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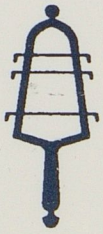
LXVII

ISA BLUMI

RETHINKING THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen 1878-1918



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Isa Blumi, born in Teplice, Czechoslovakia in 1969 earned a BA/MA in Political Theory and Historical Studies at the New School for Social Research. He is currently ABD at the Joint History and Middle Eastern Studies Program at New York University. In 1999, Isa Blumi joined the Provisional Government of Kosova, working within the Ministry of Information, from where he collaborated with the OSCE and UNMIK to help reestablish Radio/Television Kosova in postwar Kosova. While living in Kosova he also founded and was editor-in-chief of Kosova's only postwar English language daily, *Kosovatimes*. He has since lectured throughout Europe and North America on issues pertaining to contemporary Kosova and the administration of Ottoman Yemen and Albania, about which he is writing his dissertation. He has published articles in *East European Politics and Society, East European Quarterly, Current History, International Journal of Middle East Studies* and other journals and book chapters. Isa is son to and husband of two of the most wonderful, intelligent, brave and exasperating women on the planet.

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PREFACE

The following is a collection of my work that spans a period of seven years. Much of the material has been taken from recent research and has been fused with older, outdated texts, some of which had been previously published. As a young historian the institutional support given to me over the years, both in terms of financial sustenance and intellectual cheerleading is vital. I am particularly grateful, therefore, to those who supported me at the joint program of Middle Eastern Studies at New York University, especially Zachary Lockman, Robert McChesney, Michael Gilsenan, Ariel Salzmann and Katherine Fleming, who in their own ways, put up with a great deal. Likewise, money from the Fulbright-Hays, SSRC IDRF, American Research Centers in Istanbul and Rome, and the ACLS has contributed to the provisioning of my mind and body over these years.

Many visits to the numerous archives cited throughout this book have provided me plenty of opportunities to benefit from the dedicated assistance of some staff members of each archive. I thank all of them. In addition to finding a relatively smooth path to the seemingly endless supply of archival material, the acquaintances I have made along the way has been most appreciated; both for the belligerent ones and the sympathetic ones. I feel particularly privileged to have made enduring friendships while conducting research over these seven years, and their presence in my life far exceeds any benefits I hope to gain from the publication of this work. I am particularly grateful for those few among my friends and family who showed concern and shared my pain over the difficult two years when war ravaged Kosova. I would like to dedicate this book to them, for their humanity, their sense of justice and willingness to appreciate another human being's suffering. Alas, I cannot do that.

This is not a book that does justice to the sincere love I have for my friends. Instead, this book is dedicated uniquely to the implicit goal I set out to accomplish when I haphazardly put these reformulations together. This book is not for my loved ones, but for those I believe are doing all of us a major disservice by taking so lightly their ethical responsibility as scholars and teachers. This book attempts to fire a futile shot above the heads of professionals who insist on narrowly defining the human experience for the explicit goal of "telling history." As futile as it is for me to reach them with this book (how many will actually read it) it is equally futile for them to represent human beings in their glorious diversity.

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Lastly, this collection should not be considered a first or final word from me, it is just a concerted effort of one frustrated individual who is troubled by what he sees in the academic method of remembering/forgetting and has thus toiled to articulate some not so lucid reflections on the problem. These chapters were put together somewhat reluctantly, and I have Sinan Kuneralp to blame for that. Therefore, I thank Sinan for being so kind and interested in my work, for the collection I put together would have not been conjoined in this way without his persistence. The work put together here, again, is not to be considered a final word, and it is certainly not intended to attempt to fix Albanian, Yemeni or Ottoman history, it simply seeks to ask different questions of the period, the space and the ambitions of those engaging in real life less than one hundred years ago. Perhaps the most I can hope in achieving from this is to initiate some further discussion (hopefully civil and polite) over tea in or near one of the archives I will be working in until my last breath. The tea is on me!

ABBREVATIONS

AMAE	Archives Diplomatiques de Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Quai d'Orsay
AQURSH	Central Archives of the Albanian Army
AQSH	Albanian State Archives
ASMAE	Archivios e Storico de Ministeri Affairs e Estare, Serie Affari Politici
BBA	Prime Minister's Ottoman Archives, Istanbul
DDI	Documenti Diplomatici Italiani
FO	Foreign Office of British Government
HHStA	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv in Vienna
IJMES	International Journal of Middle East Studies
PA	Politisches Archiv
PAAA	Politisches Archiv des Auswaertigen Amtes, Bonn
PRO	Public Records Office at Kew Gardens, London
SAP	Serie Affari Politici.
SNA	Swiss National Archives
USNA	United States National Archives at College Park, MD.

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INTRODUCTION: BLINDED BY THE STATE. REVISITING LATE OTTOMAN SOCIAL HISTORY IN THE BALKANS AND ARABIA

> A critique is not a matter of saying that things are not right as they are. It is a matter of pointing out on what kinds of assumptions, what kinds of familiar, unchallenged, unconsidered modes of thought the practices that we accept rest...Criticism is a matter of flushing out that thought and trying to change it: to show that things are not as self-evident as one believed, to see what is accepted as self-evident will no longer be accepted as such. Practicing criticism is a matter of making facile gestures difficult.[1]

Conventional historiography of the Ottoman Empire has undergone healthy revision over the last thirty years. Indicative of this are a number of innovative and sophisticated works that have appeared over the period. Ottoman studies as a whole, as a consequence, has made a great leap forward, a reflection of both the growing availability of Ottoman documents and institutional financial support. Despite what in retrospect are fundamental shifts in how Ottoman history has been studied (let alone understood), the field itself still remains a backwater in the larger scope of things. Its relevance in the publishing industry is far less a factor than say South Asian Studies. While one could argue there are a number of market-driven factors which predetermines such discrepancies, I would suggest a more epistemological factor is involved: practitioners are still far too reluctant to make their research *RELEVENT* to the outside world.

A good case in point is the tragic events surrounding the wars in the Balkans during the 1990s. Largely ignored in the cacophony of speculators who pontificated on the origins of the war was the voice of the Ottomanist. Why was it that journalists became the authorities of Balkan conflicts and even published what are considered the most important historical works of the region's Ottoman past? Every single book published on the break-up of Yugoslavia and the war in Kosova paid lip-service to what Maria Todorova and Denis Rusinow called the Ottoman Legacy. The problem however, is substantially more serious than one of acknowledging that the Ottoman

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[1] "Practicing Criticism," in Michel Foucault, *Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interviews and Other Writings 1977-1984,* edited by Lawrence D. Kritzman, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Routledge, 1988): 154-155.

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Empire had a role in shaping contemporary political events.[1] The issue is the manner in which the empire and the socio-political processes it created has been categorized by the journalists and political scientists writing on the modern Balkans. Without even the pretense of using Ottoman or for that matter, any other archival material of the period, the last ten years of "scholarship" on the Balkans has created a monolith of this thing called the Ottoman Empire. The problem has been plain for me to see: Ottoman historiography and its practitioners are at best, marginal in the dialogue about the region's recent history. Worse, they have proven to be utterly incapable of recognizing the opportunity to use their particular expertise to engage in the debates about the Balkans. The consequences have been devastating in the diplomatic and post conflict administration of the region.

I have been on a personal crusade of sorts over the past eight years. I have sought to span the canyon that separates this historical period that lacks adequate research and current events. My personal research has focused on the late Hamidian period, that is the period normally associated with the Berlin Congress of 1878 and its impact on the Balkans. I have been comparing a number of processes of change and social reaction to such change in both Northern Albanian-speaking regions and the administrative district of Yemen. I have also been actively engaging in debates surrounding the current crisis in the Balkans. My previous publications have all sought to address a larger audience by pointing out in subtle ways the rather glaring shortcomings of recent diplomacy and analysis by using the insight gained from studying this late Ottoman period. Alas, the impact of my work has been far less effective in spanning the gap between practitioners of the field and the day-to-day realities on the ground in places like Kosova and Yemen. To my frustration there has been and continues to be new scholarship and governmental reports that perpetuate the unchallenged misconceptions of these regions' past century. It appears the task of the historian of the period has been to confirm current perceptions rather than make the less marketable move of challenging them.

Obviously historians have been actively engaged in the study of current events. Unfortunately, it is the views of those whose period of expertise have more or less no relevance to the social, economic or political structures of the late 20th century who have predominated. Medievalists, and particularly Slavists, have dominated the story of the modern Balkans, suggesting the strong links between academia and the political strategies of state-dominated universities remain. It has been since the late nineteenth century that Serb, Bulgarian, Albanian and Greek nationalists sought ways of circumventing the 500 plus years of Ottoman rule in order to find foundational justifications for grandiose and entirely modern claims of nationhood. That historians of the medieval empires of the Balkans are evoked by journalists to assert, confirm or deny nationalist claims made in various circles during the last twenty years is all the more astounding once the late Ottoman period is studied.

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[1] See for instance, the reductive piece written by David Fromkin for the New York Times, "A World Still Haunted by Ottoman Ghosts," *New York Times*, (9 March 2003), WK 14.

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There are many historians who work on the period under study in this book here, and unfortunately, they too have proven less than capable of actively asserting a challenge to the ridiculous anachronisms imposed upon both Medieval Balkan states and the social actors of the late Ottoman period. The fact that my colleagues have yet to become a part of the debate about the historical origins of current events reflects a lack of self-promotion, a disturbing tendency to avoid controversy and a debilitating parochialism. Such shortcomings have resulted in our institutionalized irrelevance in discussions about events that have had horrific consequences for millions of people.

Similar factors are at play on what was the other side of the Ottoman Empire. After the events on September 11 have galvanized a previously aloof reading public about the dynamics of the contemporary outside world, Yemen has become the focus of US military strategists and social commentators. A result of this new found geostrategic relevance will be a greater demand for "scholarly work" on the country's history which will inevitably have to explain how and why Yemen is the "way it is" today. That its long history of Islamic learning and regional/transregional integration is now being quickly reduced to clichés about tribal barbarism and religious fanaticism should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the nature of academic publication industry. Much like in the Balkans, specialists working on Yemen will not be up to the task to reign in the exuberant journalist-cum historian genre that has flooded the market over the past ten years and is now filling in the market demand for work on political Islam. Again, as the historian of the late Ottoman empire has an obvious contribution to make in our appreciation of the dynamics of the Balkans, so too does she have a role in the upcoming bastardization of Yemen/Arabian history, traditions, dynamics and complexities.

This book is not a manifested attempt to tackle these shortcomings on its own. There is an explicit acknowledgement from the beginning that the author's present role in determining the world around him is relegated at the moment to making far less universal claims. This book wishes to demonstrate how I have raised in the past some fundamental issues as to how one can adequately address the current need for expertise on the social, cultural, economic and political origins of current events. The central premise here is one that believes any serious engagement with the past as it seeks to address current events will have to attack the epistemological foundations upon which much of the popular understanding of these regions sit. The Ottoman Empire, its complexities, contingencies and contradictions must be acknowledged in a manner that does not rely on categories that seek to establish functional clarity and narrative coherence. In other words, much as a healthy skepticism about the very tools of the practitioner has been drawn into question in other fields of analysis, so too will the Ottoman Empire and its many facets be revisited with a critical eye. Whether or not this presentation ultimately finds the intended audience relies on as much my capacity to make a viable argument as it is the role of the reader in finally taking a more activist and explicitly interdisciplinary approach to the Ottoman nineteenth century.

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The manner in which I have chosen to frame my concerns with how the Ottoman Empire has been understood is best articulated by James Scott's recent contribution to what I believe is the central issue demanding theoretical attention today.[1] The preponderance of analytical perspectives that have created the methodological conventions of the academic fields of history and the social sciences, are directly related to the phenomenon outlined by James Scott's brilliant intervention. Not only have those studying the Balkans and Yemen been directing their analytical energies to addressing pre-determined processes of change based on largely unfounded academic conventions about "pre-modern" societies, but they have done so under the spell of institutional factors largely non-existent to the period they study. Much of the discourse on the "emergence" of the nation-state, modernity and colonialism has reflected the questions posed from a state-centric perspective, not the conditions that may have existed in the period under study.

James Scott's story about the emergence of a praxis of modernity that translated into fundamental changes in how we interpret the world around us is of particular relevance to the study of Ottoman historiography. With this in mind, my work humbly seeks to draw out some deeply embedded problems with how this discipline has continuously been developed. In spite of the vastly improved and increasingly sophisticated approaches, there is still a tiny percentage of those armed with the considerable linguistic skills needed to do Ottoman history who have bothered to engage the other disciplines which have made themselves relevant to the world around them. The consequences are not only grounds for theoretical quibbling, however.

There have been a number of interesting studies on how we understand social change in its various forms during the watershed of the nineteenth century. For instance, much has been done to theoretically reassert the role of the "subaltern" in animating social change. But by in large, these scholarly trends have been ignored in the study of how Ottoman societies functioned over the course of the late nineteenth century. Investigating change is a challenge fraught with landmines that have a long genealogy of disciplinary complicity with centers of political and economic power. Being aware of the very terminology brought to bear is a key point of scholarship, an exercise often brushed aside for clearer narratives that reach out to audiences who are assumed to lack the patience for such splitting of hair.

This book has been put together to address in one place what I have felt over the last seven years are some fundamental problems with the Ottoman field, how it is conceived and how it is reproduced over and over again. This is

[1] James Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition have Failed*, (New Haven: Yale, 1998).

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not meant to be a timepiece. The arguments I am making also have merit in other parts of the world as it relies not on a method of inquiry based on certain foundations of exclusive knowledge in the classic Orientalist manner, but one that provides the space and possibility of contingency that is inevitably part of life. This, therefore, will be a plea to hopefully the next generation of Ottomanists who are now working through their labor-intensive requirements of conquering modern and Ottoman Turkish, hopefully Arabic, Persian and a local Balkan language. This is a plea to actively engage their departments' collective diversity, to expand to reading what political theorists and what other area studies (Latin America, Africa, South Asia) have written to better inform their research questions. In this work, I demonstrate what happens when questions raised by others are reapplied in our field. I will systematically dissect the tools of the trade by raising what are quite basic questions others would find rudimentary.

For the student of these key periods of change, it is perhaps even more important to be aware of the inherent lack of coherence to social lives otherwise rendered as instruments of explanation by historians. The tribe, ethnicity, the state, faith, social class, geographic location, gender all have powerfully asserted factors determining the nature of analysis practitioners can make when looking into the past. As the following chapters will suggest, the foundational value of much of these analytical categories are inadequate to accommodate the scope of contingency that shapes every human being and the communities they make. The institutions and so-called cultural values that help animate and inform the exchange that ultimately translates into an historical document, must be recognized, therefore, as products of endless negotiation. Certainly, as theorists of power are aware, once we adopt a greater appreciation for the fugitive experience of social life and all the cultural and administrative formations seeking to control its contingencies, one realizes power is in a constant process of negotiation. This translates into what anthropologists have increasingly identified as a capacity for agency, one that rarely conforms to seemingly embedded hierarchies on which historians are so often fixated. The notions, therefore, of social change emanating from a particular class or institution fail to respect the now long tradition in political theory and philosophy of the unending malleability of social status, state formations, the frontiers which they make and indeed, the identities of those who claim them.

By adopting this critical need to question the very presumptions of certain sites of power within Ottoman society, I hope to demonstrate the need to risk complication. By allowing life's messy complexities to surface on the written page, we resurrect the dynamic of social exchange in Ottoman society that in our 21st century world translates as a productive challenge to otherwise, unhelpful conventions about how we understand recent events. The

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Ottoman world is used here to make the larger methodological argument that Islam, clan, or ethnic identity are all precariously fluid and unstable in our contemporary world, as much as it was in the nineteenth century. This will thus force us to develop a greater appreciation for the multiplicity of social actors, their needs and perhaps democratize an otherwise tyrannical and dictatorial process of diplomatic and academic exchange which avoids as much as possible, the contingencies of life.

The central state, in its modern rendition is the animating factor here. The inherent complexities that make up the functioning of that state, much as Scott has outlined, are continuously being overshadowed by the universal search for analytical, rhetorical and narrational clarity. But as Scott has demonstrated how such institutionalization of the ethic of statecraft has had horrific consequences on humanity, so too has this modernist ambition to monitor, categorize and ultimately confine social and biologic life been disastrous to our understanding of the past, present and future. Not only have historians simplified the nature of inter human exchange in the Balkans and Yemen, they have, as a consequence, provided the template for analysis that has reproduced such subjugation today.

Ultimately, therefore, this book serves as a departure from more conventional methods of narration, an attempt to illuminate "moments" while also establishing larger, more transferable principles of understanding a moment in time. I do this by introducing the Empire's two edges, an exercise which could help dissuade those operating along metaphors of geographic distance that forces the reader to center on Istanbul or Palace affairs while discarding the role of the province, its peoples, its socioeconomic links to the world around it to affect change in the Empire. The overwhelming dependence on documentation and the subjects under which they are engaged has been a terrible burden on appreciating the dynamics of local life in the Ottoman Empire. It is argued here that such state-centric focus distorts the versatility of human exhanges. Indeed, the bias often held for a centralized perspective, while so often cited as justification for these works, obscures the nature of power in the empire.

Introduction to the Era under Study

The last fifty years of the Ottoman Empire (1878-1918) witnessed a dramatic period of territorial losses. Somewhat paradoxically, at the same time the Ottoman state enacted social and economic policies to consolidate control over territories that remained within is formal sovereignty. The set of essays presented here compare the consequences of these measures to centralize administrative control over two areas which became the new frontiers of the

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empire -- the highlands of Albania and Yemen. By studying how communities in the "periphery" articulated, through their shifting claims to communal and individual identity and their subsequent reaction to Ottoman state expansion, I hope to address a number of theoretical questions that may impact how we study imperialism and nation-states more broadly. I suggest the questions I raise may be of crucial importance to an understanding of the paradoxical expansion of Ottoman state control over its shrinking domains and how local identity shaped the nature of this state.

From petitions, commission reports, census records, administrative correspondences, private diaries and a variety of other unexplored documents found in European collections, I have gained a unique profile of the numerous actors involved in articulating agency in its numerous sectarian, regional, tribal and productive forms. Through the filter of local politics, a cacophony of interchanging voices may be heard from Ottoman documents which will demonstrate that there is a far more diverse cast of actors involved in creating, repairing or destroying imperial and nation states than previously acknowledged.

Why Albania and Yemen?

It is important to demonstrate the significance of the geographical scope of the following study. The novelty of my studies on highland Albania and Yemen is that they isolate the processes of transformation that are outside the widely studied acts of "imagining a nation along modular lines." Much of the work done by Balkanists in the last thirty years are fixated on the origins of the nation. Often forgotten are the contemporary animating factors that drive such angles of interpretation. While the "nation" is the central mode of operation today, it certainly did not have to be one hundred years ago. Aside from studies such as Benedict Anderson's or Ernest Gellner's which privileges capitalism's impact on collective identity,[1] recent efforts to create "multi-sited" approaches to questions of nation-building and identity further obscure the multiplicity of local actors involved in the representation of social existence. What makes these two areas interesting for comparison, therefore, is that they are situated on a number of fault lines between an expanding state and what are posited as tribal, rural or more importantly, pre-modern societies. I would suggest that while studying the effects of the imperial state on local lives, we divest from universalistic frameworks dominated by the state and refocus on local spaces of activity. These two areas will demonstrate just how little uniformity was possible within the periods of state expansion and how much interactive historical players are in the process.

[1]Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983) and Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism.* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).

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Such an approach is especially important in the context of the Ottoman Empire for there is a resilient interest in the role Istanbul played in creating the assumed parameters of interaction within a center-periphery dichotomy. While recent work has illuminated the variety of projects the "central" state *attempted* to institute in the provinces,[1] I would suggest an approach which favors this state/elite perspective (ideologically self-legitimating programs of bourgeois rationalism, recast in "Islamism") obscures the realities of imperialism in the mountains of Albania and Yemen. Focusing on the intellectual and administrative currents in an imperial state without recognizing the transformative effects of local communities simply reiterates theoretical constructions which have been widely challenged in other fields. The work of Holt, using Lefebvre's "sociology of the everyday" in attempt to locate racial consciousness is a particularly informative example.[2] It is both within the local and global realm (the provinces and Istanbul) that historical change takes place, not as isolated domains of action but interactive and co-dependent.

The cases of Albania and Yemen will provide ample evidence that the experience of imperialism is a series of multiple and simultaneous cultural and political contestations and exchanges that transcend binary oppositions such as: modernity/tradition, tribe/city, center/periphery. Much as done in more theoretically informed disciplines, I want to demonstrate the value of conceiving events depicted in Ottoman documents as manifestation of ever-shifting identities within an empire that within its very core, operated in fragments. In other words, rather than assuming local communities cannot be heard, studying the shifting patterns of cultural and social representations, set in dynamic relationship to each other, lends a range of social constituencies different opportunities of self-expression and self-creation.

It is important not to forget the trans-regional context and the Sublime Porte's relations with neighboring states. These essays, therefore, suggest that linking the macro-processes of an imperial administration and the events in the larger, geo-strategic theater to the highlands of Albania and Yemen will be informative. While Yemen and Albania may be viewed as sitting at the edges of the empire they are, paradoxically, also central to regional issues. As a result, highland Yemen and Albania underwent the first comprehensive attempts by the Ottoman state to institute central control through a variety of administrative projects recognizable in other, better-known imperial settings. The attempt, for instance, to create a new body of loyal citizens through a

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[1]Donald Quataert, "The Age of Reforms," in *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire*. Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert, eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994): 759-933.

[2]T.C. Holt, "Marking: Race, Race-Making, and the Writing of History," *American Historical Review* 100 (1995): 1-20.

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centralized educational system has received some, albeit misdirected attention. In an example discussed in several chapters, Abdülhamid II's schools were meant to "civilize" the rebellious peoples of the empire. While this project of identifying and then attempting to educate deviant segments of the population is widespread in the nineteenth century imperial state, and there are a number of supportive commentaries emanating from Istanbul at the time, I would suggest more study is needed to understand how the juxtaposition of these new categories of "civilized" and "unruly," tribesmen versus citizen affected notions of place within these communities. The problem, again, with projects focusing on the ideological *raison-d'être* of the metropole is that they ignore the nuanced local reactions to these attempts to impose imperial power. As is evidenced in the archives as well as in other imperial settings, communities transform the context of policy implementation, forcing the state to adjust to local conditions which, in turn, influence local identity.

Methods and Issues in the Literature

On a broader theoretical plane, I intend to use the case of the Ottoman Empire to part-take in the project of "decentering" history's focus on the imperial state as the single source of historical change. I also share an interest in "provincializing" Europe from narratives of imperialism but still insist on retaining the vernacular of the literature—state and identity—to explicitly move the Ottoman experience closer to a conceptual space occupied by Europe.[1] Unfortunately, the theoretical literature has suffered from ignoring the Ottoman Empire as a case study of the general administrative shift towards a rationalization of state power. Such a bias towards the Ottoman experience often dictates how far we can argue for comparability and hence make an impact in the far more engaging literature of other disciplines. I suggest the politics of identity in Yemen and Albania are firmly embedded in the period and my conscious effort to locate the interdependence of local and metropole in questions of state centralization and identity-formation has relevance for studies on nineteenth century European nationalism and imperialism.

It must be noted that I recognize identity, as the central point of analysis in my project, lacks conceptual clarity. Locals in highland Albania and Yemen during this period of heightened exposure to a modernizing, increasingly intrusive world empire exhibit perfectly the hybridity of identity that is continuously being forged, contested and reaffirmed. For the essays available in this collection, I use identity to refer to a subject(s) position vis-à-vis representations emanating from both inside and outside its cultural sphere

[1]Dipesh Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian Pasts?'" *Representations* 37 (Winter, 1992).

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of influence. As has been suggested recently, a "bifurcation of linear histories" or in this case, the representations of identity, may be the best way of "rescuing history" from the modern nation-state which retroactively appropriates the representations of so-called marginal actors into contemporary historiography.

Nationalist historians of Yemen and Albania in particular, have obscured the tensions that existed between "co-nationals" during the Ottoman period and impose a homogeneity which defies even contemporary realities. Fortunately, in other fields there have been attempts to identify the "tensions of empire" through a judicious representation of how local communities reacted in often contradictory ways. By lending voice to the "silenced" subaltern, many have attempted to articulate the "struggle for the appropriation of symbols [of identity]" between the weak and the powerful through an imaginative use of indigenous sources. As noted earlier, a factor often forgotten in many important analyses of colonialism is that subject populations also undergo transformative experiences which, when explored critically, erase conventional assumptions about culture and identity, power and state, self and other.

