierarchy of the Orthodox Church was both ethnically and linguistically Greek, the parish clergy and flock was a polyglot mass speaking almost as many languages as were spoken in the empire itself. In the Balkans, there were speakers of Slavic and, in the case of Rumanian, a Romance language. To the south of Anatolia, there were Arabic speakers. In Anatolia itself, according to observers during the nineteenth century, the majority of the communicants of the church did not know Greek at all, as their native language was Turkish. In Anatolia, literate Greek Orthodox wrote in Greek script, but the language many of them transcribed was Turkish.

Early in the nineteenth century, under the influence of a Hellenizing trend in the Greek community, an attempt was made to impose Greek upon the many-tongued Orthodox flock. The words of the Vlach scholar Daniel of Moschopolis (1731–1769), a town in what is now Albania, illustrate the sense of cultural superiority with which he embarked upon this effort:

> Albanians, Wallachians, Bulgarians, speakers of other tongues, rejoice.
> And ready yourselves to become Greeks
> Abandoning your barbaric tongue, speech and customs.[7]

No other community was as linguistically diverse as the Rum, but members of the Armenian churches—Gregorian, Catholic, and later Protestant—did not necessarily speak Armenian. According to missionary reports, perhaps half of the Armenian population in Anatolia spoke Turkish.

As the doctrines of nationalism spread among these communities, such linguistic anomalies became a problem. Exacerbating the situation were the cries for language reform that emerged in the cultural life of Armenians and Greeks during the nineteenth century. While the nationalist elites were judging the purity of the spoken dialect against a mythic classical model, the great mass of the people they claimed as a nation continued speaking a different language.

For other Christians and the Jews of the empire, such linguistic anomalies were less perplexing. Ottoman Jews spoke a variety of languages. Among those in the Anatolian and European parts of the empire, Ladino dominated, but there remained small pockets of Greek speakers in the Balkans. In the Kurdish areas of the empire, Jews spoke that language, while others spoke a dialect of ancient Aramaic. Further to the south, the Jews of Aleppo, Damascus, Baghdad, Egypt, and Palestine, for the most part, spoke Arabic, as they had since about the eighth century. Ladino immigrants were fewer and less culturally dominant here. Consequently the process of assimilation was reversed. Greek and Turkish speakers were Hispanized by the immigrants from Iberia. Further south, Ladino immigrants became Arabized by the indigenous communities. Nonetheless the self-consciousness of Ottoman Jewry as a whole took its cue from the wealthier and politically connected Ladino-speaking Jews of the capital.

Since nationalism barely influenced these Jewries, linguistic diversity did not need to be explained away. For all, Hebrew remained as it had in centuries before the Ottoman conquest: the language of ritual and learning and, occasionally, literary expression; Hebrew script was commonly used by Jews to write the languages they spoke.

In Ottoman Syria and Egypt, the linguistic status quo remained. Christians continued to speak Arabic. Coptic and Syriac were retained in liturgy alone. To a much greater degree than any other region, these lands were linguistically unified. The legacy of the Arab conquest had permanently established the dominance of Arabic.

Among these groups, language was not imbued with that mythic character that has made it the conventional cultural determinant of nationhood. Whatever mythic quasi-spiritual quality was ascribed to language was found in its script, not its sound. Thus the Greek Orthodox, the Armenians, and many Syrian Christians, along with the Jews, wrote in a large variety of different languages in their respective liturgical scripts. Spoken language was a means of communicating among different peoples, not a means of distinguishing one from the other. In the nineteenth century, language began

to acquire the second role, but within the Ottoman Empire it never assumed the same importance it was to gain in Europe.

The Protection Racket

From the late eighteenth century onward, the Ottoman Empire faced an increasingly restive Christian population. In its external relations, the empire confronted powers eager to exploit this restiveness. The disruptive notions of European thought, the Enlightenment, liberalism, and nationalism undermined the different assumptions of Ottoman society. The powerful engines of Europe's capital and industry blasted the Ottoman economy. Each of these thrusts might have been resisted on its own, but nothing could have withstood the combined thrusts. In the face of these challenges from within and without, the empire displayed a degree of patience, ingenuity, and flexibility, which faltered in its twilight decades.

Of all the challenges confronting the Ottomans, the most dangerous proved to be the notion of foreign protection. At its origin this protection was limited to Ottoman Christians and Jews, locally recruited for service to the foreigner as vice-consuls, interpreters, commercial agents, and more menial employees. The individual so employed was given a warrant, issued by the Ottoman government at the behest of and through a foreign consulate called *berat*, whose terms resembled diplomatic immunity, including in some instances exemption from Ottoman criminal jurisdiction, as well as reduced customs levies and other commercial privileges (see Chapter 9 by Charles Issawi).