As far as my two cases are concerned, I question the value of focusing uniquely on a bourgeois parvenu as in Indian colonial society in which the marginal are "appropriated" by a middle class that then proceeds to create nationalist myths for them.[1] Ottoman documents are filled with the voices of "the marginal" in the form of depositions, petitions and reports on their "bandit leaders," which demonstrate clearly that there is a multiplicity of social actors at the local level which could engage and, if need be, reject the elite's monopoly on representations of identity. As Rafael demonstrates so well on questions of local contestation to Spanish proselytizing in the Philippines, I too argue the continuous process of invention, reinvention, negotiation and co-optation of new state administer categories—ethnicity, denomination, citizen, rebel—is what frames communal and regional identities.[2]

While there have been many derivative studies of Foucault's work on the relationship between knowledge and power I insist one must return the focus to the colonial subject when considering such dynamics. As often demonstrated, local actors, in the face of these disciplining strategies retain a great deal of agency through which local communities can contest or adopt statistical categories—tribe, caste, ethnicity, sect—for their own, specific interests. It is when a "tribal" shaykh *elects* to send his son to Abdülhamid's

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[1] R. Guha, and G. C. Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies*. (New York, 1988).

[2] V. L. Rafael, *Contracting Colonialism: Translation and Christian Conversion in Tagalog Society under Early Spanish Rule*. (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press: 1996).

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tribal school, a local *accepts* a position in the regional, secular court or to represent his "millet" in imperial commissions, while others continue to *defy* such categories of power that one may see the shades of contested identities emerge. One can locate these actors often in Ottoman documents, depicted as the bureaucrat, an "Albanian," a member of a tribe, or, if deemed a threat, labeled as rebel or bandit. This may be one of the important windows into observing the politics of identity at work: studying from the perspective of an increasingly rationalist, positivistic state bureaucracy how it deals with diversity.

I believe the impact of imperial expansion must be examined in a manner that acknowledges a reciprocal interplay of sociocultural forces which are neither mutually exclusive nor fused. Past work along these lines have attempted to historicize the period prior to imperial "penetration" in order to demonstrate structural continuity and/or disruption: the "structure of conjuncture."[1] I question such methods for they tend to create historically static models of pre-colonial societies which threatens to resurrect highly problematic essentializations of "tribal and traditional" systems.

Instead, I will take the point of initial "contact" as my temporal and social base while being fully aware that there are historical roots to subsequent communal and state representations of the moment. I am confident that the impact of these new day-to-day interactions in Albania and Yemen can stand on their own, distinctive from equally, but different, complexities of early periods. This implies that historical links with pre-imperial communities is not essential because a "structural" hybrid is created by this specific exchange. I suggest the 1878-1918 period constitutes a significant enough rupture to justify using this conjuncture as my point of departure as opposed to referencing social structures of fifty years past. Using documents taken from Italy, Germany, Switzerland, the United States, United Kingdom, Albania, France, Yemen and Turkey, I chart the transformative effects of this exchange between empire and its constituents. By selectively observing how locals, through sectarian, tribal, regional and productive identities, force Ottoman administrators to adjust to their changing manifestations of identity, I can avoid the methodological pitfalls that create an essential pre-imperial culture and a hermetically sealed state.

It is important to reiterate my earlier point that there are shortcomings to the centering of elite actors to the origins of nationalist sentiments either in "Arab" territories, among Turkish members of the "Young Turk" movement or the Balkans. Albanian and Yemeni history is particularly victimized by this methodological shortcoming for so few have considered the subject worthy of

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[1]Marshall Sahlins, *Islands of History*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

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research, let alone through Ottoman documentation. In response, I would share the interest of Akarlı and Doumani in looking at the distinctiveness of the empire's provinces and how the impact of empire on local populations was reflected in forms of identity.[1] In addition, recent work on post-Ottoman Syrian nationalism has raised important points about the saliency of privileging notables on questions of identity formation.[2] Moreover, as noted in Latin America, "nationalism" is a contested phenomenon with localities far from the "center" making important contributions to the articulation of national identity that do not necessarily survive the sanitizing process of writing "national histories" years after an event.[3]

It is in this particular frame that I want to go beyond the general literature on nationalism as well. This body of work stresses the centrality of the state and modern industrial economies in the articulation and application of national identity as we supposedly understand it today. I want to escape this hegemonic dynamic. I would suggest that returning to the micro-level, beyond the general histories of national domains, would locate the tensions of, in this case, empire and reveal how contested these processes are, not only in the Ottoman empire, but all over Europe.

This can be accomplished in a number of ways but I have been particularly intrigued by some recent work done in relation to the experience of change in local communities. Anthropologists have become interested in Yemen and some have fruitfully dealt with questions on rupture of communal spaces and their effects on local political arrangements that could be helpful for my long term project.[4] The few attempts to venture into the Ottoman period, however, fail to capture the fragmentary dynamics which I suspect are evident and key to understanding the relationship between imperial expansion in Yemen and its hybrid contested state. I try to set the stage for future research on Yemen's imperial experience with the essays introduced here.

As the empire attempts to regulate these two regions in new ways, indigenous claims to collective rights as communities possibly result in ideological constructions in Albania and Yemen which contradict the paradigms of nationalism. It is important to stress it appears that Yemeni and Albanian contesting parties articulated their relationship to the outside world

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[1]Beshera Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Nablus, 1700-1900.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Engin Akarlı, *The Long Peace: Ottoman Lebanon, 1861-1920.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

[2]James L. Gelvin, "Demonstrating Communities in Post-Ottoman Syria," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 25: 1 (Summer 1994): 23-44.

[3]Florina E. Mallon, *Peasant and Nation: The Making of Postcolonial Mexico and Peru.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[4]Martha Mundy, *Domestic Government: Kinship, Community and Polity in North Yemen.* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995).

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through claims of identity that did not, necessarily, stress a national, universal identity as their goal. Questions tied to linguistic and sectarian identities, for instance, highlight a sharply contested domain of what constituted an Albanian identity. In fact, large numbers of highland Albanians were ambivalent to the idea of separating from the Ottoman state and resisted the creation of an independent state. There is clearly a need for exploring these questions further, along lines that do not assume "ethnic" groups act in unified ways, all of the time.

This study will provide insight into the multiple layers of social transformation created by imperial expansion, co-optation and negotiation in two distinct areas of the Ottoman Empire. The attempt to focus on local and implicitly isolated regions will suggest new focus on the function of state expansion into state-free areas have important consequences for studying the processes of expressing and articulating identity. Beyond the theoretical questions along state and identity formation, this study should add weight to efforts to integrate the Ottoman experience into a larger European context, centering the litany of social policies utilized to assert state control, as markers of a larger administrative phenomenon as well as demonstrate a need to engage with other disciplines to better understand Ottoman history. It is hoped that eventually, such a project could inspire more comparative work between empires in order to better realize my long-term goal of integrating the Balkans and the trials and tribulations of the late Ottoman state into European history. Likewise, I would hope to see more Ottoman historians involving themselves with the debates about the present by sharing their expertise of the past.

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2

FINDING SOCIAL HISTORY ON THE BOOKSHELF: THE TYRANNY OF SOCIOLOGICAL CATEGORIES IN STUDIES ON ALBANIANS AND THE BALKANS

> L'Albanie ... toute la nature s'y montre âpre, sauvage et les habitants sont d'un aspect et d'un caractère dignes de cette nature, beaux, grands, robustes, belliqueux, féroces.[1]

There has been a steady trend in the academy since the 1970s that emphasized a new sensitivity to the ethnocentrism and subtle undertones of racism that have been central to the study of the non-Western world.[2] Despite this postmodernist discourse, a number of important residuals of the cultural and economic vision identified by scholars has continued to find its way in the production of academic and diplomatic knowledge of certain areas of study. In the following chapter, I hope to suggest there have been serious consequences to our appreciation of the kinds of change taking place in the Balkans as such residual patterns of seeing historical change remain prominent.

While the suggestion that there is an element of continuity in Western representational narratives from the age of empire to how we understand the world today is nothing new, it is intriguing how much has changed since the narrative traditions of these two eras were focused on the Ottoman Empire. It is the recent memory of the Ottoman Empire as represented in popular histories and school text books found throughout Europe as well as the perception of a continued racial and spiritual ambiguity in the Balkans that sustains the relationship between Europe and the Balkans.[3] As a response, many scholars from the region, sensing their marginalized position within Western academic circles, have made efforts to distinguish the Balkans from the Ottoman Empire, arguing that they fit more closely with a central

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[1] Théophile Lavallée, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman: depuis les temps anciens jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1855), 49.

[2] See among others: Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978) and Lisa Lowe, *Critical Terrains: French and British Orientalisms* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

[3] See Xavier Raufer and François Haut, *Le Chaos balkanique*, (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1992), 23-80.

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European or Russian developmental trajectory rather than an Ottoman, read Islamic and unwestern past.[1]

Although the "sick man" no longer casts his debilitating shadow over the actual lives of the region, the same vulgar descriptive phrases used in the nineteenth century are used in contemporary literatures. The crude marking of the Albanian in a pre-modern context fraught with violence, insubordination and lawlessness has resulted in a kind of ghettoization of Balkan and Arabian cultural, historical and political realities. Rather than adapting to the immediate conditions that envelope these two regions, scholars and journalist-cum historians alike have reasserted the descriptive value of 19th century terms and categories.

I have explored elsewhere the consequences of these persistent methods of differentiation on diplomatic practices in the 1990s.[2] In the present chapter, I explore how such a persistent legacy of stereotypes has distorted our ability to ask new questions of the region in light of the recent innovations about the relationship between knowledge and power. The generic Albanian has served as an ideal Balkan type in much of the literature on the last fifty years of the Ottoman Empire. Clearly, as current events unfold in much the same way as it appeared to transpire more than one hundred years ago, contemporary stereotypes about the Albanian provided the ideal bridge to an understanding of the past.

This chapter seeks to impress upon the reader the value of avoiding the generalizations that were once embedded in systems of domination.[3] As with Byron's fascination with the Albanian 'Ali Paşa of Janina (Tepelena), the chronicler of "...exotic fierceness which he [Lord Byron] continued to associate with Islamic civilization: the combination of uncompromising religious passion and military virtues which he identified as the qualities of nature,"[4] such images are being appropriated and reinforced by contemporary journalists, academics and diplomats. It is encouraging to note Katherine Fleming's recent study of Ali Paşa of Tepelena's impact on how Europeans understood their own world resisted such tendencies. As Fleming notes, the analysis of Ali

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[1]See in particular, Maria Todorova, "The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans," in Carl L. Brown ed. *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996): 45-77.

[2]Isa Blumi, "The Commodification of Otherness in the Study of the Balkans: How to Look at the Albanian." *East European Politics and Societies* [Fall, 1998]: 527-569 and "One Year of Failure in Kosova: Chances Missed and the Unknown Future," *South Eastern European Politics* [Summer, 2000]: 15-24.

[3]Following Foucault, self-inspection through a variety of methodologies may help explain the resilient suppositions about the outside world. See Michel Foucault, *L'Archéologie du Savoir* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1969), 23-45.

[4]Mohammed Sharafuddin, *Islam and Romantic Orientalism: Literary Encounters with the Orient.* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1994), 227.

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Paşa Tepelena is submerged in a refined treatment of history traditionally skewed for an audience more inclined to retain old stereotypes about Albanians, Muslims, the "other."[1] The reluctance on the part of nineteenth century imperialist to dig deeper into the intricacies of the homogenized units of analysis being evoked—ethnicity, nation, Islam -- has proven a powerful influence on how my colleagues today write history of that period.[2] Moreover, I want to expose what I see as a dangerous propensity to reinforce rather than challenge uncritical notions of history attached to ethnic identity, notions that attempt to simplify models rather than expose variants of complexity.

Identifying Difference

One of the more distinct methods of governance associated to modernity is the appropriation of socio-cultural traditions to assert a categorical hierarchy of subject. In its capacity to secure a monopoly of coercion and the many methods that emerge from these strategies of governance, the modern state serves as the site of origin for the academic disciplines that articulate historical, political, cultural and economic change. The links between the social sciences and the articulation and dissemination of power has long been exposed by the work of Foucault and others. What has been clearly resisted is the practical implications of the persistent utilization of many of foundational terminologies that infuse the disciplines.

Ethnicity, for instance, has been for many years the source of professional quibbling among anthropologists.[3] Unfortunately, the conclusions many have drawn from this critical inspection have failed to penetrate the application of power in the modern world for reasons that become apparent once we understand the relationship between rhetorical conventions and such markers of power. By incorporating a critical reading of policy with how "ethnicity" is asserted, I hope to raise new modes of inspection into how some discursive models shape and divide human lives and how institutions validate structures of power. Ethnicity, therefore, has, as an "immutable," "primordial" identifying tool, animated all events in the Balkans over the last six hundred years according to recent analysis despite such descriptive methods

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[1]Katherine Fleming has provided an important inspection into the consequences of Ali Pasha of Tepelena's ascendancy in Yanya, especially in shaping European imperial limitations, both practical and existential. Katherine E. Fleming, *The Muslim Bonaparte: Diplomacy and Orientalism in Ali Pasha's Greece,* (Princeton, N.J., 1999).

[2]From Martin Cromer, Edward Gibbon, Antonio Vivaldi, Edmund Spenser, Richard Lovelace, Christopher Marlowe to Benjamin Disraeli, the savage hero who defended Christianity against the forces of Islam has been the inspiration of European fantasies about the Albanian. See Robert Elsie, "Benjamin Disraeli and Scanderbeg. The novel 'The Rise of Iskander'" in *Südost Forschungen*, 52 (1993): 25-52.

[3]For a history of this debate among anthropologists, see Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions.* (London: Routledge, 1996).

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being soundly condemned by a number of theorists uncomfortable with the use of naturalizing essentialism. It is clear throughout the history of the modern state that ethnic categories have been configured in order to repress and often exterminate indigenous populations throughout the world. "Albanian" ethnicity has been the driving force for Greek, Serb and Montenegrin state expansion into the villages and pasture lands of hundreds of thousands of people. The problem is manifested in the case of its utilization in Kosova, for instance, as ethnicity has glossed over the distinctive social structures that have developed over decades, if not centuries in a variety of contexts.[1] Ethnicity is a tool of explication and, in many poignant ways, extrication. It silences inherent complexities as it operates as a comprehensive tool of analysis that confines life's many contingencies to one sociopolitical essence. The act of recognizing ethnicity is used to create identifiable units, often set in diametrically opposite sides of the political, social or cultural field of any society.

In order to understand this critique better, I suggest it is helpful to first recognize the constitutive nature of the criteria of engagement which made this small geographical space a center piece to international diplomacy. The process I am treating here has recently replicated similar methodologies of engagement in places like Rwanda, the Persian Gulf and Bosnia and is manifested in other academically contested subjects such as race and gender. Individuals and the communities they form are constituted an identity on the basis of a variety of criteria that often determine the limits of both performative and theoretical self-articulation. As most clearly noted in relations between men and women, blacks and whites, and "Muslims" and "Christians" narrational values given to categories carry great sociological weight when they are interlaced with relations of power in any given context. The function of the category, not only ethnicity, but any category, is at once meant to fix identity of a given subject and to limit the terms of engagement. "Albanians" are thus fixed within a very small space of expression which any deviation beyond would constitute grounds for repression. It is the boundary drawing around permissible mediums of self-expression that constitute the functions of state-imposed identity, gender norms, racial myths and morality. The discourse that frames these socially permissible spaces also have a way of reinforcing their "objective reality" over time, especially when hegemonic powers seek to control potential rivals to legitimacy claims or economic control.

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[1]For a strong critique of how ethnicity is ethnographically fixed in political and social structures, see Jack D. Eller and Reed M. Coughlan, "The Poverty of Primordialism: the Demystification of Ethnic Attachments," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 16:2 (April, 1993): 183-202.

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The masking of all human activity in the discursive framework of ethnicity makes it impossible for individual communities, which never constituted a single "Albanian" unit, to represent themselves outside the parameters of their assumed "ethnic" identity. This is extremely important in the history of Kosova and Iskodra because the Ottoman Empire, as other regional powers, had taken a position of institutional management that requires a rigid "restructuring" of political life along "communal" lines after the Berlin Congress. European liberals and Ottoman administrative leaders mobilized a rhetoric of liberal democracy through institutions which operate on the grounds of these ethnic divisions.

I propose that identities are precarious sociological moments, vulnerable to a variety of transformative elements contingent to both environmental and ideological factors. One presumes, for instance, that Albanians constitute a community based on a variety of shared linguistic, physical, spiritual and social traits. Unfortunately for the historian it is not so clear cut. As I suggest throughout this book, the historical tensions between various Albanian communities signifies a fundamental problem with the deterministic qualities an ethnic identity implies.

The important distinctions between Northern Gheg and Southern Tosk Albanians, while often identified, have rarely shaped the analyses of Albanian political culture during the Ottoman period. I argue that Albanian regional specificity, as located in this most identifiable (but certainly not the only) marker of distinction, is both the reason for, and a product of, a variety of historical moments. It is possible to conclude from a review of the regional history that what, until quite recently, constituted Albanian lands in the minds of a Western representation, were in fact, dispersed and hardly linked by any modern notion of ethnic identity. Now it should be noted that in attempting to coherently make a general argument, I will allow myself to limit my treatment of the complex interrelations within the broadly defined polarities of the Albanian population. Suffice it to say that I do not wish to make the same essentializations about Ghegs and Tosks as has been done with other groups. That said, I am satisfied that for the purposes of this introductory chapter, my thesis is better served by not going into the detail about the elaborate cross-currents of local histories involved in understanding the Southern Balkans.[1]

Due to geographical barriers, linguistic and as a consequence, cultural boundaries solidified among Albanians. The numerous, and often subtly different, representations of the Albanian are in fact reflections of important

[1]For a flawed but interesting ethnographic treatment of mountain Ghegs see Carlton S. Coon, *The Mountains of Giants*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950); and for a more well-rounded and historically relevant work, Edith Durham, *High Albania*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1909).

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and resilient boundaries that distinguish as opposed to unite. These real and identifiable boundaries helped create separate patterns of integration among Albanian groups, both economically and socially, with their immediate environment.[1] My central concern is to demonstrate how Albanian-speaking populations evolved distinctive historical linkages with the outside world. Once it can be demonstrated that the Albanian "ethnic unit" experienced a rich and diverse relationship with a number of external elements, it should be easier to consider the variety of possibilities that emerges in the twentieth century as each respective community attempts to protect its definite and often contradictory interests.[2]

Unlike the North, which I study throughout this book, southern populations were more restrained by social and economic boundaries erected by a continuous relationship between the imperial state and local elites. These structures served specific functions within the imperial context as opposed to the fluid and autonomous social milieu in the North. As time transpired, these social and economic contrasts were codified in practice,[3] in particular in the legal realm where the customary laws of so called tribal areas served as "key symbols" of autonomy and distinction from other Albanian speaking groups.[4] As with customary law, other social practices were identifiable through a variety of public displays — dress, dialect, cultural production — that were often too subtle for European travelers passing through.[5] Ghegs and Tosks were identified by symbolic systems which marked difference, difference which

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[1]Even a member of the great Albanian nationalist Frashëri family, Sami, in his attempt to define the Albanian, specified unique communal identities between Ghegs and Tosks. Sami Frashëri, *Shqipëria ç'da qenë, ç'është e ç'do bëhetë*, [Albania, what was it, what is it and what will it be] (Bukuresht: Shoqëria Dituria, 1899) [Reprint, Tirana, 1962]. Also see his definition in Semsiddin Sami, *Kamus-ı Türki*, 6th edition (Istanbul: Çagrı Yayınları, 1996), 899.

[2]This historical bifurcation of the Albanian population and its consequences on regional affairs can be clearly studied in different eras. See, for example, BBA Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası (h.1268-1269) 23/54; BBA A.MKT. UM (h.1277-78) 459/68; BBA Cevdet Tasnıfı Dahiliye (h.1214) 15169.

[3]As Terry Eagleton has noted, widening gaps in development lead to significant gaps of consciousness. These variant levels influenced communal and individual ideologies, aspirations and focus, enough I would argue, that the implied coherence of the Albanian ethnic unit is inadequate and misleading. See Terry Eagleton, *Ideology* (London: Verso, 1991).

[4]Key symbols such as social distinctions between mountain and the lowlands help summarize or elaborate a social order and often are used to communicate identity. See Sherry B. Ortner, "On Key Symbols," *American Anthropologist* 76 (1973), 1338-1346. In respect to "tribal" customary law in a northern context, see in particular, Margaret Hasluck, *The Unwritten Law in Albania*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954) and Ismet Elezi, "La caractère du droit coutumier albanais durant l'occupation turque," *Ethnographie Albanaise*, (1973), 41-47, in addition, see Edith Durham's interesting and relevant study in *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1928), 63-97.

[5]Long term residents like Edith Durham and the various consuls for the British developed an eye for these distinctions and soon abandoned the crude generalizations we are so familiar with in Byron, Edward Lear and more recent adventurers. See Durham's study on tattooing and symbols, Durham, *Some Tribal Origins*, 101-143. Outside the Balkans, see the remarkable essay on the nature of textile codes in the Andes by Verónica Cereceda, "The Semiology of Andean Textiles: the talegas of Isluga," in John V. Murra, Nathan Wachtel and Jacques Revel (eds.), *Anthropological History of Andean Politics* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1978): 149-73.

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carried meaning in part due to the their relationships with power and how that power was linked to the Ottoman state.[1] Of course these markers were never fixed, they constantly transformed as the world changed around them; individuals and groups alike "translated" anew the meaning and value of these systems.[2] Such fluidity and adaptability, I argue, is key to gaining insight into any society.

Ultimately, it is due to a persistent separation from the center of imperial power that polarities solidified between Ghegs and Tosks.[3] This dichotomy intensified through time as Tosks developed strong intellectual and cultural links with Istanbul, and consequently, the rest of the world, while Ghegs, as a community, remained largely isolated from the center.[4] As a result of better means of communication, Ottoman governance went well beyond garrisoning southern towns and effectively integrated Tosk Albanians, with a few exceptions, into Ottoman society. Local elite mingled with others—fellow Janisarries, land owners, as well as religious figures—to make up part of an intricate social and economic network which will be illuminated more in chapter six.[5] As a result of their incorporation into a world empire, individual Tosks flourished, playing a disproportionate role in the Empire's administration of not only Albanian populated areas such as Elbasan, Yanya and Berat, but in the Empire as a whole.[6]

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[1]See Dale F. Eickelman's work on the social production of meaning, "The Political Economy of Meaning," *American Ethnologist*, 6 no. 2 (May 1979): 386-393. I would only wish to emphasize the discursive power of the Ottoman state in mediating between social meaning and its production.

[2]I credit Samira Haj for clarifying conceptually this important aspect of my argument. See her *The Making of Iraq, 1900-1963: Capital, Power and Ideology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997) especially, 143-150.

[3]This was made clear in a number of reports sent from Italian consuls based in Yanya during the turn-of-the-century. In one report, the consul notes that an emissary from Prizren in Kosova traveled to Gjirokaster in the South in an attempt to mobilize the Bektashi leaders to unite behind a common struggle against the Ottoman state. The consul observed that Bektashi concerns were far more local and the differences between Gheg northerners and Tosks was made clear over the course of the meetings. See ASAME, Serie Affari Politici (henceforth SAP) B. 667 dated Janina, 19 July 1906, no. 310/118 consul to Ministry of Foreign Affairs (henceforth MAE).

[4]The fascinating example of the Ottoman state attempting to integrate Gheg tribal regions into the administrative fold can also be found in Eugene Rogan's recent study "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)" *IJMES*, 28 (1996): 83-107. In 1891, Ottoman authorities also established a commission to regulate, with the hopes of reducing the number of, vendettas between communities in and around Prizren, Prishtina and Peja (Ipek). See Michel Roux, *Les Albanais en Yougoslavie: Minorité nationale territoire et développement* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1992), 244 and Durham, *High Albania*, 112.

[5]Norris' book is the best example of the cultural environment the Empire provided and the possibilities for talented southern Albanians to be exposed to the Empire's multicultural radiance. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, 43-81.

[6]It should also be noted that on those many occasions when Tosk elites governed Gheg populated areas, they experienced just as much, if not more, resistance than when non-Albanians governed, in large part because they represented, conceptually and literally, a rival entity who treated their subjects like an imperial governor. For one illuminating example see Omer Nakicevic, *Revolt, Protestni Mars Stanovnika Kosova 1822. Godine.* (Prishtinë: Svetllost, 1969).

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Tosks were integrated into the Ottoman state often via educational channels set up to filter in talented subjects. Koçu Bey of Korçe, Muhammad 'Ali of Kavala, Ismaïl Kemal of Valona, Sinan Pasha of Topoyani, Ibrahim Temo and the Frashëri brothers are but a few examples of the intellectual, administrative and military influences Tosks had on the Ottoman Empire.[1] The very process of being assimilated into the daily practices of empire helped create networks of political and economic alliances that were key for establishing personal careers and provide vital leverage for the Ottoman state.[2] Devsirme recruitment, for instance, may have been largely done along communal lines;[3] Albanian troops, primarily Tosks, were probably recruited in groups and served as vital, cohesive elements in a variety of theaters. For instance, Muhammad 'Ali's efforts in Egypt and later in the Hijaz and Mashriq (even against fellow Albanians in the war for Greek independence) was largely predicated on a core group of particularly skilled men recruited from areas around Kavala and Manastir.[4] While the tendency is to look at these groups collectively to represent the whole of Albania, in reality they represented specific regional interests which often led to confrontations with other Albanians as were the cases with 'Ali Pasha of Janina's confrontation with Kara Mahmud of Iskodra and the subsequent "Greek" revolt in which many Albanians of the Orthodox Church fought against Albanian Muslims for a "Greek" independent state.[5]

Along with military careers, members of a growing urban population, what some in the Albanian literature called the petty bourgeoisie, emerged in many cities around the Empire, mingling with other groups, sharing ideas and developing political strategies. Among the growing numbers of intelligentsia and bureaucrats in urban areas who were the focal point of Ottoman rule in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, urban Tosks became the forbearers of, first a reforming Ottoman element (The Committee for Union and Progress) and

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[1] I do not wish to suggest the North did not produce influential figures, but if we take the case of Vasa Paşa (once the governor and prominent reformer in Lebanon, 1883-1892) we see why his case is rare. His training in Rome and eventual rise to prominence were highly unusual for someone from the Mirdita region since it required rigid educational training which was not readily available to northern areas until late in the Abdül Hamid II period. See Muhammad Khatir, *'Ahd al-mutasarrifin fi Lubnan, 1861-1918,* [The Mutasarrifin Period in Lebanon, 1861-1918] (Beirut: Manshurat al-Jami'a al-Lubnaniyya, 1967), 139.

[2] See George Joffé, "Muslims in the Balkans," in F.W. Carter and H. T. Norris (eds.) *The Changing Shape of the Balkans* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 84.

[3] See I. Metin Kunt, "Transformation of Zimmi into Askeri," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.) *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, 1982) vol. 1, 55-68.

[4] Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid Marsot, *Egypt in the Reign of Muhammad Ali* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 32. It is interesting that within this rather sympathetic biography of Muhammad 'Alı, Marsot would find it necessary to reinforce the violent and unsavory savagery of the Albanian within the context of Egyptian history. Again, it is not only the geographical West that uses these stereotypes.

[5] See Koli Xoxi, *Lufta e Popullit Grek Për Pavarësi: Kontributi Shqiptar* [The Greek Popular War for Independence: The Albanian Contribution] (Tiranë: Shtëpia Botuese 'Enciklopedike,'1991), 134.

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then an Albanian national culture and subsequently, a national "consciousness" at the end of the 19th century best represented by the Frashëri brothers.[1] Once we reach the often cited watershed moment in Albanian national development, the League of Prizren (1878), one must consider the numerous factors discussed in order to help explain why such a moment could be filled with so much contentious debate and disagreement between presumed national brethren. I suggest the historical effects of different political and economic (not to mention social) experiences, as well as the variety of reasons delegates actually went to Prizren in the first place—the expanding Montenegrin and Greek borders, Ottoman centralization policies, opportunism—all translated into specific and vastly contradictory interests and conceptions as to what represented the Albanian political unit.[2]

A recent study on Abdülhamid II's Aşiret Mektebi-i Hümayun (The Imperial Tribal School) demonstrates the pitfalls of retaining popular representative models of, in this case, Albanians, as a single, historically coherent ethnic unit.[3] Alisan Akpınar reveals a tendency to universalize anachronistically the Albanian social, political and cultural unit. He predictably treats the process of recruiting Albanians into an imperially commissioned school for the children of community elites as regionally neutral. What Akpınar misses out on is that there are strong institutional prejudices inherent in the Ottoman state when it concerned Albanian populated territories in the nineteenth century. As noted earlier, Albanians from the South played an enormous intellectual, administrative and military role in the Ottoman Empire and were among the leading voices in Ottoman reform measures throughout the Abdülhamidian period. The fact that Akpınar's own archival work reveals that northern Albanians were targeted for this indoctrination scheme must raise questions. If one were to integrate Bayram Kodaman's work on development schemes in Northern Albania with the question of Albanian children in tribal schools we would realize that the two projects stemmed from the same administrative notions of what northern

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[1]The often cited role Albanians played in the Young Turk revolution and then its subsequent demise is one example of how immersed Tosks were in the Empire's urban and intellectual life. M. Sükrü Hanioglu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 71-74. For primarily Tosk Albanian activity in Cairo, Algiers and Damascus see, Norris, *Islam in the Balkans*, 209-211, 244-252.

[2]It may very well be that the League represented the first formative stage towards a modern articulation of a national consciousness; but this is not the focus of my argument. The League's role in a formative process does not mean it, in 1878, signified a collective and singular people or an ethnic consciousness that was at all generalizable.

[3]Alişan Akpınar, *Osmanlı Devletinde Aşiret Mektebi* (Istanbul: Göçebe Yayınları, 1997), 43-46. The quality of the material in Turkish on the Albanian populations in both the imperial and contemporary periods is reflective of the reach of western methods of representation. While there is certainly an indigenous set of stereotypes concerning the Albanian stemming from the Ottoman period, I suggest the marked similarities in characterizations have much to do with the exchange of ideas and images as opposed to confirming the validity of the stereotypes.

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Albania represented.[1] What is lacking in Akpınar's and Kodaman's studies is a strong grasp of the social history of the area.

The correspondence with infrastructural reform in both the Kosova and Iskodra vilayets, the persistent positioning of troops in these two districts and the recruitment of tribal children for special training in Istanbul rests, ultimately, along a geographical disparity. The central theme of the tribal school was the regulation and correction of "wildness", "ignorance" and the lack of civilization. There is a great deal of evidence that, much like Enver Hoxha in the 1940s and 1950s, southern Albanian intellectuals and bureaucrats, most of whom were firmly embedded into the Ottoman state, viewed the northern tribes with just as much disdain and fear as Anatolian urbanites. Regional identification quite possibly was represented in the administration of Albanian territories during the Ottoman period. What is at work in the case of the tribal school and infrastructural improvements have a great deal of coherence in the light of a persistent regional distinction made between Gheg and Tosk throughout the Ottoman period. These differences, manifested in hundreds of examples, were the central means of the Ottoman state to regulate Balkan life.

This case is also recognizable in the production of several of the most important cultural figures in the "Albanian" renaissance (Relindje Kombitare). In a piece in IJMES in 1983, George Gawrych, once again misreads the symbolic significance of, in this case, a play written by Şemsiddin Sami.[2] His play *Besa Yahud Ahde Vefa* (An Honorable Pledge or Loyalty to an Oath) in 1874, represents quite vividly the level of social and intellectual disdain the sophisticated and highly educated aristocracy of the Empire, which included a great many southern Albanians had for the unsavory mountain Albanians. The play reflects the internal tensions of the "Albanian," the stark social and economic contrast of northern and southern populations. For Sami and his fellow intellectuals, the northern policies of blood honor and other abominations which deny the right of a state to interject, are to be contrasted with the social order represented by Sami Frashëri himself. The destructive elements of tribal custom was one of the targeted ills in the tribal schools, and this bears notice when a series of commissions are established to settle blood feuds in Kosova and northern highlands.

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[1]Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi* (Ankara: Türk Kurumu Basımevi, 1991), 92.

[2]George W. Gawyrch, "Tolerant Dimensions of Cultural Pluralism in the Ottoman Empire: The Albanian Community, 1800-1912." *IJMES* 15 (1983): 519-536.

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In the play, it is the Southern born Demir Bey who reminds the tribal characters of play that they are in fact "Albanians" and should act accordingly.[1] The Ottoman state, via its local representatives consisting of southern Albanians impose tribal commissions, moral and cultural restructuring projects through schools in a firm attempt to bring the north into their self-perceived world of civilization. This was a project for not only Albania, but the actors involved represented a narrow community of social and political elite using Sami's plays to link ambitious state programs asserting a dominant ideological and social project upon a geographical space conceived to be Albania by the outside world. Undoubtedly, as best registered in the League of Prizren, the quest for local domination was being weighed along these lines, where the regressive traditional north was juxtaposed to the enlightened, forward looking, even pluralistic, south and fierce battles over language, history and religion were carried out.[2]

The ahistorical treatment of national ethnic groups in the Balkans also reflects an unsophisticated understanding of the dynamics of state formation. Those who study the phenomenon of West European state-formation and the process that helped create a relatively homogenized cultural if not ethnic entity all recognize the importance of the centralized bureaucratic state and its incorporation of rural populations in shaping national identity.[3] The lack of imagination demonstrated by a historiography that insists on lending Albanians an immutable ethnic and cultural coherence as early as the fifteenth-century is simply not taking into account the role of the totalitarian Hoxha state had in accomplishing a level of social and cultural coherence unknown during the Ottoman and interwar periods.[4] In the Balkans, the structural model that is so essential for creating the nation-state is but a recent, and tentative at that, phenomenon.[5] Those who represented the Ottoman state had only varying degrees of success in collecting taxes and regulating regional administrative networks let alone inculcate universal notions of political cohesion in much of the Albanian territories in the Balkans.[6]

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[1] Şemseddin Sami. *Besa Yahud Ahde Vefa* (Istanbul: 1292 h./1874), 97-98.

[2] For a rather unsympathetic view of the League of Prizren and how ineffective it was in articulating any position, see PRO FO 78/2988 dated 14 October 1879, Political Report 33, St. John to Salisbury. The Italian consul based in Scutari understood things quite differently, perhaps revealing the kind of speculation circulating in the city that was a least three days walk away from Prizren. See I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI) Seconda Serie 1870-1896 Volume X, Document 202, Scutari 23 giugno 1878 R. 353 il console a Scutari, Berio, al Presidente del consiglio, Cairoli.

[3] See for instance, Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914*. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[4] As I argue elsewhere, even Hoxha's totalitarian state could not fully accomplish this goal. See Isa Blumi, "The Politics of Culture and Power: The Roots of Hoxha's Postwar State" *East European Quarterly* XXXI No. 3. (1999): 409-428.

[5] Engin Arkalı's work provides an important first look to understand how the Ottoman state did help consolidate regional links and construct the primary stages of the formation of a modern national identity. See his *The Long Peace*.

[6] For some evocative insight see report on events in the Mirdita region. PRO FO 78/2628, political n. 29 Consul Green to Foreign Office, Scrutari, 16 April 1877.

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Towards a "Nation"

While dispersed and loosely organized uprisings took place throughout Ottoman-held territories, the tendency in the literature to label these conflicts as patriotic or manifestations of the Albanian consciousness is putting too much meaning in collective action on a relatively small scale.[1] I would suggest we micro manage the important post-1878 period by looking at specific regions as isolated historical units rather than impose universal significance to what would later become a nation-state in our current understanding of the term.[2] It was only on rare occasions that Tosks collaborated with northern leaders and in these cases, both in Prizren and Ipek (Peja/Pec), historical tensions that distinguished Gheg and Tosk predominated.[3] While Tosk interests were often tied-in to a rising interrelationship with Europe, in the North, Gheg interests in the nineteenth century should be identified as balancing territorial incursions by the new Montenegrin state and protecting their autonomy within the disintegrating Ottoman Empire.[4]

Ultimately, Ottoman Europe disintegrated under Slav and Greek pressure in 1912 and Albanian lands were parceled out among its neighbors. Cast adrift in the sea of the brutal events surrounding Serb, Greek and Montenegrin state expansion, it was through diplomatic persuasion and the dynamics of power rivalry that saved a corner of the Balkans for Albanians in 1912.[5] The fact that a significant percentage of Albanians remained outside boundaries arbitrarily drawn by European powers provides a useful historical conjuncture to my thesis on ethnicity in the Balkans.

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[1]Compare material written for the British public at the turn of the century, a literature which often fed in journalistic style images of Balkan populations as coherent units driven with Western ideals of national freedom, to Consul Green's more subdued and the often clear distinctions he makes between groups in Albania. See Sir Charles Eliot, *Turkey in Europe*. Reprint of 1900 edition (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1965), 348-381; H. Charles Woods, *The Cradle of the War: The Near East and Pan-Germanism*, (London: Little, Brown, and Company, 1918), 153-173, and PRO FO 78/2840 Consul Green to Foreign Office, Scutari, 4 February 1878.

[2]Compare, Stefanaq Pollo, "La Révolution nationale albanaise face aux réformes ottomanes (Les années 30-70 du XIXe siècle)," *Studia Albanica* 1 (1985), 49-57 and Starvo Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1967), 392-437.

[3]Although none of these historians offer such a thesis, for ideological reasons I may add, I suggest the evidence of regional interests clashing is quite vividly portrayed in their work. See Kristo Frashëri, *Lidhja Shqiptare e Prizrenit: 1878-1881*. [The Albanian League of Prizren: 1878-1881] 2 vols. (Tirana: Akademia e Shkencave e RPSh Të Shqipërisë, 1989); Zija Shkodra, *Shqipnia në e Tanzimatit* [Albania at the Time of Reforms]. (Tirana: Tiranë University, 1959) and Kristaq Prifti, *Le mouvement national albanais de 1896 à 1900: la ligue de Pejë*. (Tiranë: University of Tiranë. 1989).

[4]See, BBA, İrade Hususiyye, (h. 1323) 367/77, 484/70; Harıciye İrade II (h. 1320-1334) 3636 14/B; Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening*, 59-68, 413-415 and PRO FO 78/2841 N. 67 Consul Green to Marquis of Salisbury, Scutari, 8 September 1878.

[5]See Ernst C. Helmreich, *The Diplomacy of the Balkan Wars, 1912-1913*. (New York: Russell & Russell, 1938), 265-267.

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The Commodification of Otherness

What has frozen the Balkans and I would add, most geographical and cultural entities into easily consumed packages, is a complex system of interdependency between popular media and the academic world and its obvious effects on policy making circles which consume the production of both. The former two entities are responsible for producing a body of knowledge which has historically been unable to divorce political and economic interests of the Western world from what it insists is objective truth. The result is an overly simplified rendition of historical forces, often couched in a point of reference uniquely European.[1] These simplifications are often then manifested in popular forums in what I suggest are ***attitudes*** towards the other. The formation of attitudes—disgust, superiority, charity, condescending (and highly temperamental) anguish—that link collective knowledge to what, borrowing liberally from literary criticism, may be called the commodification of otherness, is the central problem to scholarship on the Balkans.

Situated within this dynamic is the purported impatience of the masses for news of anything beyond the fifteen second video coverage. The "market's" capacity to absorb information has directly shaped the culture of knowledge dissemination. While the generalizations and popular stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims, Albanians may be residuals of the imperialist mind,[2] I sense there is also a propensity to suffocate complexity in order to package the world in reader/viewer friendly units. It is the recyclable container reinforcing the qualities of "otherness" that is being used, not so much for imperialistic reasons, but for reasons of economic efficiency. While literature in the nineteenth-century may have had greater links with a colonial project, I believe the commercial element in today's dispersed academic and media fields have coopted the characterizations produced in a different context and used them for the audience's consumption. Unfortunately, the cultural influences of the commoditization of violence as a marketing tool have been appropriated by producers of knowledge to link the market to the writing of history and ultimately to policy makers.

Solidified by characterizations and metaphors such as "Balkanization," and "Powder Keg," a Western media culture which has a global, nearly hegemonic scope, has codified long outdated notions of Balkan identity to fit a market niche. The concern is that historians and social scientists have reinforced commoditized essentializations by writing books and articles that do

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[1] See in particular Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Dusquesne University Press, 1969) and Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi (Minnesota: Minnesota University Press, 1984).

[2] See Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World.* (New York: Pantheon, 1981).

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not attempt to dissect these generalizations, rather, they buttress their own work by evoking them. The consequences of this will be evident below as the production of this literature is put into the context of an Albanian identity that has been both linked to the "Islamic world" and forever branded as the potential spark that will set off the "powder keg" in the Balkans.

The vast body of literature produced to address the outside world's latest tragedy is a phenomenon that has many precedents and certainly predates the age of advanced media technology.[1] Nevertheless, there is a concern that our contemporaries' rush to exploit the market's wave of interest in the "other" (whomever it may be) has crossed a threshold of conspicuousness. The drive to publish has caused many to greatly exaggerate the real tensions in the outside world (often to be exploited by savvy local political leaders) to the point that any serious efforts to address external tensions with responsible and enlightened scholarship is impossible.

This has been manifested most clearly in the study of ethnicity and the flourishing body of related literature on nationalism which had reached its apex during the Bosnian war. The sheer volume of this material drove the general trend towards sensationalism and overly simplified explanatory tactics, reconfirming rather than contradicting, an undercurrent of preconceived notions the West (and the world) had of the Balkans. The end result of this phenomena in an era of market-driven publication policies is that there does not seem to be any room for "paradigm-shifting" work. On the rare occasions when publishers are earning profits on academic-type publications, logic suggests that for an author, it would be impossible to gain editorial confidence without a slavish reconfirmation of the collective understanding of the dynamics at work. As far as the "model" is concerned, Islam and ethnic nationalism are the keys and in the post-communist world, it is the "resurfacing" of ancient hatreds that has particularly volatile implications for the region.[2] Policy makers have clearly shared this fixation and the consequences are many.

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[1]Again, as Edward Said has shown so clearly, whole genres of literature and related cultural production emerged overnight to accommodate a schizophrenic middle class throughout the colonial period. See Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism.* (New York: Alfred A, Knopf, 1993) and Ann Laura Stoler, *Race and the Education of Desire* (Durham: Duke University Press: 1995). More recent examples of this phenomenon is the Gulf War crisis and the proliferation of literature about Saddam Hussayn and Iraq and in the Balkan context, the plethora of "war diaries" and first-hand accounts of the Bosnian War. Consult Susan Jeffords and Laren Rabinovitz (eds.) *Seeing through the Media: The Persian Gulf War* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1994).

[2]See Frances Trix, "The Resurfacing of Islam in Albania," *East European Quarterly*, XXVIII, No. 4 (January, 1995): 533-549 and Larry Luxner, "Albania's Islamic Rebirth," *Aramco World*, (July-August, 1992): 38-47.

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The unfortunate reflex to link Albanians to the West's phobia of Islam and its simplification of ethnic nationalism, for example, severely limits the capacity of local Albanian leaders in Macedonia and Kosova (or any other community attached to a larger representative entity, the "nation" by the West) because their unique and pressing demands are subsumed in larger universal "Albanian" and Islamic contexts which are tied to Tirana (and Tehran) as opposed to Tetova or Prishtina. This is, of course, not a phenomenon of a specific geographical region. The nature of the majority of journalistic and academic publications today reflects the globalization of motifs and strategies of narrative to fit most current events. Again, reading the Arabic language press during the Kosova crisis of 1998 clearly demonstrates that contemporary journalistic and diplomatic modes of expression are acultural and transcendent.[1] Again, it may be argued that the roots of this incapacity to move beyond these global units of analysis in any of the fields under scrutiny stems from the production of knowledge within an environment that is driven by a market that can not distinguish sensationalism from historical processes. I call this tendency the unequivocal reiteration of historical generalizations.

Some Examples

As indicated above, the academic and policy making worlds is purposefully placed under the same critical light because the misguided application of identity (often reduced to religious affiliation) among scholars has tragically painted conflicts in the Balkans along exaggerated ethnic lines and thus, boundaries that are historically immutable. Using units of analysis such as, Nation and Islam impose upon the subject, in this case Balkan ethnicity explicitly and Balkan sectarianism implicitly, preconceived and reified notions of intractable opposition.

To take the western community's collective representation of Islam, for example, within its euro-centric, historical, sociological and cultural context and reinforced by a long tradition of influential scholarship, it has the inevitable effect of suppressing critical analysis of the variety of Muslim communities in the Balkans. According to the "market," Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Albanians all interact in predetermined patterns that define their historical conditions and dictate how the world perceives their reality. Such an understanding has largely determined the West's interaction with the rest of the world and has reinforced an agonizingly resilient notion, among diplomats and

[1]Of course the emphasis of these London-based publications on Kosova's Muslim population is attempting to tap into a different emotional, collective nerve. It is all the more surprising, therefore, that there is such an uncritical application of terms inherited from elsewhere. See Hasan ul Bilal, "Kusufu shirara al-Busna alati lam tantalaq ba'ad," [Kosova, the Bosnian Spark that has not ignited, Yet] *al-'Alam*, 612 (March 14, 1998), 14-16.

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policy makers alike, of the intractability of conflicts outside the Western world.[1]

While Manchevski's film *Before the Rain* exemplified the cultural influences on the public discourse of otherness during the latest Balkan war, it is the links with the academic world that the forces of reductionism and sensationalism have made which strikes me as most troubling. Influential in shaping both the theoretical and practical world in earlier works on state and societal modernization, Samuel Huntington's attempt to explain the post-Cold War world in some thirty pages is a perfect example of the consequences of these blurred professional boundaries I referred to above. In a widely read piece published in 1993, Huntington used familiar explanatory models and recycled old enemies to provide a framework of interpretation which has been part of a mode of understanding the world: History is explained by impenetrable boundaries, battle lines that separate political and cultural bodies. These boundaries conceptualize whole civilizations, often reduced to geographical spaces. Places like Bosnia, Kashmir and the Sudan all manifest a fundamental and pre-ideological civilizational confrontation with other monolithical units.[2] Central to the West and to the Balkan context, Islam is again, after a period of hibernation, the great divide, a civilizational divide greater than NATO bombs and United States presidents. Huntington has provided the ideal explanatory vehicle to understand the Balkans and has been resurrected to help the world understand the current war in Iraq.[3]

Another, even less qualified commentator, Robert Kaplan, had become a popular advocate of such a disturbing and ahistorical analysis on the Balkans. His *Balkan Ghosts*, a travel book, among other "objective" attempts to explain to his vast audience through excessively gloomy descriptions the juxtaposition of Western values and moral health to the poverty and immorality of the Balkans. His account of the savage demographic nightmare of the Balkans, and later the Third World in general,[4] exemplifies a genre of literature that has received too much uncritical attention in the United States. The fact that books such as *Balkan Ghosts,* (written by journalists applying

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[1]Again, due to the dominance of Western academic and journalistic representations, this is a global phenomenon. For a sophisticated critique of Western social sciences in respect to Islam see Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam.* Occasional Paper Series (Washington D.C.: Georgetown Univ. Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1986).

[2]See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?," *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer, 1993): 22-49.

[3]On Kosova, Huntington believes the "simmering violence" between Serb and Albanian is an indicator of these conflicts on "the northern border of Islam." Huntington, "Clash of Civilizations," 33. The article has since evolved into a 360 page book, please note the publisher. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996).

[4]Robert Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey of the 21st Century* (New York: Random House, 1996).

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generalizations and treating historical narratives with an eye for the fantastic) influenced policy decisions is an indication of just how distorted the West's image of the Balkans is and how desperately misinformed policy makers have remained.[1] This body of literature and the mass media all share a common methodology: the use of loosely defined universal ethnic and religious qualities as explanatory models. By being uncritical of, if not out right complementary to such terrains of ahistorism, academics are partly responsible for the level of inaccuracies that have dominated the media and the diplomatic world.