From the point of view of Islamic law this warrant had the effect of removing its recipient from the status of a *dhimmi* to something approaching the status of a resident alien. *Dhimmi* status was subject only to the *shari'a* as applied by the government, but resident alien status, as it evolved under Ottoman rule, was subject to the terms of international agreements and understandings. Ultimately this status depended upon the balance of power between one state and another. Considerations of military security, diplomatic alliance, and economic advantage in practice determined its application.

The early Islamic empires had formulated a similar status, but there was a major difference. For geographic and strategic reasons, none needed to be as intimately involved with the states of European Christendom as was the Ottoman Empire. Resident alien status within the Ottoman Empire developed as part of the sixteenth-century military-political alliance between Sultan Suleyman and King Francis I against the Habsburgs, to encourage French merchants to trade in the Levant. That arrangement also allowed for French intervention on behalf of Catholic houses of worship in the Ottoman

realm. The terms of these agreements appeared in chapters, *capitula* according to the Latin of international diplomacy. *Capitula* was the source for the term, "capitulation agreements," which in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries came to acquire a different, very sinister meaning, at least as far as the Muslim lands were concerned: Ottoman capitulation to the demands of Europe. Prior to the late eighteenth century such arrangements carried no significant threat since they applied to small numbers. When the French started to intervene on behalf of individual local Catholics as well as their institutions, that population was strategically too insignificant.

Gradually some form of European protection became increasingly attractive. Christians and Jews with no diplomatically legitimate claim whatsoever to a *berat* started obtaining them, and a brisk trade developed. Faced with such abuses, the Ottoman government, which had previously allowed foreign diplomatic agencies to distribute them, now began to issue them directly to its own subjects—non-Muslim and eventually even Muslim. The increased number of warrants diminished the competitive advantage afforded the holder, and direct Ottoman sale removed the disruptive impact of distribution by foreign governments.

But as the individual *berat* started to decline in importance, a new intrusion emerged. Russia's military and political rise in the late eighteenth century represented a radically different situation. By comparison to the corrosive effects of western European ideas, Russia represented a far greater challenge. Here was a state directly on the frontier that had both a powerful military of its own and, within the Ottoman Empire, sizeable and strategically placed natural allies—religious (Orthodoxy) and ethnic (Slavdom)—who could be a threatening fifth column. Russia along with the other European powers increasingly pressed claims for the protection of entire communities. But unlike all the other powers, Russia could claim the demographically largest and strategically most significant of all, the Rum. Thereby they, the Romanov dynasty, could assert patronage over practically all of Ottoman Europe and a significant part of Anatolia. Early in the nineteenth century, Russia added the Armenians to its list of protected communities, so now it established a presence in both western Anatolia (the Ionian coast) and eastern Anatolia (near Iran) and along the Russian-Ottoman frontier in the Caucasus. The other powers had to content themselves with relatively insignificant scattered communities. France vied with the Habsburgs in adopting the Catholics, at best, of marginal significance only in the remote region of Mount Lebanon. Britain and Prussia competed for the protection of the small Protestant communities and occasionally extended it to the numerically more important Jews. Eventually the claims for protection led to the bestowal of foreign citizenship on some Christians and a few Jews.

During the imperial heyday, the Ottomans had employed the *devshirme* system to alienate the loyalties of selected talented Christians from their

own communities for the benefit of the Muslim state. Now the relationship was reversed. Christian states were alienating the loyalties of talented non-Muslim Ottoman subjects for their own benefit to the detriment of the Muslim state. The decline of the *devshirme* system and the rise of the protection system functioned like the opposing sides of a seesaw.

Now that Europeans proclaimed protection for entire communities, the Ottomans, unable to revive the *devshirme* system, tried to assert a counterclaim of protection for Muslim communities under Christian control. The Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca of 1774, skillfully deployed by the Russians, provided the legal pretext for the tsarist right of intervention in the Ottoman realm. In that same document, the caliphate was formally recognized as the institution offering a comparable pretext for Ottoman intervention on behalf of the Crimean Tatars, who by virtue of the treaty came under Russian influence and later annexation. The Tatars were long-standing Ottoman allies, but now the sultan was forced to renounce those military ties.