The use of models which define ethnic and religious essences have immediate consequences within the Albanian context. As noted earlier, the unchallenged understanding of the intimacy between Albanians (as with other "national groups") within the context of the recent surfacing of "ancient hatreds" provides many a commentator to observe that, for instance, "...nations demand that its borders revert to where they were at the exact time when its own empire had reached its zenith of ancient medieval expansion."[2] What Robert Kaplan is using is the exuberance of nationalist rhetoric at its worst expressive point in order to best produce an image of irreconcilability, intransigence and the inevitable replay of all Balkan wars. Such a level of observation, from journalists and academics alike, greatly influence the content of discourse among influential policy makers. No less a figure than the former British Prime Minister, John Major, revealed while in office, the permeation of this rhetoric into the highest levels of policy:

The biggest single element behind what has happened in Bosnia is the collapse of the Soviet Union and of the discipline it exerted over the *ancient hatreds* in the old Yugoslavia. Once that discipline had disappeared, those *ancient hatreds* reappeared, and we began to see their consequences when the fighting occurred." (House of Commons, 23 June 1993.[3]

As a method of analysis for historians this is extremely flawed and dangerous. In relation to such assertions one should ask what makes any of these so-called ethnic groups coherent units? Again, Islam and a loose notion of ethnicity (rarely defined) are posited as the ultimate link. But religion is a highly dubious link, even for a co-religionist group like the Serbs let alone for Albanians whose sectarian complexity remains a fascinating and understudied

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[1]For an early critique of the phenomenon in which journalists became influential in policy making see Anouar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis," *Diogenes* (1963), 119-120.

[2]Robert Kaplan, *Balkan Ghosts*, (New York: Vintage Press, 1994), 57. In the Macedonian context see Susan Woodward, *Balkan Tragedy: Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*. (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 1995), 333-373, 393.

[3]Cf. Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), xx. (Emphasis mine).

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residual of a more complicated period in the pre-nation state Balkans.[1] As for ethnicity, it defies logic to suggest any ethnic group, especially one dispersed by distinct state boundaries, are not delinked at some level by specific interests. In the mythological Balkans, psychological and personality essentializations of a "Balkan social character" are also often used to explain what is posited as inherently unwestern behavior on a trans-ethnic basis. Compare recent work to Théophile Lavallée's characterizations of the Albanian in 1855 and we can conclude such methods of representation have changed very little.[2] Contemporary studies are inevitably linked to narratives of nationalism which have followed seemingly parallel tracks. What is suggested here, then, is that our tools of identification are highly determined by overly simplified conceptions of identity, linked by character traits, physical appearance, geographic and religious associations which obscure our ability to understand local history and thus the current trends in local political life.

In sum, the westernized world fails to understand the important cultural, political and economic divisions that exist between distinctive "national" groups, be they Serbs, Croatians, or Albanians in the Balkans.[3] Again, the related notion that Muslim populations, all of whom harbor their own, distinct and often contradicting histories, are a part of a civilizational boundary intrinsically programmed to struggle with the Orthodox and Catholic communities, reveals the tendency of the westernized community to accept traditional conceptualizations of the world without serious debate.[4] Notions such as fundamentalist, primordial and irrational behavior patterns all contribute to a process I call the marginalization of historical cognition. The terms mentioned above, all applied to the Balkans and the Islamic world in popular and academic circles, all over the world, are tools of rhetoric that are meant to mobilize an audience's energies into the right intellectual frame. Once armed with immutable notions of the ontological other, often igniting emotional sentiments as well, words and actions follow their pre-determined

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[1] Nathalie Clayer has provided the most thorough study of Sufism in Albania and its social complexity: *Mystiques, État et société: Les Halvetis dans l'aire balkanique de la fin du XVe siècle à nos jours* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994) and *L'Albanie, pays des derviches: Les ordres mystiques musulmans en Albanie à l'époque post-ottomane (1912-1967)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990).

[2] "Les caractères communs aux deux peuples [Gheg and Tosk] sont l'amour de l'indépendance, l'amour de la guerre, l'esprit de vengeance, la férocité. Ce sont des soldats pillards, sauvages, infatigables, vendant leurs services et leur sang à qui mieux paye; mais vifs, gais, aventureux, sobres, généreux et héroïques dès qu'il s'agit de la défense de leur pays, de leur tribu, de leur famille. C'est une race de fer, aussi dure que les rochers qu'elle habite." Lavallée, *Histoire de l'Empire Ottoman,* p. 54.

[3] Jovan Cvijic described the cultural diversity and hence, divisions among Serbs as "cultural belts," a notion that is all but submerged by the West's uncritical application of nationalism which gives such terms as "The Serbian nation" a metaphysical quality. See Jovan Cvijic, *La Peninsule balkanique: géographie humaine*, (Paris: A. Colin, 1918).

[4] I suggest the Greek Defense Minster's comments about Bosnia being a "bridgehead" for Islam in Europe is a perfect example. Ioannis M. Varvitsiotes, "Security in the Mediterranean and the Balkans," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 3: 1 (Winter 1992): 25-34.

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path. For all the claims to journalistic objectivity or academic science, there is no escaping the effects of rhetoric used for mass consumption. Balkan histories become popular histories driven by Western ideological motivations that go beyond the immediate subject. The Balkan national character and its savage manifestation in non-democratic populism intertwine in a public discourse of unfortunate ignorance and at times, outright racism within the westernized world.

Conclusion

In light of this historical profile of an "ethnic group" that in the eyes of the westernized world has a singular coherence, it is suggested that historians and social scientists develop a framework that avoids overly simplifying complex political communities such as the Albanians by creating, anachronistically, nations. This chapter attempted to expose the fallacy of the westernized understanding of a specific Balkan community by emphasizing several important points. While the West has essentialized ethnicity and identity to the point that the tensions in Kosova, for instance, amount to the next stage of the inevitable clash between "civilizations," there is strong historical evidence to suggest ethnic identity does not necessarily suggest unanimity. Second, the long-term rivalries between, for instance, Serbs and their Albanian neighbors are not products of the primordial animosities between "tribes" nor are they extensions of ethnic tensions that cross contemporary international borders. They may be tensions which are constructed around ethnic signifiers but they are always closely defined by administrative boundaries which have specific historical, as opposed to ethnic, significance.

Historians and theorists should not accept popularized conceptualizations of Balkan ethnicity. Instead of essentializing Balkan identities, professionals in all academic fields should adopt an approach that exposes the variability of identity. On a broader theoretical plane they must redraw the typological boundaries set specifically in the literature on ethnicity and nationalism that have often set uncomfortably narrow conceptualizations of identity formation.[1] It is not an inherently helpless, idealistic plea that I am

[1]Benedict Anderson somewhat dangerously identifies the rise of nationalism as the product of the modeling of a "national" identity. Under the model, which could be adopted by any aspiring nationalist, a prototypical process of identity formation becomes attached to subsequent nation-states. The model unfortunately exaggerates the effectiveness of universalizing processes in the modern state. Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities:* is but one case of a general theoretical approach which has led less vigorous thinkers to forget the important distinctiveness of historical conjunctures that characterize each case. Eric Hobsbawm's informative work has pinpointed another such case in the centrality of the nation-state in the operational process of Western diplomacy. By giving privilege to the nation-state and its narrowly defined meaning, historical differences within "national-groups" such as the ones I discuss in this paper have been overshadowed. Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 130-131.

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making. Borrowing from the vigorously contested terrain in, for instance, the working-class literature, would assist in expanding our understanding of identity.[1] If the discourse on national identity and ethnicity were to be invigorated, it would stimulate a positive reflection on these rigid notions of primordial identities so solidified today and possibly change the way history is told through the media and how historians write it.

[1]One useful example would be Aristide Zolberg's insistence upon applying a diversified, and case-specific study of European labor movements and their constitutive working classes. This sound advice must be applied to "national" communities in the Balkans if we are to best understand these conflicts and find a resolution. See Ira Katznelson and Aristide Zolberg, eds. *Working-Class Formation: Nineteenth-Century Patterns in Western Europe and the United States*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), especially chapter 8. For other informative examples see Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History, 1832-1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) and Zachary Lockman, "Imagining the Working Class: Culture, Nationalism, and Class Formation in Egypt, 1899-1914," *Poetics Today* 15: 2 (Summer 1994): 157-190.

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3

REDEFINING TRIBAL PATHOLOGIES: YEMEN'S UNDECLARED DYNAMIC BEYOND THE GAZE OF THE STATE

Introduction

Much as I have critiqued the ethno-national identities that were central to the analysis of the period in the Balkans, so too has Arabia been victim of such reductive methods of analysis. This is troubling because over the last forty years, scholarship on the "Third World," in general, has seen a number of important paradigmatic shifts, often dominated by debates on how to best understand social and institutional change over time.[1] The Subaltern Studies Group, in particular, has provided one of the more influential interpretive angles in this recent historiography. In their search to recover the lives of subjects generally ignored in scholarship, they introduced a process of calling into question the very narratives, source materials, and theoretical frameworks used in the past. Unfortunately, the debates that have arisen from this scholarship have not influenced much of the research on the Arabian Peninsula, in particular that of the Ottoman period. The result has been a disciplinary gap separating those working on subjects pertaining to the Arabian Peninsula and those who have sought more fruitful inquires into the value of studying, among other subjects, the "Islamic World."

Part of the problem in the research on the Arabian Peninsula is its disciplinary foundations, which have been critiqued by those working outside the field. Ernest Gellner, an influential British commentator on things "Islamic" in the postwar period, probably best personifies this disciplinary gap.[2] In much of his work, Gellner preferred to think of the "Muslim World" as a closed entity, fixed structurally to a definable pattern that consisted of "bricks" which included Islam (as the monolithic faith) and communal

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[1]For our purposes in this volume, one article stands out: Dale Eickelman and James Piscatori, "Social Theory in the Study of Muslim Societies," in *Muslim Travelers*, ed. D. Eicklman and J. Piscatori (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).

[2]See in particular, Ernest Gellner and his influential work, *Muslim Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

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segmentation.[1] To Gellner, these "bricks" constituted, "neat, crisp models" that helped inform the Western observer on how to read this alien world.[2] In work that specifically studies the Arabian Peninsula, authors perpetuate Gellner's functionalist approach to the history and contemporary politics of a region that, as demonstrated in this volume, is diverse and ambiguously fused with often contradictory forces.[3]

For many studying Yemen, in particular, it is Gellner's representation of the "Muslim World," the social model of the segmented "tribe" and the superstructure of sectarian identities that constitute the "bricks" of Southern Arabia's political, economic and social order.[4] As indicated in the large body of scholarship on Yemen's "tribal" culture, the unifying goal has been to find meaning in the actions of identified, apparently representative, actors both living today and in the past.[5] To most anthropologists and political scientists working on the area, the group affiliations of these representative idols of Yemeni culture are posited as the means through which we are expected to understand their actions.

Elsewhere, similar "master narratives" have resulted in the affirmation of communalist tensions that have dominated how scholars interpret, for instance, South Asian history. Recent critical readings of this colonial-era discourse have provided important correctives to the historical record of Muslim-Hindu relations in South Asia. Similar results could be attained in Arabia.[6] As will be suggested here, the very act of interpreting actions using Gellner's model of the Muslim Society has become so distorting that there have been few adequate studies of Yemen's complex political and economic relations as a result.

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[1]One of the more precise critiques of Gellner's construction of Islam may be found in Talal Asad, *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam.* Occasional Paper Series. (Washington DC: Georgetown University Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, 1993): 22-49. See also Henry Munson "Rethinking Gellner's Segmentary Analysis of Morocco' Ait 'Atta," *Man* 28/2 (1993): 267-80.

[2]See John Davis, "An Interview with Ernest Gellner," *Current Anthropology,* 12, (1991): 71.

[3]William Lancaster and Fidelity Lancaster, "Tribal Formations in the Arabian Peninsula," *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy,* 3 (1992): 145-72.

[4]Paul Dresch, *Tribes, Government, and History in Yemen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 336-7. Weir also commits Dresch's fatal error of social organizational abstraction as its concerns tribes, but her critique of Dresch's failure to consider economic issues impacting the lives of his "tribal" subjects suggests she is aware of these methodological concerns. Shelagh Weir, "Trade and Tribal Structures in North West Yemen," *Cahiers du GREMAMO: Arabie du Sud,* 10 (1991), 88.

[5]Among others, see Andre Gingrich "Tribes and Rulers in Northern Yemen" in A. Gingrich et al. (eds) *Studies in Oriental Culture and History* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1993): 253-80.

[6]See Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990).

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Academic (and/or bureaucratic) accounts that base their frame of reference, in particular, on tribal or communal identifications wish to provide categorical explanations for particular events that disguise the inherent complexity of the population in question. The goal behind assigning authority to "tribal shaykhs" in the ethnographic text, the principal unit of rural political power used by ethnographers working on Yemen today, is to simplify a variety of personal and political motivations (and often the sociopolitical context) out of which events transpire. Critics within the field of anthropology have questioned such methods of ethnographic inquiry, suggesting the need for a more contextual and historical examination of the subject.[1] This wider concern for the tendency to objectify social processes is particularly relevant for the Arabian Peninsula as it is there that the reification of categories such as tribe, and sectarian and confessional group allegiances (i.e. Zaydi and Shafi'i) animate an often fruitless search for ultimate causality.[2]

Somewhat disappointingly, while many younger scholars have drawn a great deal of inspiration from the criticism of segmentary functionalism, they have nevertheless reapplied the very terminology of the school of British Social Anthropology, dominated by Ernest Gellner, when dealing with the "tribal" regions of the "Islamic" world. In attempts to understand the emergence of modern notions of collective identity, including national and trans-national ones, for instance, old colonial-era categories have been used to falsely create polarities in societies that, rather than demonstrating far more complicated patterns of interaction, vitiate the very mantra of recent breakthroughs brought about by Subaltern Studies.[3] This resistance tends to eliminate the possibility to move beyond old patterns of interpreting social interactions and recognizing their colonial origins, ultimately reinforcing a powerful conceptual gap retained by social scientists and historians who insist on utilizing these colonial-era terms to understand the region.[4] As Susan Kappeler has noted, scholars who operate under these terms are often reasserting the authority of the narrator over a rigid, static and objectified subject. This process inherently robs the subject of her/his very subjectivity, leading to rather bold representations of historical reality that are hard to refute.[5]

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[1]Talal Asad, ed. *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London, 1973); James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds. *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, Calif., 1986; and George W. Stocking, Jr., *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge* (Madison, Wis., 1991).

[2]Steve Caton, "Power, Persuasion, and Language: A Critique of the Segmentary Model in the Middle East," *IJMES*, 19, (1987): 77-102.

[3]See for instance, Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination: Oral History and Textual Authority in Tribal Jordan.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

[4]This is particularly evident in Paul Dresch's latest book which unconvincingly attempts to link the late Ottoman period with social organizational patterns that extend to the 1990s. Paul Dresch, *A History of Modern Yemen.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 1-28.

[5]Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 48-50.

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Power/Marginality: Arguing for a Local History

Instead of reducing social actions to terminology that can articulate "Yemeni history" to an audience with little "knowledge" about Yemen, it may be more productive to return to the context from which events take place. Unfortunately, the danger with citing tribal or sectarian associations is that such categories are used to eliminate the contingencies of daily life for the sake of narrative clarity. The conventional categories of tribe and sectarian loyalties were often explained by graphically reproducing them on maps or charts in order to help conceptually articulate the relations between these units of analysis over time.[1] What these categories fail to allow the historian to do is explore the events taking place within these categories, rather than only between them. It may help elaborate this point by specifically looking at the process of political contestation in order to demonstrate that while the impact of Ottoman imperial rule on Yemen is a significant force of change, neither the imperial state nor these assumed social structures animate Yemen's political and economic life exclusively. In sum, what will be new about how I approach Yemen's past is that I suggest the assumed centers of indigenous power studied by anthropologists are susceptible to challenge and modification over even a very short period of time. These next two chapters, therefore, seek to offer some alternative ways of looking at Yemen's historical past by exploring a key but forgotten period in Yemen's recent history: the late Ottoman period of 1872-1918 and how power operates in channels of exchange otherwise obscured by colonial-era categories.

I suggest that in order to explore such changes over time, it is necessary to permit the diversity and fluidity of social existence in all societies to manifest itself in the history and ethnography we write. Historians working on colonial Africa, for example, have clearly identified a pathos of complexity that at once helps us understand colonial power and the nature of local engagement with it at the same time. The example of David Edward's convincing work on how the metropole understood its "colonial failure" to civilize Africa, helps readdress our focus to appreciate how a process of self-reflection actually reproduced colonial era (Ottoman or English) categories that ultimately went into writing about Yemen's past.[2]

Much as David Edwards demonstrated in British-administered Africa, I suggest power in Yemen is not solely negotiated along terms set by state institutions or ethnographic conventions which assert a position of authority

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[1]Paul Dresch, "The Significance of the Course Events Take in Segmentary Systems" *American Ethnologist* XIII (1986): 309-324.

[2]David Edwards, "Mad Mullahs and Englishmen: Discourse in the Colonial Encounter," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 31 (1989): 649-70.

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onto "tribal shaykhs."[1] By remaining fixated on categories that serve the purpose of confining contingency to a manageable narrative, we are left unable to observe power's frequent dissemination through "unconventional" channels, mainly those that are not recognized by states and denied a central place within contemporary "tribal" structures. Recent work on bringing voice to those formally distinguished as "marginal" in the hierarchies presumed to exist in "tribal" and patriarchal societies demonstrates that there is a way to replicate a past's complexities by actively disengaging from using certain categories as the foundation of inquiry. I seek to reproduce that same voice here.[2] The social order predicated on uniform notions of power are constantly transcended by social actors whose worlds were not locked in perpetual isolation from the outside world and solely dependent on local, "tribal" or "religious" claims to their loyalties. Yemen's "disenfranchised" and "undocumented" people will prove to be intensely engaged in trans-communal links that implicitly challenge the certitude of conventional categories asserting predictable patterns of social interaction.[3]

Documented Barriers to a Social History of Yemen

Studies on Ottoman bureaucratic discourse, while still in its infancy, are revealing in the sense that the Ottoman élite, like their European and South Asian counterparts, used social typologies to create the necessary conceptual space between themselves and those they ruled.[4] As a result, it is assumed that Ottoman officials had their own understanding of imperial order that is reflected in how it ruled distant territories such as Yemen.[5] That alone, however, does not give us a complete picture of imperial governance or state/society interaction. There were tensions in this "order of things" that scholars of Hamidian imperialism fail to recognize. The central problem, I suspect, is methodological. Scholars are still too reliant on a literal reading of Ottoman documents. This speaks of a need to move beyond accepting the "official" representations of Ottoman policies which often used the categories

[1] Both Abu-Ghanim and Dresch attempt to argue that it is precisely through the shaykh that Yemeni society can best be studied. See respectively, Fadil Ali Ahmad Abu Ghanim, *al-Qabila wa al-Dawla fi al-Yaman* (Sana'a': Dar al-'Anad, 1990), 17 and Dresch, *Tribes*, xii.

[2] I am particularly inspired by Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing's path-breaking work on marginality, which demonstrates the fragility of communal, gender, political and cultural barriers that have often been assumed in anthropological work in the past. *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place.* (New York: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[3] For interesting work along these lines, see the theme issue of Cultural Anthropology edited by James Ferguson and Akhil Gupta, "Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference." *Cultural Anthropology* 7/1 (1989).

[4] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 16-92.

[5] See for instance Memduh Muhammad, *Miftah-i Yaman* (Istanbul, 1330) and for an interpretation of Ottoman imperial ambitions, see Eugene Rogan, *Frontier of the State in the Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

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of tribe, sect and status much in the same British administrators do in Aden at the same time. A recently discovered document of how the Sultan himself had to adapt to the realities of power in Yemen which contradicted earlier imperial categories makes my point perfectly.

Much as scholars of the period suggest, the Sultan officially sought to affirm his hegemonic role over all "his" subjects and assert some paternalistic control over what may have been an overly exuberant administrative cadre. Contrary to our conventional understanding, however, the Sultan at times, proved susceptible to compromise. In a direct order from the palace written in 1894, the Sultan advised his regional commanders and administrators to better prepare the defenses of Libya and Yemen, which were seen to have been weakened by the persistence of local rebellions. Normally, such demands would not be treated with much consideration. I would suggest the document is far more revealing however. In 1894, the palace offered a new strategy to accomplish the imperial goal of securing its frontiers.

The seemingly enlightened approach of treating the local population not as objects of derision but as partners certainly would constitute a novel approach to local governance. Perhaps eager to reinforce his inclusive gesture to all Muslims in the Empire at a time when locals may have been revolting, the Sultan's advisors ordered administrators to run Yemen not as a "foreign place" in need of occupation, but one in which local Yemenis could be counted as equals. In an apparent departure from earlier methods of rule, the Sultan demanded that locals be allowed to run the police, administer villages and monitor weekly markets. The Sultan's men stressed in this document that the role of the government in Istanbul was to send judges and money to enhance production, tax revenue and trade through development of local education, and not necessarily to subjugate its inhabitants to the point of rebellion.[1]

Viewing this message in the context of a barrage of literature produced by Ottoman media and imperial administrators at the time proves to be an intriguing contradiction to the imperial ambitions most historians assumed to be manifest. The concerted effort to inculcate loyalties through the creation of a professional bureaucracy clearly did not produce the kind of results Sultan Abdül-Hamid II thought necessary for Yemen in 1894. This decree reveals a shift in thinking. What is most striking about the Sultan's personal intervention at this time, therefore, is that "locals" are seen as much a

[1]BBA YA.RES 71/35 Yıldız Saray to Meclis vükela No. 339 5 Safer 1312 [9 August 1894]. It must be pointed out that this is not an extraordinary moment of state crisis, but a part of a process that can be read in literally hundreds of documents in the archives. The key is how one reads a document, not that it can be translated. Therefore, asking the right kind of questions about the material historians and social scientists use is a part of the training necessary to successfully work in any archive.

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part of the successful administration process as the trained cadre of bureaucrats Istanbul was sending down to Yemen.[1]

Yemen for this reason alone is a fine case study of how imperial ambitions, the correspondent administrative rigidities and local reactions all translated differently in the historical text over time. There is a danger, therefore, of assuming that the number of memoirs and newspaper articles depicting the bureaucrat's tour of duty in Yemen are representative of what was transpiring in Yemen at the time. It is certainly the case that the "colonial ambitions" of the Empire could be noted in newspaper accounts of Yemen, popularizing, in the process, the vernacular of distance so important to the whole project of imperial rule.[2] That these depictions of an Ottoman's adventures to the Empire's distant provinces were popular among readers demonstrates the power of the imagery of savage, tribal Yemen in the halls of imperial power.[3] Furthermore, much like our self-referential fascination with Afghan or Yemeni "tribes" today, Ottoman collective social identity, whether indigenous or foreign, could easily be argued to have been founded on this impressionistic opposition towards the Yemeni "other." But the Sultan's order clearly sets this elitism's limits. Yemenis were talking back and Istanbul was forced to modify its policy towards them, engaging in a partnership rather in a relationship of subjugation. This is clearly a case of the subaltern speaking loudly to the metropole.

Again, the problem seems to be one of perspective. Some scholars of the modern state suggest that the socially constructed hierarchies appearing in the media, including the categories of tribal peoples versus urban civilization, are the fundaments of modern nation-states.[4] In the context of the Ottoman Empire, this could more accurately be framed as a combination of social constructions that pitted urban, literate actors against "tribal," rural savages, constituting a social polarity many found attractive at the time for the forging of a specific, collective Ottoman "bourgeois" identity.[5] Nevertheless, while the richness of the primary material found in Istanbul has told us much of the Ottoman "imagination," this has ultimately blurred our understanding of what was taking place in Yemen at the time.

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[1] On the role of the bureaucracy and their development in the Empire, see Carter V. Findley, *Bureaucratic Reform in the Ottoman Empire: The Sublime Porte, 1789-1922* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980).

[2] See, for example, the Ottoman-language daily, *Tanin*, Number 438, (21 November, 1909) for a depiction of life in far-off Yemen through the eyes of an Istanbul intellectual.

[3] See for instance a recent republication of Gazi Ahmed Muhtar Paşa, *Anılar: Sergüzeşt-i Hayatım'ın Cild-i Evveli* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfi Yurt Yayinlari, 1996), 40-50 and Kadri Hasan, *Yemen ve Hayati* (Dersaadet: 1328).

[4] See Alan Knight, "Racism, Revolution and Indigenismo: Mexico, 1910-1940," in *The Idea of Race in Latin America, 1870-1940*, ed. Richard Graham (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990): 72-73.

[5] For one study on the social changes taking place in Ottoman Society see Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire. Ottoman Westernization and Social Change*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

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A countervailing and currently popular approach to understanding state/society relations in the colonial context has viewed subaltern politics as an "autonomous" domain, a cultural cell that has allowed for, in Ranajit Guha's words, "dominance without hegemony."[1] Among scholars of Latin America, such a concept is best embodied in the notion of "the Andean" whereby Andean history is gauged and validated by supposed continuities with Inca rule and resistance to Spanish domination or Westernization.[2] Although such insight may underscore the importance of endogenous beliefs and practices in resisting Ottoman rule, it straight jackets indigenous cultural "authenticity" in the mantle of continuity and restricts history to an exercise in negation. Indeed, in obscuring the creative and contradictory processes whereby dominant symbols and meanings are filtered, absorbed, and reworked by locals, such a methodological approach impoverishes our understanding of the history of local-imperial relations to the point that it is impossible but to see them as fixed cultural entities, locked in tribal or sectarian categories.[3]

The Ottoman Imperial Context and Local Agency Rediscovered

What makes these resilient interpretive angles damaging is clear once we better understand how and why Yemen became such a key component to European and Ottoman interests in the late nineteenth century.[4] Situated in the heart of a crossroads of trade routes and military strategic points, Ottoman Yemen represented a vital interest for a number of imperial powers at the turn-of-the-century.[5] This is evidenced in how imperial powers competed in the Red Sea, claiming, for instance, uninhabited islands as coal depots to refuel shipping that made the lucrative trips to Asia through the recently opened Suez Canal. What had previously been a minor enclave for Ottoman imperial

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[1]Ranajit Guha ed., *A Subaltern Studies Reader, 1986-1995* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), ix-xxi.

[2]For a critique see Mark Turner, *From Two Republics to One Divided.* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997), 11-14.

[3]A similar argument is made in Gilbert M. Joseph and Daniel Nugent, eds. *Everyday Forms of State Formation: Revolution and the Negotiation of Rule in Modern Mexico.* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994): 21-22.

[4]For instance, the British spent a great deal of its limited resources in Aden to stake a claim to the hinterland of the region as early as 1874, in response or inducing Ottoman expansion into the northern highlands during the same period. For a detailed description of how British agents drew imaginary lines of influence in regions that would by the 1890s serve as de facto boundaries between to rival empires see BBA HR.SYS 90/10 document 4a, dated 3 April 1876.

[5]For studies of this period in Arabic see Faruq 'Uthman Abazah, *Al-Hukm al-'Uthmani fil-Yaman,* (Beirut: Dar al-'Awwada, 1979): 277-327 and Sayyid Mustafa Salim, *Takwin al-Yaman al-Hadith: al-Yaman wa al-Imam Yahya, 1904-1948.* 4th ed. (Cairo: Ma'had al-Buhuth wa-l-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1971).

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ambitions suddenly became a point of obsession for British, French and Italian rivals.[1]

The Ottoman State in its efforts to secure control of this key point facing British Aden, French Somalia and Italian Eritrea, initiated a number of state centralization schemes after establishing formal claims to Yemen's northern highlands in 1872-1874.[2] This desire to impose "reform" is revealed in documents that clearly outline the intentions of the Sublime Porte as early as 1874.[3] Unfortunately, recent revisionist scholarship that has broken new ground in terms of angles of analysis and use of documentation in other fields, still do not break with old categories in places like the Arabian Peninsula. Hasan Kayali's work, for instance, while doing the field a great service by taking a closer look at Ottoman documents, nevertheless, reflects too little concern with the method of categorization I am criticizing here, resulting in some misrepresentations of reforms and key events taking place in Yemen.[4]

Likewise, fiscal reform, investments in infrastructure, telegraph lines, military barracks and elaborate plans to centralize judicial and educational life have been interpreted to be essential to Yemen's post-Ottoman society.[5] Studies, however, which evoke these transformations without considering how local communities reacted to such measures miss an important element of the nature of power at the time.[6] The underlying assumption in these readings of history between presumably unequal adversaries is that indigenous communities are being acted upon from positions of rigidly formed social structures incapable of adopting to the variables introduced by a modern imperial state.[7] On the contrary, we can observe the extent to which locals

[1]The Ottoman government was particularly concerned with the foreign activity in the Red Sea as per the uninhabited islands. See BBA Meclis-i Vükelâ Mazbataları, (MV) 1/20 dated Receb 1302 (April, 1885). For a fair study on Italian interests in the Red Sea region see Marco Lenci, *Eritrea e Yemen: Tensioni italo-turche nel mer Rosso, 1885-1911* (Milano, Franco Angeli, 1990) and for a study on the British in the area see Faruq 'Uthman Abazah, *'Adin wa al-Siyasa al-Britaniyya fil-Bahr al-Ahmar, 1839-1918*. (Cairo: al-Miya al-Misriyya al-'Asama lil-Maktab, 1987).

[2]For early reactions from Istanbul's principle rival in Yemen see PRO FO 78/2753, private letter addressed to Sir Henry Elliot, dated Aden, 2 January 1873, documents 8-12.

[3]For an outline of these ambitions in English see, PRO FO 78/2754 Jan. 28, 1874 [76].

[4]See Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 110-11.

[5]See Brinkley Messick's otherwise excellent study, *The Caligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993). For an example of how Ottoman imperial projects were conceived in Istanbul see report from the Ottoman Defense Ministry on the advantages of expanding the famous Hicaz railroad down to Yemen. BBA Bab-i Ali Evrak Odasi (BEO), 286439, dated April 1912.

[6]For instance, Ottoman officials had a serious problem with maintaining the value of their silver based currency as market forces (Yemeni merchants) constantly undermined early fiscal policy. Details of the declining value of Ottoman Piastre in Yemen in the early periods of Ottoman rule see PRO FO 78/2988 dated Jeddah, 19 July 1879 Jeddah Consulate to Marquis of Salisbury, report number 49.

[7]For how Italian administrators in Asmara viewed Ottoman concerns in 1901, see ASMAI 91/1, folders 6, 7, and 9.

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maintained a capacity to dictate events on the ground when studying the tensions between Britain and the Sublime Porte along the southern highlands that separated their two regions.[1]

These tensions usually surface in the archival material after incidents involving local "warlords" bring the two imperial powers face-to-face. The imperial relationship, as a result of the intimate linkages between locals and the diplomatic gamesmanship taking place in London and Istanbul, was transformed in such a way that local figures, often as lowly as a village elder, could incite a diplomatic uproar. This capacity must be studied on grounds distinct from fixing the local actor along tribal or sectarian lines of analysis.

Rethinking Historical Agents
Muhammad Idrisi's Challenge to Imam Yahya

If we look at the political rivalries for ascendancy in northern Yemen after the emergence of a new Zaydi Imam in 1904, we immediately see some important indications of the fluid boundaries between social and political categories I am discussing here.[2] The case of Muhammad Idrisi, in particular, serves as an interesting conjuncture to events in Yemen and a perfect example of how unreliable categories used to write Yemen's history prove to be. As leader of a regional Sufi order—the Idrisiyya—Idrisi's ascendancy in what at one point extended well into traditional Zaydi and Shafi'i sectarian territories demonstrates most clearly the dynamics at work during the late Ottoman period.[3] Not only does Idrisi exemplify the shifting economic and political fortunes of a number of actors in the region, his activities would also translate into a central factor to Ottoman policy vis-à-vis the identified Zaydi élite.

Muhammad Idrisi came from a long line of successful Sufi leaders who established firm links throughout the Red Sea area and branches as far as Istanbul. Muhammad al-Qutb and his son 'Ali b. Muhammad settled along the 'Asir and Tihama coast when the Ottomans were making significant in-roads in the first half of nineteenth century. The Idrisiyya settled in a region in

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[1]Demonstrations of the interconnectedness of regional economy, political ambitions of locals and global flows of commodities such as salt may be found throughout the late Ottoman period in Yemen. These connections forced the Ottoman state administrators in Yemen to actively work within a local as opposed to a universal context. BBA, İrade-i Şura Devlet: Report number 639, dated 21 Cemaziyelahir 1305 [10 March 1888] for instance, discusses the impact of shortages of Indian salt on local relations in Ottoman Yemen.

[2]BBA YA.HUS 472/61, Sublime Porte to the Yemen Governor. It was reported that the old Imam (identified as a criminal in the document) is ill in Saada. Some of the ulema from the Hashid district are reportedly in Saada to elect a new leader. The Vali was assigned to infiltrate and assure the right successor would be elected. 23 Safer 1322 [9 May 1904].

[3]For a brief study see Anne K. Bang, *The Idrisi State in 'Asir, 1904-1934* (Bergan: Bergan Studies on the Middle East and Africa, 1996).

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Yemen that historically resisted Zaydi hegemony, the 'Asir, as it is called, was conducive to the organizational and spiritual capacities of someone like Muhammad Idrisi because of its sociopolitical fragmentation and important commercial links to the outside world. What makes 'Asir an attractive case is that Idrisi reveals how unreliable rigidly drawn universalisms based on nationalist or sectarian vernacular and contemporary geopolitical boundaries are for historians. If we did insist on using rigid characterizations centered on solely sectarian or tribal markers, we would not be able to accommodate the frequent alliances between Idrisi and many assumed allies of Imam Yahya, who took over as the principle political leader of Zaydis in 1904. While Idrisi represented a minority Sufi order and almost certainly came from a racially mixed background, Idrisi's ability to put a stop to inter and intra-"tribal" feuds and rampant banditry in the 'Asir, securing the tranquility necessary for both a solid opposition against the Ottoman state, and more importantly, to provide an economic environment which generated wealth, procured for him the affection of community leaders throughout the vilayet. This affection and trust developed over a period of time would inevitably translate into a declared allegiance to Idrisi in his inevitable clash with Ottoman and Imam Yahya forces.[1]

In addition to being the focus of Ottoman concerns, Idrisi represents the most visible political challenge to the Zaydi Imam since at least 1908. While he was the leader of the anti-Ottoman uprising in his native 'Asir region, in the process of consolidating his economic and political influence, Idrisi also shifted the nature of local power in what has consistently been characterized as Imam Yahya's Yemen.[2] As would be surmised in the literature, these actors' "tribal and sectarian" identities, if we are to accept them, would have precluded members of the Zaydi sect, or of the Dhu Muhammad "tribe" from joining forces with a Sufi leader based in Asir. But as demonstrated in the case of Idrisi, so-called tribal and sectarian identities did not impede a fluid interaction between individuals and groups. It could be said that, as in the Ta'izz highlands (discussed in the next chapter), the outbreak of tensions between local and imperial powers of the region provided a variety of economic as well as political opportunities for a plethora of actors who would have otherwise been ignored in the imperial scheme of things.[3]

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[1]Idrisi unabashedly reflects on his successes with gaining local trust in his Bayan published in 1912. Bayan li-l-nas wa-huda wa-maw'iz a li-l-muttaqin. Reprinted and translated in Bang, *The Idrisi State in 'Asir*, 145-188.

[2]Reflective of his growing importance, the Ottoman state sought to coopt Idrisi throughout the early twentieth century as his activities threatened their imperial designs. See for instance, BBA MV 227/248 dated 24 Zilkade 1330 [6 November 1912] and DH.MUI 1-1/10 24 Muharrem 1327 [16 February 1909].

[3]BBA DH.MUI 1-1/33 27 Safer 1327 [21 March 1909], report from Sana'a that Imam Yahya is having trouble keeping his various military allies loyal, suggesting a fresh series of loses to Idrisi is a result of these fluid lines of loyalty.

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The economic and correspondent political power Idrisi commandeered during the First World War, in particular, helps conceptualize our appreciation for this dynamic I suggest is taking place throughout Yemen. Beyond the economic inducements of joining forces with a British ally, a relationship formalized in a treaty in 1915, Idrisi's growing political and economic influence resulted in a number of alliances with Zaydi leaders who were otherwise isolated in their highland enclaves.[1] The animated political relations were a reflection of the expansion of possibilities for a number of local players in areas nominally under Imam Yahya's control. The growing economic importance of coastal towns under Idrisi's control, along with British stipends and a liberal flow of arms helped him secure viable alliances that threatened Imam Yahya's very existence and in the process, rendered the categories used to understand them unrepresentative.[2] Scores of Zaydi shaykhs, who constituted the heart and soul of Imam Yahya's power, were repeatedly seen as severing their ties with the Imam, their tribe, and often their immediate family during the course of the period leading up to the treaty of Da'an in 1911.[3] After the Da'an Treaty of 1911, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter, there are even more examples of individuals and their companions leaving their "tribes" to join Idrisi's cause and by default, the infidel British. As British intelligence reports suggest, Idrisi's men often faced in the battlefield members of their own "tribe" or even family, suggesting there are different animating factors at play.[4]

A focus on the tribal or sectarian idiom used to understand Yemen's political relations and fix them along a vocabulary of order obscures the political nature of communal/individual interactions noted above. Reliance on these categories also unnecessarily taints our historical understanding of the reality of Idrisi's or Ta'izi locals' strengths in contrast to the relative weakness

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[1]Idrisi forged a formal alliance with the British in 1915 to fight Ottoman forces, thus opening a second front as British troops faced the Ottomans from Aden. See PRO War Office (WO) 95/163825 Report from Political Resident, Aden D.G.L. Shaw, Major-General to Residency, Cairo. "The War: Egypt, Turkey" 18 October 1915. For an early order by Ottoman officials to capture Idrisi, see BBA BEO 265661, [February 1909].

[2]A British effort to incite internal strife compliments the internal diversity that literature to date has failed to recognize. See Interview with Lieut.-Colonel Isma'il Effendi, commandant of Ta'izz Garrison, as reported by W .F. Bainbridge, February 19, 1919. in *Records of Yemen, 1798-1960* 6 vols. eds Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams (London: Archive Edition, 1993) 6: 401-409.

[3]While the treaty which linked Ottoman and Imam Yahya, hints at a new phase of Imam Yahya's political fortunes, I would suggest the factors that compelled him to join forces with Istanbul in 1911 suggest his formal claims of legitimacy were hardly resonating in the impoverished highlands. In BBA DH. MUI 1-1/12, 25 Muharrem 1327 [17 February 1909] we see that the Imam is soliciting Ottoman state assistance in his fight with Idrisi, desperately, I argue, seeking a way to shore up his weak logistical and financial base needed to keep alliances viable.

[4]The case of Idrisi shows such concern with kinship and tribe has far more play among European-influenced categories than for those on the ground in Yemen. For examples of intra-"group" strife elsewhere, see BBA DH.MUI 1-6/17 3.Z.1327 [December 1909], Documents 3 and 6.

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of Imam Yahya and/or the Ottoman state during specific moments of time. By privileging a small section of Yemeni society at the expense of the frequent "anomalies" that appear in history, be they manifestations of the agency of women, former slaves or "weak" merchants, we may be ignoring the many complexities that operated just beneath the surface of late Ottoman Yemen.[1] In respect to Yemen at the time, the combination of Idrisi's privileged access to the outside world, the increasing economic impoverishment of the Imam's territories and the Imam's subsequent inability to sustain his economic obligations to allies intensified the decentralized political field and proved even "weak" social actors have a role to play in history.[2] If we add to this dynamic the fact that the entrance of the Ottoman Empire into the highlands forty years earlier and a major World War taking place on all sides of Yemen, it is clear Northern Yemen was in constant flux, a dynamic about which I will talk in more detail in the next chapter.

Conclusion

By strategically calling into question the epistemological assumptions such units carry through an historical study of Ottoman Yemen until World War I, it is hoped that studying forgotten events clarifies the otherwise confused and highly un"conventional" behavior of history's silenced agents. Such an approach to identify agency beyond the categories of the ethnographer may prove to be an attractive alternative to the scholarship written in the past. Stated differently, I believe such a parochial study of a relatively unimportant region has transcendent value, one that confirms the intellectual and moral spirit of those who changed how we understand the history of what is now called the postcolonial world. Through the filter of an empire that was far from "sick," and a society that was far from rigid as terms such as "traditional" "Islamic" and "tribal" imply, I suggest the alternative analytical strategies that deal with diversity may serve us well in a variety of other contexts as well. If one were to abandon the persistent stereotypes traditionally used to study Yemen, the Ottoman period would suddenly prove to be valuable to social scientists interested in questions of identity-formation, political and commercial networks, state-building and nationalism.

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[1] Paul Dresch spends much time elaborating a social hierarchy in Yemeni rural areas that has proven to be far too empirical and literal and not critical enough to be helpful in understanding Yemen's past. See Dresch, *Tribes, Government and History in Yemen*, 75-157.

[2] Imam Yahya's official historian has noted the role of merchants in opposing his patron's rule during the late Ottoman period, see 'Abd al-Wasi' al-Wasi'i, *Ta'rikh al-Yaman* (Cairo: al-Matba'at al-Salafiyya, 1928), 121.

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The study of Ottoman Yemen could also offer to a larger audience the important methodological correctives that have relevance beyond Yemen and the nineteenth century. Administrative routines within Istanbul-based bureaucracies, for example, established a means of inquiry and bureaucratic "seeing" that has apparently migrated from the official document to how historians have understood Yemeni actors. By redirecting the emphasis, we may find new ways of appreciating imperial rule altogether. As Bernard S. Cohn has demonstrated, categories of colonial knowledge set the terms in which opposition to colonial power could function and in which colonialism itself could be critiqued.[1] Ottomanists, unfortunately have not readily appreciated this. Depictions of Yemeni resistance to Ottoman rule were routinely denied a coherent place on the analytical scale of Empire; rather they were compartmentalized to fit an imperial vernacular of rule and repression. Subsequently, present-day Turkish historians have reproduced the categories of displacement that affirmed Ottoman sovereign "rights" to conduct oppressive campaigns against their "rebellious" subjects. In the process, they have confused currently held anti-Arab sentiments prevalent in Turkey with events in the past.[2] Unfortunately, those writing the historical record of Yemen today have not appreciated this irony. Contemporary Turkish, Yemeni and Western social scientists and historians have adopted the discourse of marginality that situates them (and the complicit audience) far away from the developmental backwardness of such (in general Arab) "tribal" societies that are supposedly still functioning at some level as they did in the nineteenth century.[3]

There must be greater emphasis on the fact that power in Yemen, from the Imam down to local shaykhs is contested. By suggesting Yemeni society is not static, but in a process of constant change, as much as European societies were during the same period, we conceptually open up new avenues of interpretation that allow us to reconsider the parameters of modernity. Asking new questions of the late Ottoman period in Yemen allows us to discover that human beings are not rigidly inclined to any one standard of interaction entombed in "tradition" and immune from modern sentiments and agency. If there is any hope in adequately giving voice to the vast majority of humanity, as scholars influenced along the lines of the Subaltern Group often attempt to do, it is necessary to abandon categories that seek to erase the contingencies revealed above. As will be demonstrated in greater detail in the next chapter, customs, social allegiances, religious associations and legal traditions are fluid, reflecting the contingencies that make up life, a fact that has similar consequences to our appreciation of events that take place far away from the Arabian Peninsula.

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[1]Bernard S. Cohn, "The Census, Social Structure and Objectification in South Asia," in Cohn, *An Anthropologist among the Historians and Other Essays* (Delhi, 1987), 224-54.

[2]We therefore have studies on so-called "peripheral" groups that take on a coherence that has been criticized in African and Latin American studies. See Selçuk Akşin Somel, "Osmanlı modernleşme döneminde periferik nüfus gruplari," *Toplum ve Bilim* 83 (1999/2000): 178-201.

[3]See for instance, İhsan Sırma, *Osmanlı Devletinin Yıkılışında Yemen İsyanları*. (Istanbul: Beyan Yayınları, 1994).

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ALL WAS NOT QUIET ON THE SOUTHERN FRONT: YEMEN'S SOCIAL HIERARCHIES AND THE ROLE OF THE OTTOMAN STATE, 1911-1918

A common error in historico-political analysis consists in an inability to find the correct relation between what is organic and what is conjunctural. This leads to presenting causes as immediately operative which in fact only operate indirectly, or to asserting that the immediate causes are the only effective ones....In the first case there is an overestimation of mechanical causes, in the second an exaggeration of the voluntarist and individual element.[1]

Over the years, the literature in the field of Middle Eastern studies has seen a number of paradigmatic shifts accompanied by fascinating and intellectually stimulating debates. What has always been troubling about these shifts, however, is the persistent use of social models which are meant to characterize the limits of the Arab/Islamic world and its inhabitants.

There have certainly been important critical interventions into the pervasive marking of the Middle East subject along such essentialist lines.[2] These critiques have failed, however, to modify the vocabulary used by Western-trained social scientists and historians; a fact made clear by the persistent reference to studies on "Islamic" and "tribal" societies which base their findings on the mechanical representations of this complex region's "social order." I continue this critique in order to reiterate the often brushed aside dangers of using ontologically constructed analytical units that seek, in the case of this chapter, to assert ahistorically, a social hierarchy meant to explain the developments of the last quarter century of the Ottoman occupation of Yemen.[3] By exploring how categorical rigidities have impacted the study of

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[1]Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith (New York: International Publisher, 1971), 178.

[2]Lila Abu-Lughod, "Anthropology's Orient: The Boundaries of Theory on the Arab World," in Hisham Sharabi (ed.), *Theory, Politics and the Arab World: Critical Responses*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 81-131.

[3]I stress "non-western" for this self-identifying academic mantra has its pejorative uses among those who evoke it. See William E. Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 16-35.

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Yemen, one of the more popular locales to study "tribes, shaykhs and imams," I hope to inspire new inquiry into the vocabulary of the field and its appropriateness for the twenty-first century.[1]

As explained at length throughout this book, the use of categories which originate in the age of European imperial domination persists in ways that consciously or unconsciously reconstitute boundaries between what critics in post-colonial theory would suggest are the collective self (Britain and Imperial Europe) and the imagined other.[2] In response, the social sciences in general have undergone great scrutiny over the last thirty years, mainly from those situating themselves in a feminist and post-colonial discourse.[3] Unfortunately, the impact of these studies have been minimal when it comes to dealing with historical agents and those living today in the Middle East.[4] European-trained practitioners still consistently conduct historical or social research on the Middle East and its inhabitants in ways that treat the mass of humanity as passive parts of a larger, constituted whole. The evocation of vertically conceived social hierarchies in places like Yemen demonstrate how models are consistently used as tools of standardization and have been re-employed in order to sustain undercurrents of rigid perspectives in a globalizing world. That tropes about a Middle Eastern "patriarchal" society end up in far more sinister ways in popular culture, suggests that academics must begin to take more responsibility for what they write.[5]

To demonstrate just how detrimental such idealized terms actually are, not only to living human beings who face stereotypes that marginalize them in an increasingly interconnected world, but to their past, I will deepen my critical focus by using late Ottoman Yemen's society and its complicated and shifting dynamics of local power as my case study. I am concerned that the image of Yemen that informs historical as well as sociological analysis may be shaped to a large extent by news stories and how journalists essentialize an "Arab social order" rather than attempting to seek alternative perspectives on life, identity and their contingencies. Clichés around a kidnapping of Western

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[1]Yemen has been identified as one of those last bastions of pre-modern societies in the Arab world and since the 1970s its paradigmatic social structures have been widely studied. See among others: Najwa Adra, "Qabyala: The Tribal Concept in the Central Highlands of the Yemen Arab Republic," Temple University, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1982 and Robert Burrowes, *The Yemen Arab Republic: The Politics of Development, 1962-86* (Boulder: Westview, 1987).

[2]See for instance David B. Downing and Susan Bazargan, (eds) *Image and Ideology in Modern/Postmodern Discourse*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991).

[3]See Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds), *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993) and for a watershed in critical readings of ethnography see James Clifford and George E. Marcus, (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[4]Larbi Sadiki's study on recent subaltern political resistance demonstrates the pitfalls of such prejudices in analyzing contemporary politics in the region. Larbi Sadiki, "Popular Uprisings and Arab Democratization" *IJMES* 32:1 (2000): 71-95.

[5]See in particular, Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1996).

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tourists by "pre-modern tribesmen" who are under the control of powerful "chiefs, shaykhs and imams" make great copy and certainly penetrate far deeper into an audiences' collective unconscious than Yemen's other pressing questions of say, territorial disputes with Eritrea or water maintenance.[1] These resilient models of Yemeni society located in the media are not harmless, however, to how historians ask questions about the past. These tropes permeate both the general reading public's uncritical understanding of the outside word and an academic community which shapes expectations and affects the cross-cultural translations that often inform the media.

One way of looking at this problematic is from a perspective taken by James Shapiro.[2] Crudely situated in such narratives, Yemen's place in the disciplines that study the Middle East in general has been determined by an almost cartographic perception of marginality, both geographic and cultural.[3] As a consequence, few reliable studies have surfaced to help shed light on this forlorn corner of imperial history and have thus intensified a perception of Yemen's developmental and sociological backwardness both today and in the past. Even more ominously, while from one side of the mouth the international community speak of democratic standards, the perceptions of how Arab societies are "supposed" to function, many conveniently accept the imposition of "strongmen" who dominate local politics at the expense of an inherently more complex and contested political environment. The case of Saddam Hussain in Iraq is but the most obvious case.