To compensate for this loss, the Ottomans attempted to spread their claim to lead the religious community of Islam worldwide. It was a good stick with which to beat the powers, because Russia in Central Asia, France in Algeria, and Britain in India all had substantial Muslim populations. The threat, however, was not strong enough to stop European intervention, which now became more ingenious and subtle. An effective method was the European sponsorship of internal reforms aimed at the equality of subjects of the empire. In order to forestall more drastic intervention, the Ottoman government issued the Reform Decree of 1856, which proclaimed the equality of all—Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

In the wake of this order, Cevdet Paşa (1822–1895), a high-ranking government official and acute observer of the Ottoman scene, noted the reactions of the Muslim and non-Muslim populations:

> In accordance with this ferman Muslim and non-Muslim subjects were to be made equal in all rights. This had a very adverse effect on the Muslims. Previously, one of the four points adopted as basis for peace agreements had been that certain privileges were accorded to Christians on condition that these did not infringe on the sovereign authority of the government. Now the question of [specific] privileges lost its significance; in the whole range of government, the non-Muslims were forthwith to be deemed the equals of the Muslims. Many Muslims began to grumble: "Today we have lost our sacred national rights, won by the blood of our fathers and forefathers. At a time when the Islamic *millet* was the ruling *millet,* it was deprived of this sacred right. This is a day of weeping and mourning for the people of Islam."
>
> As for the non-Muslims, this day, when they left the status of *raya* and gained equality with the ruling *millet,* was a day of rejoicing. But the patriarchs and other spiritual chiefs were displeased, because their appointments were incorporated in the ferman. Another point was that whereas in former times, in the Ottoman state, the communities were ranked, with the

> Muslims first, then the Greeks, then the Armenians, then the Jews, now all of them were put on the same level. Some Greeks objected to this, saying: "The government has put us together with the Jews. We were content with the supremacy of Islam."[8]

By 1856 even this Turkish scholar-statesman, well-informed in matters Ottoman and Islamic, had assimilated the incorrect European understanding of the term *raya*.

His skeptical view notwithstanding, a serious effort was made to implement reform (see Chapter 11 by Carter Findley). Advanced and official circles developed the notion of Ottomanism, the empire's attempt at creating patriotic loyalty to the sultan and the empire as a whole. Unfortunately, this secular and egalitarian (in religious, not social, terms) response to the centrifugal forces of religion and ethnicity aroused little support. Working against it were the entrenched hierarchies of the religious communities, the eager spokesmen for the emerging nation-striving ethnicities, and the defenders of Muslim privilege (on this last point, see Chapter 12 by Moshe Ma'oz and Chapter 13 by Samir Khalaf). Ottomanism offered a means of arousing the kind of patriotic loyalty that had elsewhere united diverse ethnic and cultural elements to construct France and Great Britain, but there was no comparable political tradition in the empire. In the nineteenth century, the growing movements for unity were based on different assumptions and reflected different historical conditions. The kind of energies unleashed by the Risorgimento and the German Awakening claimed to represent primordial instinct. Once introduced into the empire, these notions would serve to disrupt rather than unify. In 1862, Ottoman foreign minister Ali Paşa wrote a tragically prophetic note to his ambassador in Paris:

> Italy, which is inhabited only by a single race speaking the same language and professing the same religion, experiences so many difficulties in achieving its unification. . . . Judge what would happen in Turkey if free scope were given to all the different national aspirations which the revolutionaries and with them a certain government [Russia] are trying to develop there. It would need a century and torrents of blood to establish a fairly stable state of affairs.[9]

Decades later, inspired by the unification of Italy and Germany, the Ottomans did try to promote, more or less successively, two different ideologies based on what they considered to be comparable primordial instincts. They propagated the cause of pan-Islam, which heretofore had been largely used to score points in the chanceries of Europe. Sultan Abdulhamid II now transformed it into a rallying cry carried to the entire world by his spokesmen. Unlikely a cause as it was, Ottomanism might have provided the basis for continued Ottoman unity. However, pan-Islam

only exacerbated tensions and divisions between Muslims and non-Muslims without achieving any political success. As the cause of pan-Islam gained adherents and as the empire was increasingly threatened by its Christian adversaries, the situation of Ottoman Christians deteriorated. As pan-Islam paled, pan-Turkism emerged as the final primordial solution.

There were further complications. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Muslim peasantry, weakened and impoverished by the heavy burdens of conscription and wars, saw their Christian neighbors, largely exempt from these duties, grow in numbers and possessions. The same period witnessed the growth of a Muslim middle class whose economic aspirations brought it directly into conflict with Greeks, Armenians, and, to a lesser degree, Jews. There arose a vocal and articulate element eager to displace these minorities from their position of influence (see Chapter 9 by Charles Issawi and Chapter 14 by Feroz Ahmad).