As is clear from sophisticated critiques of past academic production, the central problem stems from how the "Middle East" itself is treated as a comprehensive, fixed sociological space, a unit distinct from other regions in the world on account of its cultural essence.[4] In much the same way as the exotification of the Muslim/Arab woman has determined the nature of inquiry in gender relations, the characterization of the region in respect to a "tribal" sociology has often set the terms on which social scientists and historians treat their respective subjects. I argue such narrational tools help reaffirm professional authority over the subject, often sacrificing legitimate inquiry

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[1] See Paul Dresch and Bernard Haykel, "Stereotypes and Political Styles: Islamists and Tribesfolk in Yemen." *IJMES,* 27 (1995): 405-431.

[2] Michael J. Shapiro, *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War,* (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 15-20.

[3] The Turkish historian, acting as the classic parvenu, eagerly adopts such mediatic discourses to situate himself (and the complicit audience) far away from the developmental backwardness of such societies. On Yemen, Turkish scholarship and popular literature have been notoriously transparent. See for instance, Mim Kemal Öke and Lütfullah Karaman, *Milli Mücadele Dönemi'nde Yemen-Türkiye İlişkileri: İmam Yahya-Mustafa Kemal Paşa Yazışmaları* (Istanbul: Arba, 1997).

[4] For an important early contribution see Bryan Turner, *Weber and Islam* (London: Routledge, 1974). For a recent study on literary representations of Muslim women, an issue receiving greater inspection as of late, see Mohja Kahf, *Western Representations of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).

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into economic or more important still, the micro-politics of daily life in the process. Not surprisingly, such typologies of social order, by force of their logic alone require a detailed ethnography of such "tribal ways" before any historical and political analysis, if any at all, can take place. This model of social order has become paradigmatic in the works of anthropologists working on a region that spans from Morocco to Iran and has consequentially determined the nature of analysis of so-called "tribal societies" such as Yemen in respect to its nineteenth and early twentieth century history.[1]

Again, I attribute these resilient fixations to observer/subject dynamics identified in other disciplines. Much as Alan Soble has argued in respect to the study of women and the world of natural sciences, work on Yemen (and the Middle East as a whole) has a tendency to focus on the properties of its population that rely on imperial-era categories such as tribes, naturalizing in the process, the experiences, interests and social ties of these people. This in turn reinforces a homogenization of Yemenis as objects of research.[2] Such epistemological foundations strengthen the author's (and audience's) positionality in respect to observed subjects.

Dealing with Diversity in the Middle East

As will be made clear throughout, identifying historical actors within rigidly bonded sociopolitical units distorts the complexity of day-to-day interactions between local communities and in the case studied here, the Ottoman imperial state in Yemen. Attempting to identify specific actors at particular conjunctures through the use of transcendent sociological identifiers such as the Zaydi imam obscures the internal tensions that erupt within the geographical and political boundaries of specified spaces of influence among individuals engaged in local politics.[3] Local actors are not dutifully attached to any one "tradition" of negotiation/interaction as is so often assumed by social scientists. Rather, local structures of power are products of people adaptive to conditions as dictated contemporaneously, often vastly contrary to what ideal

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[1]Innovative work in the field has attracted interest, unfortunately it is usually outside Middle Eastern studies. See Lila Abu-Lughod, "The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women," *American Ethnologist* XVII (1990): 41-55.

[2]Alan Soble, "The Political Epistemology of 'Masculine' and 'Feminine,'" in Mary Vetterling-Braggin, ed., *"Femininity," "Masculinity," and "Androgyny": A Modern Philisophical Discussion* (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams and Company, 1982).

[3]It must be stated that the discursive resonance of tribal models pervades even Arabic language literature focusing on Yemen; hierarchies, in the process, are reimposed in the world by evoking Western models of governance and social order. Compare Fadil 'Ali Ahmad Abu Ghanim, *al-Qabila wa al-Dawla fi al-Yaman* (Sana'a': Dar al 'Anad, 1990) in particular 258-260 and 'Abd al-Malik al-Maqrami, *al-Ta'rîkh al-ijtima'i li al-thawrah al-yamaniyya.* (Beirut: Dar al-Fikr al-Mu'asir, 1991).

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models impose on the analysis of events.[1] More specifically here, the reign of Zaydi Imam Yahya (1904-1948) speaks perfectly of how academic presumptions of the social and political roles of assumed leaders of communities with unambiguous and fixed loyalties interacted with the world ordered by imperial rivalries.

That these paradigms are embedded in the practice of authoritative studies is even more remarkable when considering the origins of the categories.[2] It was the very nature of imperial rule and the accompanying requisites of the management of subject populations that led to the field of anthropology in the first place.[3] This fixation on the universal order of the non-European world has been a product of nineteenth century practitioners of the social sciences who sought to charge words with the task of serving as transparent and unambiguous signs of "things" that made up "reality." This proves especially important for Yemen as operational conventions which dominated "Western" modes of colonial administration infiltrated Ottoman government practice since the early nineteenth century. This is most clearly documented by recent works of imperial historians interested in late Ottoman social policy.[4] While such discourses of colonial/imperial power have been refreshingly analyzed, I fear the operational logic of the imperial state has prejudiced historians and social scientists studying the non-Western world in general, and of Yemen in particular. The social and political role of the Zaydi Imam is still the dominant social and political organizational focus informing research on the region, in large part because practitioners still look at the past through eyes of the bureaucratic, imperial state which sought to narrow its administrative interaction with the subject population through surrogate representatives of that population. The result is a failure to explore the intricacies of daily life which prove to contradict the assumed order of essentialized social spaces and just how such interactions with an imperial power actually helped make or break individual claims to power within their communities.

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[1] A study more than thirty years ago demonstrated perfectly the contingent and malleable nature of communal order and how a number of factors can lead to significant shifts in human interaction. See Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) especially 1-13.

[2] See for instance, Stefen A. Marglin and F. Apffel Marglin, (eds) *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture and Resistance*, (Oxford: Claredon, 1990), 1-28 and on the empirical constructedness of another sociological category, ethnicity, see Marcus Banks, *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions* (London: Routledge, 1996) especially 161-181.

[3] See among others, Michael Gilsenan who discusses the relationship ethnography has with imperialism in his *Recognizing Islam: Religion and Society in the Modern Arab World.* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 142-150 and for an interesting look into German developments, Woodruff D. Smith, *Politics and the Sciences of Culture in Germany, 1840-1920.* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

[4] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998) and my colleague at NYU, Thomas Kühn, "Ordering the Past of Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1914." *Turcica* (forthcoming).

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How Ottoman Rule May have Shaped the Future of Imam Yahya

Gyan Prakash has correctly suggested that the flirtation with nineteenth century positivism was not a monopoly of the "West."[1] Indeed, Ottoman officials, as bureaucrats of other European empires, had their own understanding of imperial order that is reflected in how it ruled distant territories such as Yemen.[2] Yemen in respect to those who administered it, just as perhaps their British and French counterparts treating African or Asian possessions, was a distant, savage land, helping Ottoman men of culture situate themselves on the hierarchy of civilization which reflects the classic performative move of Europeans in the nineteenth century in regards to their subject peoples.[3]

Studies on Ottoman bureaucratic discourse, while still in its infancy, are revealing a tendency of the Ottoman elite to use social typologies to create the necessary conceptual difference between themselves and those they ruled.[4] Yemen for this reason alone is a remarkable case study of these performative juxtapositions. The number of memoirs and newspaper articles depicting the bureaucrat's tour of duty to Yemen as "adventures," fits in with themes dominating the popular literature of the day in the rest of Europe and are a testament to the power of the imagery of savage, tribal Yemen in the creating of a late Ottoman identity. The important factor to note here is that such popular conventions have left a considerable mark on how social scientists and historians today represent societies on similar conceptual maps of near/far, developed/traditional.[5]

The Ottoman imperial experience serves as an ideal prism through which many of the complexities of Yemeni society are highlighted and a new approach to studying history can be explored. I carry out my, by no means, exhaustive critique of the literature on Yemen, by studying the period immediately following the Da'an treaty of 1911 until the end of World War I.

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[1]Gyan Prakash, "After Colonialism" in *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements*. ed by Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 3-17.

[2]See for instance Memduh Muhammad, *Miftah-i Yaman* (Istanbul: 1330) and Ahmed Raşid, *Tarih-i Yemen ve Sana'a'*, 2 volumes (Istanbul: 1291/1875).

[3]Klaus Kreiser, "Abdülgani Seni—ein aufgeklärter Imperialist im Jemen (1909-1910)" in *Jemen-Report* 1 (1989): 11-15.

[4]George Duby wrote convincingly that imagination greatly influences the reconstruction of history, a product which is most evident in Yemeni narratives that rely on conversational renditions which use anachronisms to depict the past. While they have certain rhetorical value at the moment of transaction, it may not be helpful to resign oneself to such narratives for a representation of the period in World War I. See George Duby, "Histoire sociale et idéologies des sociétés." Jacques le Goff and Pierre Nora, eds. *Faire de l'histoire, I: Nouveaux problèmes*, (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 203-230.

[5]Farah's exasperating habit of using derogatory and imprecise labels like "rascal" for nameless individuals rebelling against Ottoman rule highlights the epistemological limitations of past studies on Yemen. Caesar Farah, *The Sultan's Yemen: Nineteenth-Century Challenges to Ottoman Rule*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 212-273.

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The treaty, signed between representatives of the Yemeni Zaydi community—Imam Yahya in particular—and the Ottoman Imperial state led by the Albanian, Marshall Ahmet İzzet Pasha, marks a watershed for the larger canvas of Ottoman Yemen. It formally ended hostilities between the leader of a dominant sectarian community and the imperial power claiming diplomatic sovereignty over the whole of the territory. In return for his cooperation, Istanbul conceded significant local powers to the Imam, including a greater role in adjudicating locally through his version the Shari'a.[1] What I will demonstrate in the course of this chapter is that Imam Yahya, far from the dominate Yemeni player as suggested in Arabic sources, needed this treaty as much as the Ottomans did to protect a vicarious position in local political circles. I select this period because it enables me to highlight some of the inherent complexities of Yemeni society during a period in which the Ottoman Empire and the Islamic world are generally depicted as in a state of decline. This is a period which demonstrates that while World War I has a time line that fits a Euro-centric criteria, the total war in Yemen between subject and ruler has deeper roots.

Although the war years has been largely skimmed over in both Arabic and European works, through primary research, I can summarize that the war and its links to imperialism created an interesting compilation of social, political and economic conditions for the diverse population of the Ottoman territory of Yemen. I am not suggesting this period represented a break from a more predictable and orderly past and thus reinforcing the epistemological assumptions of social scientists and historians fixated on categories. I also do not want to suggest Ottoman "reforms" introduced into Yemen reflect a form of creeping modernity. Instead, I believe we should see the Ottoman period as but a chapter of a continuing process of change, adaptation and contestation. Sociological patterns that have often been glossed over with crude Weberian and Durkheimian typologies simplifying Yemeni (and generally Islamic) society into neatly identifiable units—city, country, peasant, tribes, Zaydi, and Shafi'i—prove to be highly fluid in their represented forms.[2] It is key to remember that our units of analysis—in the case of Yemen they are usually framed in legal, ideological and tribal terms—never represent static entities. The fluidity of daily life in Ottoman Yemen during World War I highlights the necessity to abandon deterministic analytical markers we study in the abstract

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[1] Sayyid Mustafa Salim, *Takwin al-Yaman al-Hadith: al-Yaman wa al-Imam Yahya, 1904-1948.* 4th ed. (Cairo: Ma'had al-Buhuth wa-l-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1971), 135-161.

[2] Numerous studies have demonstrated the importance of exposing the role, in say early modern Italy, played by ties of kinship, clan and faction in the study of state institutions. I would suggest identifying the terrign of Yemen's micropolitics would provide equally helpful insight in desolving the tribe. See for instance William J. Connel, "Clientelismo e Stato territoriale: Il potere florentino a Pistoia nel XV secolo," *Società e storia* 14 (1991): 523-43 and Osvaldo Raggio, "La politica della parentela: Conflitti locali e commissari in Liguria orientale (secoli XVI-XVII)," *Quaderni storici* vol. 21 (1986): 721-57.

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during undergraduate and graduate school. Through the filter of an empire that is dynamic and multifaceted, I will join others in suggesting alternative analytical strategies which may serve us well in a variety of other contexts that are equally dominated by professional rigidities and powerful provincialisms.[1]

The tribal idiom in particular, is utilized in the political rhetoric of Yemeni leaders and readily adopted by scholars, but, as in societies where the state is the identifiable analytical unit, there are in fact, dozens of fragments which limit the value of such universal terms.[2] The introduction of an imperial element, (during the war there were three) provides the ideal vehicle for conceptually disrupting these analytically identifiable structures. During the war, as will be shown below in the case of the Ta'iz Sancak and the northern highlands, new strata of local power are created out of the already fragmented social structures such as Sufi orders in the south and the "tribe" in northern Yemen. Tribes or religious orders, both before and during the war, just will not fit into any neat, generalizable social, economic or political pattern. I am therefore, indirectly, attempting to use the case of Yemen to continue problematizing the theoretical principles the discipline still ascribes to social and political history in the Middle East.[3] It should be added that while it is unproductive to avoid using sectarian identifications and broad tribal affiliations all together, for they do exist at a certain level in some form of social consciousness, I wish to qualify my use of such identifiable units by integrating deeper considerations: I attempt to locate the contingencies that illicit transformations, evolutions and contradictions rather than focus on continuities. The key is to capture the moments of transition in order to avoid using unnecessarily, essentializations that animate self-identity in Yemen over the long term.

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[1]See Beshira Doumani's study for an excellent example of how we should be reconfiguring our criteria for observing changes in the Ottoman imperial context See Beshira Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Nablus, 1700-1900.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

[2]This critique is applicable to a number of modes of identification: nationalism, class, gender and ethnicity. For informative examples see Eric Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 130-131 and Joan Wallach Scott, *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

[3]Many Yemeni scholars—Shawqani and later, al-Hibshi—identified distinctive sociological units in Yemeni society, reducing the northern tribes to a unit inherently disengaged from the intellectual/statist tradition situated in Sana'a'. On Shawqani, see Hussayn al-'Amri, *The Yemen in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Political and Intellectual History.* (New York: Ithaca Press, 1985), 122 and 'Abdullah b. Muhammad al-Hibshi, ed. *Hawliyyat Yamaniyya min Sanah 1225 h. ila Sanah 1316 h.* (Sana'a': Wizarat al-I'lam wa-l-Thaqafa, 1980), 4. Among others, Richard Tapper stresses that the continuous interaction between countryside and administrative centers are not exceptions but rules to understanding societies with large rural populations. Richard Tapper (ed.), *The Conflict of Tribe and State in Iran and Afghanistan* (New York: 1983), 4.

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Imperial Contest

The conventional focus of historians who have attempted to explore Yemen's Ottoman past is to concentrate on the imperial aspect of the experience. Imperial policies spanning decades are certainly valid topics of exploration as a variety of players—Italy, France, Great Britain and the Ottoman State—get involved in Southern Arabia. Unfortunately, much of the literature studying imperial rivalries takes a decidedly externalist perspective, ignoring local populations or, at best, portraying them as hapless pawns to the manipulations of the great powers.

I would suggest we explore a more internalist approach to researching social AND structural transformations in the Ottoman Empire's territories. Yemen is a wonderful case to study such interactions. After consultation of both British and Ottoman documents, local factors prove to be resistant to readily confined sociological categories social scientists like to attach in order to measure change/stasis. Examples of Ottoman efforts to solidify imperial control of Yemen proved unsuccessful largely due to the fact that Istanbul's immediate relationship as an imperial power with its subjects did not correspond with realities on the ground.[1] These failures can not only be explained through simplistic dichotomies distinguishing the native and imperial administrator. There are much more complicated processes taking place that go beyond the imperial mind to the administrative possibilities of Empire. What Jon Mandaville fails to capture in his brief foray into Ottoman Yemen is the decidedly fluid interchange between the state and its subject, something beginning to receive note in the growing field of studies on European imperialism.[2] The application of, for instance, Abdülhamid II (or Imam Yahya's) dictates on forms of social practice or organization are often translated locally to confirm or reconfigure, depending on the situation, both discursive dominance and the political application of that domination. As will be noted throughout, universalistic categories fail to reflect local realities once we abandon the self-affirming logic of their empirical application.

Tribalism in War

In attempt to demonstrate the need to move beyond comfortable analytical abstractions used in the past which give privilege to the imperial

[1]That said, early efforts to form alliances with locals seen by the English as "their tribes," caused significant concern in Bombay, the operational headquarters for British Aden. See PRO FO 78/2753 dated Bombay, 6 January 1873, India Office to Foreign Office, document 13.

[2]Jon Mandaville, "Memduh Pasha and Aziz Bey: Ottoman Experience in Yemen." in B.R. Pridham (ed.) *Contemperary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background.* (London, 1984): 20-33.

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capital's perspective, I will again explore briefly the impact of Muhammad Idrisi's residence in the 'Asir. Idrisi's impact in highland politics is clear when one begins to follow the terms of contention between Imam Yahya, the spiritual and political claimant to power of a highly fragmented Zaydi community, and other paramount figures in highland politics. While tensions between local centers of power and the Imam's growing pretensions of state-building will be dealt with elsewhere, it is sufficient at this point to suggest Idrisi empowered a number of forces in the northern highlands which were seeking their own place in the Zaydi pantheon of power. Such a dynamism translated into a regional rivalry over political resources between Idrisi and the Imam which empowered those local elites who were able to play off the political aspirations of both.[1]

The purpose of studying the war period is to attempt to illuminate a particularly complex social environment with all its tensions to emphasize a methodological concern. It by no means suggests Yemen, as European-trained historians of modernity wish to constantly suggest, experienced "modernity" by force of European "penetration." Yemen was never a simple, sociologically rigid, uniform entity. It certainly experienced change over decades and Ottoman imperialism, as suggested by a number of historians, did have its imprint on local life. But the underlying theme in this polemic is that some assumptions based on idealizations of pre-modern, Islamic societies do not do justice to the complexities inherent in human communities. Peter Gran's provocative and ground-breaking work attempted to correct conventional wisdom on the origins and periodization of Egyptian "modernization"; I want this chapter to take the next step in directly challenging the tools that intellectually limit historians' ability to conceive such a paradigm shift in respect to non-European societies.[2] Much like the case with Ottoman administrators on the ground, the widespread use of imperial jargon among British observers in 'Aden, in the transparent colonial/imperial attempt to instrumentalize human subjects as identified in a number of studies on imperialism, gradually loses its conviction in the documentation. The realities of social complexities related in intelligence reports used extensively in this chapter suggest a far less regulated social terrain than the terminology (the same uncritically used by many social scientists today) would like to assume.[3] Accepting the concerns raised over the last twenty years about the Western academy forces us to question the intellectual viability of such persistent terms as we attempt to represent anew Yemen's social history.

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[1] A helpful way of looking at this rivalry is through the work of Anthony Leeds, "Locality Power in Relation to Supralocal Institutions," in *Urban Anthropology*, edited by Aiden Southall, (New York, 1973), 15-42.

[2] Peter Gran, *The Islamic Roots of Capitalism*, Reprint, (Syracuse, 1999).

[3] See British Foreign Office intelligence reports compiled by Captains F. M. Hunter and C. W. H. Sealey, in *An Account of the Aden Tribes in the Vicinity of Aden* (London, 1986).

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Ottoman Yemen

Situated in the heart of a crossroad of trade routes and geo-strategic hot spots, Yemen represented a vital interest for a number of imperial powers at the turn-of-the-century. It must be noted that the social, economic and political diversity of the region, coupled by contradictory imperial projects on both sides of the Red Sea and their hinterland serves as a clear example of how complex the area is for historians of the period.[1] Unfortunately, the literature that studies imperial rivalries in the area have taken a decidedly externalist perspective, ignoring local factors by failing to integrate local communities into the narrative. Rather than exploring the internal tensions and administrative reactions to local communities, most studies resort to implying whole populations are hapless pawns to the manipulations of great powers struggling to control access to the Suez Canal and the route to Asia.[2]

While the force of imperial states and their variables of fiscal reform, investments in infrastructure, telegraph lines and military barracks such as those introduced by Istanbul since the 1870s have transformed aspects of life in places like Yemen, evoking administrative transformations and imperial intentions without reflection of how local communities reacted to such measures prove faulty. The underlying assumption in such readings of history between presumably unequal adversaries is that local, indigenous communities are being acted upon from positions of rigidly formed social structures incapable of adopting to the variables introduced by a modern state.[3] The unbending, traditional social structures that undergo painful confrontation with modernity simply do not exist beyond the comfortable categories imposed by social scientists.

The often cited resistance by locals should serve notice to imperial historians who have attempted to find some generalizable trends in the Ottoman state and its ideological claims. Local resistance must of have had some impact on how Ottoman administrators courted perspective allies in Yemen and such issues will clearly be played out in the course of the war where British efforts to incite internal strife compliments the internal diversity

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[1]The study of Italian interests in Yemen has all but been ignored and deserves far greater research in order to understand their impact on a number of issues raised below. For a fair study on Italian interests in the Red Sea region see John Baldry, "Al-Yaman and the Turkish Occupation 1849-1914," in *Arabica* XXIII (1976): 156-195 and John Baldry, "The Turkish-Italian War in the Yemen, 1911-1912." *Arabian Studies* III : 51-65. For insight into how the Ottomans saw their Italian rivals, consult BBA HR.HMS.ISO 26/7-1, dated 9 July 1911, No. 27623 "Note on the strategy of Italy," document 3a.

[2]Frederick F. Anscombe, *The Ottoman Gulf: The Creation of Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar.* (New York, 1997); and Faruq 'Uthman Abazah, *'Adin wa al-Siyasa al-Brit¸aniyya fi al-Bahr al-Ahmar, 1839-1918.* (Cairo, 1987).

[3]This is made clear in any number of files, including the correspondence between Ottoman officials in Yemen and the Sublime Porte. See BBA HR.SYS 85/21 dated 10 July 1902, documents 4 and 5.

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that literature to date has failed to recognize. Historians, both Yemeni and European have insisted on retaining analytical units based on sectarian identities and tribal loyalties to explain this resistance to Ottoman rule. According to such work, while Yemen was in revolt, it was riding a wave of national-unity on the back of an Imam who used his religious and tribal networks (connoting primordial claims) to secure loyalty. While the less sophisticated examples are easy to brush aside, extremely competent and influential figures in the academic world from influential institutions perpetuate the validity of such social categories by patronizing a new generation of practitioners and reify a body of knowledge which has become paradigmatic in the field.

This fixation on the universal has been a product of the efforts in nineteenth century practitioners of the social sciences to charge words with the task of serving as transparent and unambiguous signs of "things" that made up "reality."[1] Of course Foucault went on to identify the process in which the inadequacy of universal standards of man were simply cast as "borderline" cases and "monsters," a move that lent moral weight to terms social scientists utilized when studying the outside world.[2] While the links between the rise of the sciences of culture, Orientalism and imperialism have been made in Europe but that has had little impact on how many European-based anthropologists in the Middle East relate to the subjects of their studies. As will be noted throughout, the application of imperial power is often entwined with methodological biases harbored by colleagues in the fields of sociology and anthropology who still apply uncritically universalistic categories that simply fail to reflect local realities because they do not concede discursive autonomy from dominant narratives located in imperial archives.[3] After consultation of both British and Ottoman documents and maintaining a healthy critical distance from the use of universalizing categories, in particular the notion of tribes, I observed a local population both adaptable and informative to the Ottoman experience.

The case of Muhammad Idrisi whose role in a larger Red Sea sociocultural realm serves as an interesting conjuncture to events in Yemen is important for it provides most clearly the dynamics at work during the war. It could be said that the war provided a variety of profitable economic, social as well as political opportunities for a plethora of actors whose tribal and sectarian identities, if accepted, would have precluded them from independent actions. I suggest, whatever underlying ideological or cultural structure that

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[1]Ian Hacking, "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers." *Humanities in Society*, 3-4 (1990): 279-295.

[2]Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Science.* (New York, 1970).

[3]Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York, 1993).

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may have created the socially cohesive logic to analytical units discussed by historians and social scientists alike, the conditions under study here reveal those logics do not prove resilient in many cases.

Beyond the economic inducements which were sharpened by starvation caused by British economic blockades that lasted until 1918, Idrisi's growing political influence and his reputation as a dedicated anti-Ottoman "rebel," contributed to a complicated political environment in the highlands of Yemen. The stipend and British-supplied arms in addition to his other attributes enticed many to abandon their assumed fixed sociocultural positions within the matrix of Yemeni life: Zaydi shaykhs from a number of so-called tribal sections severed any nominal allegiance with the Imam, their tribe, and often their immediate family during the course of the post-Da'an period to act as virtual mercenaries serving Idrisi's cause and by default, the infidel British.[1] It is important to note that there is ample evidence of such cross-sectarian, regional and productive shifts occurring throughout Yemen's history, reflecting a vibrant terrain in which communities and individuals interact in complicated ways, often resulting is transformative rivalries which induce long-term political change.[2]

I would suggest our fixation on the tribal idiom, in particular, to attempt to understand these social relations and fix them along a vocabulary of order obscures the political nature of communal/individual interactions and unnecessarily taints our historical perspective, privileging a small section of Yemeni society at the expense of these frequent "anomalies."[3] Cultural and linguistic tools of unity which compose the segmentary logic of the tribe fail to account for the micro-dynamics of individual acts.[4] Only Martha Mundy has

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[1]Some would suggest Yahya commanded religious legitimacy using his call of a "Jihad" on the British as evidence. See Hans Kruse, "Takfir und Jihad Bei den Zaiditen des Jemen" *Welt des Islams* XXIII-XXIV (1984): 424-457; and 'Ali b. 'Abd Allah.al-Iryani, *Sirat al-Imam Muhammad b. Yahya Hamid al-Din*, 2 vols., Muhammad Salihiyya (ed.), (Amman, 1996) for a variety of documents affirming the Imam's pious credentials. The case of Idrisi shows such language has far more play among European-influenced academics than those on the ground in Yemen.

[2]In the period immediately following World War I, for example, individual members of a number of "tribes" frequently jumped from one patron to another, completely ignoring the logic of tribal units so central to explaining Yemen's social history in the past. See Muhammad b. Muhammad Zabara, *A'immat al-Yaman bi al-Qarn al-Rabi' 'Ashar*. 3 vols. (Cairo: Matba'at al-Salafiyya, 1956): 3, 27-29, 76-90, 119; 'Abdullah al-Shamahi, *Sirat al-'Arifin ila Idrak Ikhtiyarat Amir al-Mu'minin*. (Sana'a': Matba'at al-Ma'arif, 1937), 112-114, 173; and 'Abdullah b. 'Abd al-Karim al-Jirafi, *al-Muqtataf min ta'rikh al-Yaman* (Cairo: 'Isa al-Babi al-Halabi, 1951), 237.

[3]Other studies have located the leveling tendencies of Western positivism from the transformations in interactive exchange in eighteenth century Europe: See for instance, Witold Kula, *Measures and Men*, trans R. Szreter (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986) and Tore Frangsmyr et al. *The Quantifying Spirit in the Eighteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991).

[4]For a useful corrective see Steve Caton, "Power, Persuasion, and Language: A Critique of the Segmentary Model in the Middle East," *IJMES*, XIX (1987): 77-102. I strategically problematize below the use of the category, tribe, as Paul Dresch, in particular, has used in his brief treatment of the second Ottoman period, 1878-1918. Paul Dresch, *Tribes, Government and History in Yemen*, 219-224.

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adequately identified this pervasive reality, identifying the epistemological pitfalls of the segmentary project to the reading of Yemeni history.[1] In respect to Yemen at the time, the combination of Idrisi's privileged access to the outside world, the increasing economic impoverishment of the Imam's territories and the Imam's subsequent inability to sustain his economic obligations to his allies intensified the decentralized political field exasperated by the war and highlighted the dispersed political character of local life.[2]

An interesting consequence of such complexities are the multi-tiered rivalries, completely misread by the few who speak of them, rivalries which animated highland Yemen society at the time.[3] Many lower-level communal leaders (shaykhs) successfully broke free from past structures of control and through the patronage of the outside forces brought in by the war emerged as a new generation of regional leaders.[4] Idrisi in particular was able to exploit this current of change and champion individuals in the interior in need of patronage. The dynamics of internal tensions between Zaydi leaders, the shifting demands of powerful merchants and a semi-permanently based Ottoman Seventh Army worked in Idrisi's favor. Those who allied with Idrisi represented a cross-section of Yemeni life as he represented a beacon of stability in a world turned upside down by an alliance between an imperial occupier and the Imam and maritime embargoes bringing death and starvation.

According to the literature the Imam supposedly won widespread autonomy from the Ottoman state after the Da'an accords including the right to collect taxes. The Imam's ability to govern, however, was on the whole disrupted by shifts in local power animated by new allegiances with an "outsider," Idrisi, at the beginning of 1912.[5] Demonstrative of this fact was many of Idrisi's allies were fragments of large families that had made up the core of the Imam's power base, making it impossible for the Imam to raise troops and confusing the historian.[6] Again, the political conditions in the

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[1]Martha Mundy, *Domestic Government: Kinship, Community and Polity in North Yemen.* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), 5.

[2]Such conditions, it should be added, were not dissimilar to much of Europe prior to the consolidation of state power. Historians of the Middle East should note the reluctance to use tribal analogies in Europe historiography despite the similarities in conditions; tribes belong to historically backward societies. Such distinctions influence my reading of Yemeni history.

[3]Muhmmad al-Hibshi, *Masadir al-fikr al-'Arabi al-Islami fi al-Yaman* (Sana'a', 1983), 411-413.

[4]This was clear as well ten years earlier along the still unmarked frontier between British and Ottoman administrative districts, see BBA HR.SYS 85/4, dated 30 March 1901 for various documents recounting the first encounters in the Hawashib between a local leader and British forces.

[5]Report to General Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, Cairo from J.H. Stewert, Aden Protectorate September 7, 1917. in eds., Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen, 1798-1960* 6 vols. (London: Archive Edition, 1993): 6: 179.

[6]For an enlightening example of familial conflict and how the Ottomans capitalized in order to consolidate control, see BBA DH.EUM.EMN 89/29 1332.N.7

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highlands were animated by the abundance of patrons who could supply stipends, arms and prestige, outpacing the money-strapped Imam and his Ottoman allies. For the aspiring shaykh otherwise marginal in the political matrix of highland communities, Idrisi and his supporters in Aden represented an opportunity to scale the social and political hierarchies of highland society irrespective of academically imposed tribal, so-called traditional patterns.

On occasion, opposition to Imam Yahya and his allies, the Ottoman state, translated into short-term but noteworthy collaborations among malcontent Zaydis in the northern highlands. These political alliances between individual shaykhs had political consequences which serve as key markers to the nature of internal Yemeni politics. It is suggested however, that it was not a general ideological theme that provided the basis of such resistance. Rather, specific to geography and economic and political conditions, particular groupings would emerge as a result of individual events and fade off again when those conditions changed. One such incident motivated a temporary coalition of forces which, in fact, even transcended the frequently evoked Zaydi/Shafi'i barrier: The Abu Ra's incident of 1917.

In July of 1917 a prominent member of the Bakil confederation was executed for actions he took against the Ottoman state. The fact that Imam Yahya, who had already a difficult relationship with many Zaydi factions throughout the war did not intervene in the defense of "one of his own" represented an enormous symbolic breach of trust for many who had supported him. Imam Yahya according to the literature claimed judicial sovereignty in many parts of the highlands, drawing his legitimacy from the role of arbiter and guardian of Shari'a law, as he interpreted it. Indeed, as documents suggest, the Imam since Da'an saw it fit to intervene in everything from inheritance disputes to tax collecting and the trial, at least in the eyes of Zaydi shaykhs, must have been within his jurisdiction. The fact that the Imam did not, for what ever reason, assert his local duties as patron of Zaydi's and defended the occupying state in its decision speaks of factors that go beyond the banal exploration of tribal codes of behavior.

The execution of an Abu Ra's provides us with important insight into the political capacity of the Imam during the war vis-a-vis his political and military partners, the Ottoman state. I think the inability of the Imam to halt the execution, despite the fact it was bound to create enormous political fallback, reflected both how weak he really was in the decision-making processes concerning issues central to Ottoman interests in the area and that he was actually much more politically and militarily dependent on the Ottoman state than represented in the historiography.

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In view of this case, I wish to suggest a possible rationale for the Imam signing a treaty with the Ottoman state in 1911, a treaty which appears to historians to have been one made in desperation on the part of Istanbul. Unfortunately, long, expensive (in treasure and manpower) war in Yemen with its "spiritual leader" at the head of the rebellion sets the stage for an analysis which has failed to read into the events and conditions surrounding the treaty. I suggest a number of local factors were draining the Imam's capacity to maintain his struggle against the Ottoman state and Idrisi. There are a number of indications that point to tensions between the Imam's central allies before 1911, tensions that led to significant fissures in local politics that ultimately drove the Imam to sign Da'an, I argue from a position of weakness, a position which may have been understood by Ottoman officials as well. While the agreement explicitly hands over the Imam the right to claim sovereignty over Zaydi lands, implicitly, it links the Imam's precarious coercive power with the Ottoman army. It is clear from documents that before and after the agreement, he was in dire need of military assistance in his battles with local adversaries, something I expect the Ottoman regime in Yemen exploited to the full.

There are of course other incentives for the beleaguered Imam to forge an alliance with the Ottoman state. It should be added that the Ottoman Empire's extensive political networks and administrative infrastructure provided the context for interchange in Yemen that became key to Imam Yahya's efforts to consolidate power throughout the southern highlands after the war. Late in the war for instance, Imam Yahya contacted Ibb's Ottoman-appointed governor, Isma'il Basalama, humbly requesting military assistance in the effort to subdue a revolt in Tihama which threatened the garrison and its Ottoman commander. The letter is suggestive in that it first demonstrates that the likes of Basalama enjoyed a great deal of political autonomy at the time. It is no doubt that the Ottoman Vali made similar overtures to his governor in Ibb, but by giving the Imam the opportunity to make these requests on his behalf, the Vali may have been setting the stage for future alliances between the Imam and local leaders potentially profitable for the Porte. The strategy for the Ottoman administrators never came to fruition, since they lost the war, but the Imam and Basalama maintained strong political links after independence with Basalama becoming the Imam's appointed governor to Ibb. This flies in the face of conventional wisdom since the Imam represented a Shi'i community which had for centuries presumably ruled over the Sunni, southern highland population, creating irreconcilable animosities between the two polarities.

In the Ta'izz Sancak located in the predominately Sunni southern highlands, it is sectarianism which has been identified as the central animating force in the region's history. Usually framed as Zaydi versus Shafi'i, the Ottoman occupation of the highlands in 1872 marked a new era of Ta'izi

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politics. In light of the prevailing social categories, it may be well to begin this section with a few comments on its framework. Along with tribal categories, sectarian differences are evoked to define (and confine) the analysis of Yemen's history. In the literature, the focus is usually set on the Zaydi community, the dominant voice in local historiography. This particular sectarian identity carries an association with specific social and productive patterns of interaction, namely the tribe and the urban educated elite (ulama) over centuries.[1] Revealingly, some of the least discussed factors which, nevertheless, complicate Yemeni daily life are the network of Sufi orders in Yemen. As Julia Clancy-Smith discovered in the periphery of the Sahara, Sufi orders, despite their categorical fixity, transcend borders, be they geographical, political, productive or spiritual.[2] In the case of Yemen, Sufism proves to be an ideal indicator of the diversity of constantly changing interests resulting in a rich variety of sociopolitical scenarios. This leaves the chronicles and those historical narratives based on them falsely authoritative since they, by force of their political allegiances, silence Sufi orders in Yemen's history. In a case focused on more closely below, Muhammad Hasan of the Shadhliyya located in the Sancak of Ta'izz, as did Muhammad Idrisi of the 'Asir, proves highly successful in attracting individuals and their retinue from both the major Sunni and Shi'i communities at various times of the war. While Yemeni Zaydi and Shafi'i historians arrogantly marginalize the impact of the Shadhliyya, it is clear the rigid social boundaries local historians and western academics seek to affirm are rendered incompatible with historical realities.[3]

On the surface, the Ottomans enjoyed strong support in the Sancak of Ta'izz where prominent Shafi'i judges and regional landlords existed separately from Zaydi groups located to the North. Such qualified support reflected the impact Ottoman rule had on social conditions and economic links in Yemen's highlands. To some observers, the empire served as a mid-nineteenth century barrier to Zaydi elements which had periodically invaded the southern highlands in the past.[4] It is clear that Ta'izi elites who elected to support Ottoman power from the 1870s onwards, embraced alliances with the Porte in recognition of the utility of an Ottoman army, shielding them from rivals

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[1]A perfect example is the essentialist representation of tribal structures in Yemen by Robert.B. Serjeant, "The Interplay between Tribal Affinities and Religious (Zaydi) Authority in the Yemen." *Al-Abhath* (Beirut) XXX (1982): 11-50.

[2]The Rahmaniyya of Algeria proved to maintain a fluid relationship with colonial French administrators and communities far beyond the edge of the Sahara. This fluidity is of central concern to me in this paper for it is indicative of the unreliability of the assumptions we carry and indeed, often the rhetoric which attempts to define social and political boundaries on the ground. Julia Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters (Algeria and Tunisia, 1800-1904)* (Berkeley, 1994).

[3]Muhammad b. Ahmad Nu'man, *al-Atraf al-Ma'niyya fi al-Yaman.* (Beirut, 1965); and Muhammad b. Yahya al-Haddad, *al-Ta'rikh al-'Amm li al-Yaman*, 5 vols. (Beirut, 1986) 5: 35.

[4]'Abdullah b. Muhammad al-Hibshi, ed. *Hawliyyat Yamaniyya min Sanah 1225 h. ila Sanah 1316 h.* (Sana'a', 1980): 34, 245-6.

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both around Ta'iz and in Zaydi territories.[1] But by limiting our appreciation for what was happening on the ground, we fail to identify a number of deeper currents taking place.

Ottoman policy encouraged such opportunistic gestures and were rewarded by loyal support from a number of key members in the elite in the Ta'iz and central Tihama regions. Among other things, these allies collected taxes, supplied troops for campaigns against rebellious bands and implemented imperial administrative policies.[2] It must be stressed again that in the Yemen vilayet, as elsewhere, such relationships between the Ottoman state and locals were products of specific, local factors, factors which not only must take Ottoman interests into account but also the strategies among locals who elected to align with the Porte. The articulation of these interests are not inherently attached to one "category" of Yemenis.[3]

The relationship between Imam Yahya and the Ottoman state may have (for different reasons) stirred the fires among Shafi'is and Sufi leaders in the South leading quite often to armed clashes with both the Imam's men and Ottoman troops.[4] But the examples of Idrisi and the following clearly demonstrate such concerns are animated by far more complex issues than a crudely identified "ancient hatred" between sectarian groups. Attempts to shore up revenue collection and military recruitment, as the Porte's attention shifted southwards, helped create a new generation of local, in particular, urban alliances. Those most impacted by this reconfiguration were previously favored rural tax farmers who were immediately identified as barriers to progress in a regime bent on instituting such reforms.[5] These factors must be part of any analysis of the rebellions that surface in Lower Yemen.

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[1] We may benefit by considering Tilly's analogy for the function of the modern state as a protection racket. See Charles Tilly, "War Making and State Making as Organized Crime," in Peter B. Evans, et al. (eds.) *Bringing the State Back In* (Cambridge, 1985) 169-191.

[2] Abazah, *Al-Hukm al-'Uthmani fi al-Yaman*: 350-352, and for conditions in Ibb specifically, see Brinkly Messick, *The Calligraphic State*, 46-53.

[3] See for instance how the Ottoman state negotiated with Shaykh 'Abdul Wahad over the recruitment and upkeep of the local gendarmarie, which consisted largely of racial minorities and other social outcasts, creating, I would suggest, a racial dynamic to local politics that animated local relations dramatically. BBA DH.ID 16-2/17 1331.Ra.10.

[4] Abdullah al-Hibshi, *al-Sufiyya wa al-Fuqaha' fi al-Yaman*. (Sana'a', 1979). Zaydi areas already under Imam Yahya's administrative control abandoned Ottoman legal structures to follow a strictly Zaydi (Imam dominated) judicial structure which especially threatened the Sufi orders dependent on the dual legal system for protection. According to a British subject travelling the Yemen at the time, they also did not go so well with local Zaydis. Wyman G. Bury, *Arabia Infelix, Or the Turks in Yemen* (London, 1915), 38-39.

[5] The reforms of Mehmed 'İzzet Paşa for instance, consolidated power in the regional centers—Ta'iz, Ibb, etc.—introducing a new set of urban-based elites who streamlined institutional reforms. These reforms were part of an attempt to cut back on the "corruption" of rural tax farmers. See for instance BBA DH.ID 36/18 1331.N.9 documents 3 and 4.

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In regards to local concerns over territorial aspirations of the Imam, many chroniclers substantiate these fears with a reiteration of a clear cut Zaydi/Shafi'i cultural and political divide. Indeed there were a number of instances when violent acts took on the dynamics of a sectarian conflict. A series of documents written by Vali Mahmud Nedim to Imam Yahya demonstrates the Vali's concern over the negative effects unruly Zaydi members of the "muhajahdin," a group formally professing singular allegiance to the Imam, had on relations with the local population in the Ta'iz sancak.[1] Other documents show that later in the war, "Zaydi" raids in the Ta'iz area intensified as it became increasingly evident the Ottomans were not capable of restraining them.[2] These violent raids stand out for such incursions had been rare before the Da'an treaty. But I would ask, should we content ourselves with interpretations focusing on sectarian tensions? As noted in the beginning of this book and by a library of recent critical work on imperial discourse, categories evoked in documentation may not adequately reveal the dynamics of the situation on the ground. These raids, for instance, ultimately were considered, criminal acts, I would add they also became highly politicized, precisely because of the number of connotations they carried, which both sides used to their advantage. But the evocation of a categorical framework does not inherently lead us to finding a clear-cut reason why these raids took place.

The rhetoric of the victim is often applied with a certain precision in Ottoman documents in order to evoke the desired administrative response. By playing into the category game the imperial regime played, local elites may have elicited a more positive response from the Porte. The Ottoman administration actively sought to preserve its historical role in the southern highlands, especially during the war when it needed stability on the southern front. In attempt to assuage local fears, "Zaydi" raids during the war often resulted in clashes between Ottoman troops and groups at least nominally allied with Imam Yahya, which thus caused strains between the Porte and the Imam.[3] As hinted at before, rigidly drawn communal lines fail to capture the complex political dynamic of Yemen. In the Ta'iz area as in the 'Asir, cultural, productive and "tribal" lines were often muted. These raids in Lower Yemen were certainly a political issue for many to take advantage of, often at

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[1]Telegram from the Governor Mahmud Nedim to Imam Yahya, dated 2 Jimad 'Awal, 1333 h. [April 1915] Sayyid Mustapha Salim, *Watha'iq Yamaniyya: Dirasa Watha'qiyya Ta'rikhiyya.* (Cairo: Ma'had al-Buhuth wa-l-Dirasat al-'Arabiyya, 1985), 269-308.

[2] In the Report to General Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, Cairo from J.H. Stewert, Aden Protectorate, September. 7, 1917. in eds., Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen,* 6: 178. Concerns over Zaydi subjugation were justified when we note that from the moment when the Ottoman barrier falls in 1918, various Zaydi factions raid Southern areas with impunity. Interview with Lieut.-Colonel Isma'il Effendi, commandant of Ta'iz Garrison, as reported by W. F. Bainbridge, February 19, 1919. ibid., 6: 405.

[3]For a partisan representation of this issue see Muhammad b. Ahmad Nu'man, *al-Atraf al-Ma'niyya fi al-Yaman*, 26-28.

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the expense of those directly harmed, but there are far more nuanced explanations which reflect more concretely the local politics of the war.[1]

Muhammad Hasan

Specific to Ta'iz during the war, the process of alliance-building on an individual basis provides helpful insight into the dynamics affecting both local and imperial policy. Muhammad Hasan's story proves insightful to the task of reading into Ta'iz politics with a new set of criteria. It suggests there was a current of transition in the context of the war which resulted, at times, in armed revolt in the southern highlands. The Hasan case also proves enlightening for Hasan displayed an ability, when necessary, to make those inter-sectarian alliances that are key to understanding Yemeni politics in a wider sense.[2]

Sayyid Muhammad Hasan represented a significant rupture from the past relationship his saintly father had with the Ottoman state. As leader of the most powerful Sufi order in Ta'iz, the Shadhliyya, the important role his father played throughout the period before the war serves as a model case study of Ottoman imperial policies.[3] The decision by Hasan to resist Ottoman reform measures after Da'an and create links with outside opposition figures, particularly with rebellious Zaydi elements who had often demonstrated, at least theoretically, hostility towards Sufis, proves important to my overall point. One can speculate why Hasan took measures to distance himself from the Porte during the war by focusing on the social and political tensions which surrounded him and by way of his sectarian identity. As noted above, the conditions in Ta'iz changed for the imperial state as the war erupted, affecting in the process local political relations. Muhammad Muqbil, Shaykh Ahmad Nu'man, 'Abd al-Rahman al-Haddad and others surfaced during the war for their strategic loyalty to the Porte.[4]

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[1]It must be noted that it would be erroneous to post a firm Zaydi/Shafi'i distinction. Many prominent locals in and around Ta'iz, such as Basalama (who will figure prominently later) had a history of productive economic and political relations with Zaydis. Indeed, Hassan's ill-fated revolt in 1917 was very much an alliance between disaffected Zaydi opponents of the Imam and a former ally of the Porte. I wish to thank Bernard Haykel for insisting on this point.

[2]Hasan would attempt to create alliances with both the Zaydi-led "Confederacy" of 1917 and Muhammad Idrisi at different times during his struggle with the Ottoman state. Report from Major E.R. Reilly, to the First Assistant Resident Aden, October 26, 1917. in eds. Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen,* 6: 131.

[3]See Messick, *The Caligraphic State*, 43 n. 38. See also Report to General Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, Cairo from J.H. Stewert, Aden Protectorate, September 20, 1917. Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen,* 6: 182.

[4]Haddad, *al-Ta'rikh al-'Amm li-l-Yaman*, 4: 211-216.

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In Hasan's case, it seems the encroaching hostilities with Britain resulted in mounting tensions between himself and the Ottoman state. While Hasan's tekke represented an important cornerstone to the Ottoman Vali's prewar strategies, Hasan was being marginalized because of a significant shift in the political relationship between the Ottoman state and a new generation of allies in Ta'iz. The strategic importance of the southern border with the 'Aden protectorate required leaders who could, for instance, recruit loyal forces willing to fight along the southern front.[1] The Shadhliyya tekke's position in Ta'iz political circles had been slowly overshadowed by the encroaching war which had catapulted figures such as Nu'man and Muqbil to prominence. Strategies which resulted in realignments of local power were key to Said Ahmad Pasha's defensive strategy, rendering inactive Sufi shaykhs a liability.[2] There are plenty of examples of local figures who had made the necessary adjustments, protecting their positions locally during the war. It would, therefore, be incorrect to suggest there were universal patterns taking place. 'Abd al-Rahman al-Haddad, for instance, adapted to the new conditions quite well and effectively performed the Ottoman state's business.[3] But there are always those who fall out of favor, often a necessary sacrifice for the sake of more important local alliances. Hasan appears to be one of them.

When events reached their climax for Hasan in 1917, he had amassed a sizable coalition of similarly disaffected leaders from throughout the vilayet. The Shaykhs of 'Udayn, for instance, among whom we find the father-in-law of Hasan, offered their men to help him against the mobilized Ottoman army.[4] In the whirlwind of events of September 1917, Abas Narb [sic] and Qayid bin Rajih with their followers of about 1200 men located on Jabal Ba'adan added their respective forces to fight on the side of Hasan. It is reported that groups from Jabal Ra's, Mar'rab, Habashi, and Yahya bin Yahya al-Shayif, a Zaydi notable of great importance in the northern highlands supported Hasan with 1800 men. Clearly by 1917, local conflicts began to find cross regional links, mostly, I suggest, because of Idrisi's success, but also because Hasan was able to tap into the general impression that the Ottomans were losing the war, a point I will deal with extensively elsewhere.

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[1]Such an evolution between the relationship of the state and locals led to dramatic shifts in the political fortunes of some in Ta'iz. See for instance, Abazah, *Al-Hukm al-'Uthmani fi al-Yaman*,: 346-351. See also the pursuit of Shaykh Abdullah b. Qasim by Ottoman officials who have blacklisted him from any favorable rulings inspite of his past colloboration with the Porte. BBA Dahiliye Nezareti: Hukuk Kalemi Evraki, 59/15 1331.6.12 document 6.