Pan-lslam had been the Ottoman response to the perception of a ubiquitous pan-Christian threat: it represented the attempted transformation of a religio-political instinct into a politico-religious policy. Implicitly it raised the threat of holy war to gain its declared aim of Islamic unity under the leadership of the Ottoman sultan-caliph. In the event of such a war, the position of the *dhimmi*s would be highly sensitive, but the position of those claiming protection from an enemy combatant state would be grave indeed. This was the price that some Christians and Jews eventually paid for Ottoman recognition of their sovereign status, although the Ottomans took a long time to collect it. Even as late as the last decade of the nineteenth century, in the midst of the Greco-Turkish War, the authorities by and large left unmolested the Greek subjects of the empire who prayed for a Greek victory.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, in the aftermath of these military, political, and economic challenges, Muslim popular feeling toward non-Muslims became increasingly hostile. Christians were the victims of riots and massacres. The Young Turk Revolution of 1908, with its promised return to constitutionalism and Ottomanism, failed in its goals. Pan-Islam had been the policy promoted by Sultan Abdulhamid II, whom the Young Turks overthrew. As pan-Islam failed to deliver and after it lost its chief patron, Germany emerged as the new patron of the Ottoman Empire, supplanting the traditional allies, France and Great Britain. Consequently, a new policy prevailed, reflecting the growing dominance of the German model of mono-ethnic nation-state building. Ottomanism was abandoned, and pan-Islam receded in influence. Enver's dream of pan-Turkism now inspired the military-political aspirations of the Young Turk triumvirate. Turkification had been briefly attempted and soon abandoned when the Ottomans first entered the Balkans in the fourteenth century. The model of Ottoman Turkish culture that the dynasty ultimately constructed, an amalgam of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish

literary traditions over a polyglot, polyethnic, multireligious realm, prevented it from being introduced again. Its revival by Enver and his colleagues was proof of their desperation. They manipulated the Ottoman Empire into a disastrous alliance with a new friend, Germany, against an old enemy, Russia. That sealed the empire's fate in World War I.

The Turks had been forced to come to grips with imperial loss as their one-time junior partners, the Greeks, had done in earlier centuries. The way stations of grieving and compromise were not identical, but still they were close enough. A century earlier, the Greek Orthodox dream of a pan-Orthodox ecumene replicating the empire of Justinian had been hesitantly abandoned for a rocky kingdom at the tip of the Balkans. In the course of over two centuries the Ottoman state moved from self-confident imperialism to accommodating Ottomanism to pan-Islamic ecumene to pan-Turkic fantasy to a republic on only one side of the Aegean confined to Asia Minor. In the process, the subject Christians and Jews lost even more than did their erstwhile Muslim rulers.

As this introduction concludes, perhaps a choice from the gastronomic options offered at its beginning is in order. Was the empire a melting-pot, a pressure cooker, or a macédoine? In the course of nearly seven centuries it was all three and more. Given its composition it could not avoid being a macédoine. It began as a melting pot but ended as a pressure cooker. In the process, far too many powerful European cooks spoiled its broth.

The chapters in this volume present a sober analysis of a complex empire over a long and varied history. They describe the workings of this multicultural, multireligious, and polyglot state from its center to its periphery. The capital, Constantinople, gets special attention as does the century leading up to the empire's demise, but almost all aspects are addressed. It is hoped that this new edition will encourage ever-expanding attention to the issues of community and polity that a history of the Ottoman Empire must always raise.

Notes

1. Macédoine, see *Oxford English Dictionary* on-line, http://www.oed.com.libproxy.smith.edu:2048/view/Entry/111796?redirectedFrom=mac%C3%A9doine#eid, accessed 14 October 2012.

2. Benjamin Braude, "The Jews of Trieste and the Levant Trade in the Eighteenth Century," in G. Todeschini and Pier Cesare Ioly Zorattini, ed., *Il mondo ebraico: Gli ebrei dell' Italia nord-orientale e lmpero asburgico dal Medioevo all'Eta contemporanea*, Pordenone, Italy, 1991, p. 335.

3. Richard Clogg, ed. and tr., *The Movement for Greek Independence, 1770–1821*, London, 1976, p. 29.

4. Joseph Emin, *Life and Adventures of Emin Joseph Emin, written by Himself*, second edition, ed. Amy Apcar, Calcutta, 1918, pp. 139–146.

5. Ibid.

6. Benjamin Braude, "Christians, Jews, and the Myth of Turkish Commercial Incompetence," *Relazioni economiche tra Europa e mondo islamico. Secc. XIII-XVIII*, Fondazione Istituto Internazionale Di Storia Economica "F. Datini" Prato, Serie II, Atti delle "Settiman di Studi" e altri Convegno 38, ed. Simonetta Cavociocchi, Prato, 2007, pp. 219–239.

7. Clogg (cited n. 3), p. 91.

8. Cevdet Paşa, *Tezakir*, Cavid Baysun, ed., Ankara, 1963, vol. 3, pp. 236–237.

9. Bernard Lewis, "Ali Pasha on Nationalism," *Middle Eastern Studies,* 10 (1977), p. 77.