[2]Said Ahmed Paşa was commander of the 7th Corps, comprised of mostly Syrian troops.

[3]See Muhammad Zabara, *Nuzhat al-Nazar* (San'a', 1979), 347-48 for a biographical profile of a prominent legal scholar and ally of the Ottomans in Ta'iz, Muhammad al-Haddad. One reason may be Haddad was still mainstream Shafi'i and the Sufi element really was being marginalized by the Zaydi alliance which the Shafi'i may have been an indirect partner. For information on Shafi'i opposition to Sufi orders in Southern Yemen during the period see, Zabara, *A'immat al-Yaman*, 1956: 149-57.

[4]Report to General Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, Cairo from J.H. Stewert, Aden Protectorate, September 20, 1917. in eds., Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen*, 6: 186.

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Hasan's efforts ultimately failed. A battle took place leading to the defeat of Hasan and his allies, including al-Shayif, who fled back to Jabal Ra's. This event proves particularly interesting because while there were many behind Hasan's coalition, an important number of players remained loyal to the Ottomans. Hasan's own constituents, for instance, had convened a meeting in Ta'iz's central mosque and elected to oppose Hasan's move, continuing to support the Ottoman's role in Ta'iz during this critical moment.[1] Even Hasan's son actively supported the Ottoman efforts to repress his father's revolt and was duly rewarded with Hasan's land.[2] Once again familial, sectarian or institutional loyalties do not hold firm in Yemen.

It is within the internal tensions, often contradicting segmentary patterns, where we find the mechanisms of history. Local actors are not dutifully attached to any one "tradition" of negotiation/interaction as is so often imposed by anthropologists, but adopt to conditions as dictated contemporaneously, often vastly contrary to ideal models. Furthermore, the anthropologist's deliberate categorization, reinforcing a social hierarchy, is a reductive act which often speaks of political realities contemporary to the social scientist, rather than any reliable historical window. Contemporary power struggles in Yemen have appropriated many symbols—from Nassir's Arab Nationalism, to liberal democracy—and anthropologists arriving with a set of assumptions codified in the vernacular of the trade, often condone the temporal settlement of claims to power within the community they study by negotiating their work through assumed hierarchies. The professional attachment to the shaykhs with whom an anthropologist spends his/her time in the field often distorts the social hierarchy on which they stand.[3] These shaykhs who inform either directly or indirectly, the representation of their community, reify fictions of social hierarchies in favor of contemporary ascendants, ignoring the process of assertion, lending ultimate historical voice to parties that are reading the anthropologists motivations through the shared language of tribalism. There is a complicit silencing of Yemen's multiplicity by remaining fixated on the "tribe:" Racial and gender inequalities do not warrant inspection in a world dominated by power brokers identified in such terms. The language of tribalism reinforces the ascendant families who eagerly appropriate the rhetoric of universal legitimacy at the expense of women, the property less and empirically marginal.[4]

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[1]Report to General Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, Cairo from J.H. Stewert, Aden Protectorate, September 20, 1917. Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen,* 6: 182.

[2]See Report to General Sir Reginald Wingate, High Commissioner, Cairo from J.H. Stewert, Aden Protectorate, September 20, 1917. in eds., Doreen Ingrams, Leila Ingrams, *Records of Yemen,* 6: 184-188.

[3]See Steve Caton's book *Peaks of Yemen I Summon: Poetry as Cultural Practice in a North Yemni Tribe* (Berkeley, 1990), 11-15.

[4]See Steve Caton's article on what he identifies as four distinct analytical approaches to tribe and authority. "Anthropological Theories of Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East: Ideology and the Semiotics of Power." Khoury and Kostiner eds., *Tribes and State Formation*, 74-108.

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There must be greater emphasis to the fact that the seat of power in Yemen, from the Imam down to local shaykhs are contested positions. By bringing to the surface that even the Imam is under threat from a variety of elements within his own constituency raises questions about how deeply pervasive honor (sharaf), for instance, a term upon which at least one anthropologist is fixated, proves viable in face of the violence which determines its social parameters. Again, I am taking the opportunity to study the dynamics of Ottoman Yemen during World War I in order to highlight the methodological shortcomings of relying on overly inclusive analytical tools which all too often determine the interpretive scope of our analysis and color the history of humanity. Women, the descendants of African slaves who make up part of the Ottoman gendarme force in Yemen, landless peasants and the urban poor do not have a place in current methodologies.

As we find in many organizationally helpful charts provided by the most eloquent of the field's practitioners, an attempt is made to answer the ever-burning question the literature asks of its tribal subjects: how is social order maintained?[1] Such methods of organizing Yemeni life in the highlands, incorporating section and subsection titles, tribal names such as Dhu Muhammad and the Arhab, and then confining them in universalistic confederations—the Hashid and Bakil—point directly at what I am respectfully criticizing. What is central to the concept of segmentation is discursive uniformity, whether articulated in forms of ideology or metaphors of honor. There are important problems with these representations of human interchange. Conventions of honor do not maintain their all-encompassing claims in history. Familial and communal "bonds" are frequently shattered with acts of "deception" and "treachery" throughout the period in question. The empirical hierarchies and social traditions articulated by anthropologists do not correspond to the disparate, exclusivist acts of individuals. The case of Idrisi's impact on highland politics is clearly suggestive of other elements at play.

The most meticulous architects of segmentary structures acknowledge there are variables to the application of collective norms, insisting in the end, however, that such variables can be accounted for through a comprehensive stint of fieldwork.[2] But that is exactly where such modes of "writing culture" fails to hold Yemen's checkered historical reality. No structure can withstand the individual acts I identified in my research. While some attempt to contain the tribal system by situating the individual within geometrical abstractions, those individual acts exhibit a multiplicity of transgressions which easily

[1]Dresch, *Tribes*, 75-116.

[2]Paul Dresch, "The Significance of the Course Events Take in Segmentary Systems." *American Ethnologist* XIII (1986): 309-324.

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move beyond boundaries set in the mind of the outside scholar.[1] The notion of collective normative bonding distorts the frequent rivalries between and within so-called tribes, villages, and families. In the shadows of a larger war from 1911 onwards, members of Yemeni society attempted to affect change in local hierarchies by creating alliances along lines that often went beyond these units of analysis social scientists and historians of Yemen use. So-called tribal and sectarian communities exhibited a propensity to move beyond, between and through their identifying categories consistently.

Social boundaries are not fixed in the lives of Yemenis in the period under study. The parameters of alliances being built around and within the political spaces evoked in the literature and the archival material are in constant flux. It is for this reason why local histories are more helpful in studying Yemen since it is in contingent alliances based on local concerns which determine Yemen's political life. It is within these processes where we can ultimately observe the vicissitudes of Imamate politics. The idiom of social practice strikes a different cord at different times requiring that we do not apply assumptions based on a sociology of the tribe, but an openness to read into events and actions taken by individuals and groups, using indicators far more precise than universalizing categories.

Conclusion

The Ottoman period in highland Yemen (1874-1918) is but a chapter of a continuing process of change, adaptation and contestation. Sociological patterns that have often been glossed over with typologies simplifying Yemeni (and generally Islamic) society into neatly identifiable units—city, country, peasant, tribes, Zaydi, and Shafi'i—prove to be highly fluid in their represented forms.[2] By strategically calling into question the epistemological assumptions such units carry through an historical study of Ottoman Yemen during World War I, it is hoped the war will highlight the at times, confused and highly un"conventional" behavior of history's silenced millions. Such an approach to identify agency beyond the categories of the ethnographer may prove to be an attractive narrational alternative to the highly problematic literature of the past. Stated differently, I believe such a parochial study has

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[1] See Dresch's utilization of diagrams to homogenize human events in Dresch, "Significance..." , 315.

[2] I wish to point out that whenever I problematize the utilization of analytical models, I am implicitly suggesting such critiques, and indeed, some of my suggestions to help illuminate these shortcomings, can be useful for others working in other "areas." This in no way suggests Yemen fits an ideal type which can thus simply be "fitted" into other cases, on the contrary, I suggest each case (and the smaller the scope the better) maintains a distinctiveness and complexity that deserves attention. If anything, it is my questions and criticism that is transcendent. For an important contribution see Bryan Turner, *Weber and Islam* (London: Routledge, 1974).

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transcendent value. Unfortunately we have little information of the day-to-day conditions for those whom the Imam and empire depended the most, those not represented in the documents and those vaguely characterized as the Yemeni people. What we have we know from the anthropological work which I have shown to be largely unwilling to break from past fixations.

To end, I believe the impact historians and social scientists have on the world around them is far more greater than most of us believe. We set the conceptual parameters for a number of social actors to engage with the outside world. I believe we must adopt a far more critical approach to the language we appropriate and the assumptions we set. Instead of attempting to homogenize, sanitize and systematize the world into neat mental containers, we should celebrate human diversity, complexity and fluidity; let us follow Appadurai's advice and think of the world around us in terms of overlapping, disjunctive landscapes whose centers and perspective shift according to the multiple forces before us.[1] It is hoped that what proceeded reminds us that even in distant corners of the globe where there are few indicators of "modernity," there too are a plethora of factors which animate *individual* acts, impacting what we should be seeing and how we should be interpreting them.

[1]Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," in *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 32.

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5

UNDERSTANDING THE MARGINS OF ALBANIAN HISTORY: COMMUNITIES ON THE EDGES OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

Introduction

Over the last decade much of the scholarship on the Balkans has focused on the so-called "ethnic hatreds" between the region's inhabitants. Among the many shortcomings of identifying the wars in the 1990s along these themes is the missing appreciation for the complex ways in which the inhabitants of the Balkans interact. Of particular concern in this chapter is how such angles of interpreting the 1990s has influenced historians writing on the Balkan's past. As has been suggested by Maria Todorova, the "primordial" antagonisms supposedly animating the 1990s has distorted how we are to appreciate the legacy of, for instance, the Ottoman Empire, a political and cultural entity that ruled the region for six hundred years.[1]

I wish to expand on Todorova's critique through the study of the emergence of the nation-state in the second-half of the nineteenth century, with specific focus on Albanian-speakers as they interacted with the various imperial powers of the era. It could be argued that it is the nation-state that initiates the process of communal differentiation that has animated present day historians. By offering a challenge to the foundations of the supposed "inevitability" of the Balkan nation-state and the apparent inter-communal antagonisms it incites, however, it is hoped my critique can ultimately address the region's myths *as per* communal identities and the centrality of the ethnic nation in particular. In the process of raising questions about the foundations of nationalism, social groups and individual identity politics, there is also an opportunity to challenge how we understand the changes taking place in this period of "modernization" in the Balkans by way of seeking plausible alternative engines of change.

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[1] In response, a few scholars have pleaded for more careful scrutiny in the use of a language which reduces Balkan history to one of perpetual "civilizational" clashes. Maria Todorova, "The Ottoman Legacy in the Balkans," in *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* ed. Carl L. Brown (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 45-77.

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Setting the Parameters of Imperial Rivalry in Late Ottoman Albania

Many have justifiably noted that the key to the dramatic transformations of the late nineteenth century begins with the structural changes of the world economy beginning in the 1870s.[1] As Ahmet Akarlı recently surmised, it is the institutionalization of European-based finance and a globalization of standards of weights and measures as well as technological advancements in transport that provided the context for a "new world order" in how regions organized their industrial and agricultural production.[2] This in turn put new kinds of pressure on the political mechanisms that regulated a state's domestic relations, marking the beginning of what we understand today as the modern world.[3] The following will explore the region's integration with modernity in a way that seeks to highlight patterns of interaction far less based on patterns of animosity than is assumed to take place. As noted elsewhere in this book, smaller communities in any number of socioeconomic settings proved to have the capacity to adapt to (and change) the world around them in ways that did not necessarily spell the destruction of these small social units. To best appreciate this in regards to Northern Albania, it is necessary to first place this period of transformation in a political context.

Since the beginning of the eighteenth century, great powers with direct interests in the Balkans such as Austria and Russia had attempted to use a number of long standing diplomatic concessions granted by the Sublime Porte to assert their respective influence on the region's Christian populations. One of the more widely studied of these diplomatic mechanisms is the infamous capitulation (*ahidname*) awarded to states with which the Sublime Porte signed a peace treaty.[4] By the nineteenth century, these capitulations played a conspicuous role as the Ottoman Empire implemented a series of reforms often termed the *Tanzimat* reforms. In the context of these reforms, European powers made increasingly loud calls for expansion of their intrusive privileges as a way to maximize their access to the Empire's vast wealth and assure the

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[1]Most scholars seeking to include the Ottoman Empire in the study of the changing global economy adopted the deeply flawed "world-systems" approach made famous in the 1970s. See for instance, Rashid Kasaba, *The Ottoman Empire and the World Economy: The Nineteenth Century*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988). Alternative ways of understanding the late 19th century are beginning to find there way into mainstream scholarship. Roger Owen, "The Eastern Mediterranean during the First Wave of Globalisation, 1870-1914," *IIIrd Mediterranean Programme Lecture*, (Florence: European University Institute, 2001).

[2]See Ahmet E. Akarlı, "Growth and Retardation in Ottoman Macedonia, 1880-1914," in *The Mediterranean Response to Globalization Before 1950,* eds. Şevket Pamuk and Williamson (London: Routledge, 2000), 109-133.

[3]See Michael Geyer and Charles Bright, "World History in a Global Age," *American Historical Review*, 100 (4) (1995): 1034-60.

[4]For details on these concessions which granted subjects of states at peace with the Ottoman Empire the right to certain judiciary exemptions within the Ottoman judicial system, see Halil İnalcık and Donald Quataert eds., *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 50-52, 188-191.

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"rights" of their "Christian breathren." This largely competitive imperial dynamic resulted by the 1850s in the consolidation of claims on various "nations" (*millets*) within the Empire as a means of assuring European influence over the Ottoman Empire's numerous Christian populations.[1] The concessions granted by the Sublime Porte in this context, took the form of extensive European activities in the development of "Christian" education and trade among exclusively designated imperial/communal relations.[2]

Parallel to the growing influence Russia and Austria enjoyed within the Ottoman Empire, diplomatic tensions between the two powers grew directly affecting life in the mid-century Balkans. Initially, attempts were made to formalize spheres of interest in the region in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation. The Reichstadt Agreement of 1876, for example, was supposed to signal a delicate balance of power between Vienna and St. Petersburg.[3] Widely forgotten in this diplomatic history is the role played by the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman state, as much as its imperial rivals, actively sought to consolidate its influence over the Balkans' population, both Muslim and Christian. Importantly for Istanbul, neither Russia nor Austria wanted to completely destabilize Ottoman jurisdiction in the region, which was seen as a key element to maintaining a balance of power in Eastern Europe. The Ottoman state, during the reign of Austrian Foreign Minister Goluchowski years (1895-1906) in particular, proved to be the key to maintaining this balance of power that both St. Petersburg and Vienna sought after the Russo-Ottoman wars of 1877-1878.[4] This alone should signal that the factors involving state relations within the confines of the capitulations went far beyond the issue of guaranteeing the commercial and judicial rights of "European" Christians within Ottoman territories.

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[1] See Starvo Skendi, "The *Millet* System and its Contribution to the Blurring of Orthodox National Identity in Albania," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* vol. 1, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982), 247.

[2] By the 1850s the French gained exclusive claims to protect Lebanon's Maronites Christians, Russia the right to protect Orthodox Christians and Austria, under these new conditions, were guaranteed their place as the patron of the Ottoman Empire's Catholics living in the Balkans. For Russian ascendancy in the region see David MacKenzie, *The Serbs and Russian Pan-Slavism, 1875-1878,* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornel University Press, 1967) and for details of Austria's program in the region see Engelbert Deusch, "Das Österreichische Kultusprotektorat in der Türkei," in *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur mit Geographie*, 45, (2001): 3-23.

[3] As far as Austria was concerned, the Reichstadt Agreement of 1876 with Russia clearly articulated Vienna's opposition to the formation of a single Slavic state in the Balkans. This was immediately challenged with the creation of a massive Bulgarian state after the Ottoman defeat in the Russo-Ottoman war of 1876-1877. See B.H. Sumner, *Russia and the Balkans, 1870-1880,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 586, 588.

[4] For a helpful, two hundred page review of Austrian policies meant to restrain Russian influence in Albanian territories see HHStA PA XII/312 Türkei Liasse XXXIV/4 documents 193-194.

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A quick review of regional political relations reveals that a social dynamic was at work that parallels these imperial rivalries. This social dynamic fused confessional, ethno-national and commercial identities in ways largely contradictory to what diplomatic historians have focused on, namely the crude abstractions based on ethno-sectarian divisions as articulated in the capitulations and so-called *millet* system. For instance, despite their seemingly irreconcilable differences, Christians and Muslims, Slavs and Albanians, maintained integrated social and economic lives that confounded, at least initially, Ottoman, Austrian and Russian efforts to assert influence over the populations in the Iskodra and Kosova vilayets in the second half of the nineteenth century. How this translates over time has a great deal of value in arguing against the assertions present-day historians of the Balkans make about inter-communal relations.

It should be noted that the integrative patterns that I am suggesting existed between assumed "primordial" enemies confounded imperial designs in asserting administrative and even military control of the region after the Berlin Congress of 1878. Often, the first method of state control was to affirm the confines of its sovereignty by way of territorial frontiers. These frontiers were contested items over which regional states searched ways to circumvent the fact that the communities living within these territories were impossible to categorize along ethno-national lines.[1] Often, the very efforts at centralization practiced by Montenegro, Serbia, Russia, Austria or the Ottoman states empowered rather than weakened locals. This point will be made throughout. By appreciating, in particular, how Ottoman efforts to assert some level of control in its post-Berlin territories created new windows of opportunity for non-state actors, we may better understand the problems facing the various imperial powers operating in the region.[2] How local opportunities to interact with the world at large translates into an historical narrative can best be demonstrated in this post-Berlin period as it is during these forty years that the so-called forces of modernity are being applied in the region, forces that were supposed to codify state control over the population along communal lines but turned out to create new means of engagement for local communities.

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[1]In BBA YEE 109/17, one may find a letter sent from the Montenegrin representative in Istanbul, G. Vunevic to Marshall Derviş Paşa, aide de camp général of the Sultan and Nuri Pasha, aide de camp to the Sultan who were overseeing the delineation of Montenegrin-Ottoman frontier at the time. The document's value is in how Vunevic attempted to negotiate compromises which ultimately highlighted the narrow terms of engagement local powers. Basically, Vunevic offered the Ottoman Empire to streamline the process by "simply" drawing the border along "racial lines." Dated Constantinople, 11/23 September 1884.

[2]This is made clear by an extensive report on the emergent political forces inside Kosova as a result of the transformations caused by Ottoman state reforms. See HHStA PA XII/312 Turkei Liasse LIASSE XXXIII, dated Prizren 26 January 1899, Consul Rappaport to Goluchowski, documents 50-53.

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In addition to monitoring Ottoman policies in regards to instituting reforms and managing local responses, we can observe how "modernity" and its differentiating ambitions were supposed to have operated through the activities of Russian consuls in the region. These Russians, being the central proponent for the creation of independent Serbia and Montenegro and the spread of pan-Slavic agendas within Habsburg and Ottoman territories, vigorously asserted their role as the sole protector of Slav Orthodox communities in the Ottoman Balkans, as guaranteed under the capitulations.[1] How Austria and the Sublime Porte respond to these blatant attempts to change the internal dynamics of the Balkans proves key to appreciating the subsequent efforts to impose control over events on the ground and local abilities of maintain local autonomy. Ultimately, these dynamic exchanges between regional powers, their bureaucrats and local populations help us expose the weak foundations upon which the myths of the ethnic-nation sit.[2] As will be noted below, not only were local, "mixed" communities able to resist Russia's sectarian-based provocations, they actively engaged in strategies that empowered their community's ability to survive the numerous challenges to its autonomy by adopting Ottoman reform measures as much as those introduced by the outside world. In the end, the road to demystifying the primordial ethno-national or confessional identity passes through a study of how locals sustained their autonomy in face of efforts instituted by the various imperial powers.

Discovering the Albanian: Austria Counters Pan-Slavism

The primary issue by 1878 is the annexation of Albanian-populated territories by Serbia and Montenegro as a result of the Berlin Congress.[3] Almost immediately, the process could only partially be justified by using demographic abstractions of the local population based on their sectarian identities.[4] Modern strategies of statecraft that entailed codifying a universal

[1] In a letter from an American named S. W. King from Philadelphia, the Sultan is advised to mistrust the Russians and their overall ambitions which were being served in the Berlin Congress. The arguments raised against Russian intrigue provide an interesting parallel interpretation of Russian influences in the region to that of European diplomats. BBA YEE 76/25, documents 2a 2b dated 8 August 1878.

[2] For comprehensive coverage of the diplomatic events see Andre Novotny, *Österreich, die Türkei und das Balkanproblem im Jahre des Berliner Kongresses (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Berliner Kongresses 1878)*, (Graz-Köln: B. Filser, 1957).

[3] These strategies were already being activated in 1877 as Montenegrin agents, who had commercial (and often familial ties) with neighboring Albanian-speaking communities, spent large amounts of Russian money to try to encourage mountain communities to rise up against Ottoman forces. See PRO FO 78/2628 reports dated Scutari 5 February 1877, Consul Green to Foreign Office, document number 8.

[4] It is perhaps for this concern of consolidating "control" of the region that Ottoman officials actively played with the demographic composition of the area in early 1877 by importing Circassian colonists who were by-products of the Russo-Ottoman Eastern Front. See PRO FO 78/2628 report dated Scutari, 10 February 1877, Consul Green to Foreign Office, document 9.

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identity and as Eugene Weber and others have suggested, the powers granted to the modern state, should have spelled the end of multi-ethnic communities that existed in overwhelmingly rural societies like those in the southwestern Balkans.[1] Indeed, both Montenegro and Serbia actively sought, with Russian money and weapons, to homogenize its newly acquired populations along sectarian lines. Serbia in particular proved adept at instigating large scale migrations of Albanian and Turkish-speaking communities from its newly annexed Nish province, much to the dismay of Ottoman officials forced to accommodate these expellees.[2]

That said, despite a number of attempts to exclusively populate these border areas with Orthodox Slav populations, neither Serbia nor Montenegro could fully eliminate the indigenous population from the area: a majority of which remained Albanian-speakers of Muslim or Catholic faith. According to Ottoman and Austrian documents, the central reason for this inability to solidify central control of these areas was the capacity of locals (which included Slav Orthodox neighbors) to militarily resist these homogenizing projects. This material and cultural balance of power had an immediate impact on how diplomacy operated in the Balkans throughout the next ten years and forced Montenegro, in particular, to dramatically shift gears.[3]

After a series of military defeats against local Albanian communities, Montenegro (and to a much lesser extent Serbia) began an attempt to economically coop its frontier populations to best serve their commercial and defensive interests. In the end, what such a strategy accomplished was the creation of a security problem for the Ottoman Empire along its frontiers as locals shifted their loyalties to Cetinje or Belgrade. Such a shift proves intriguing as it was widely assumed that the Slavic and Orthodox governments of the new independent states and its Albanian, Muslim and Catholic subjects were "natural" enemies.[4] Quite to the contrary, as evidenced throughout, locals proved perfectly willing to use their key economic and strategic position to play one power off the other. Consequentially, this capacity to shift loyalties dramatically changed not only Ottoman or Slav policies in the area, but

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[1]Eugene Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

[2]The level of forced migration through the use of tactics familiar to contemporaries of the 1990s wars in Bosnia and Kosova is aptly documented in a number of reports sent from the region to Ottoman officials in Istanbul. See for instance, BBA YEE 43/102, 15 Zilhicce.1296 [4 December 1879]. See also PRO FO 78/2988 dated Prizren, 7 October 1879 Political Report 24, St. John to Salisbury.

[3]See Ottoman reports on early incidents of local resistance to Montenegrin attempts to take over the administration of areas ceded to Cetinje during the Berlin Congress. BBA YA.HUS 159/62, 16 Ramazan 1295. [14 September 1878]

[4]An assumption adopted by historians bent on erasing the fact that Montengro, for one, was far more a multi-ethnic state in the pre 1912 period. See Jagos Jovanovic, *Stvaranje Crnogorske Drzave i Razvoj Crnogorske Nacionalnosti: Istorija Crne Gore od Pochetka VIII Vijeka do 1918 Godine*. (Cetinje: Narodna Knjiga, 1948), 153-190.

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Austria's as well. How Vienna would subsequently understand its role in the region helps us directly question the historical value of long-held assumptions about inter-community relations, the foundations of ethno-national identities as well as help us think differently about the rivalry between Austria and pan-Slavism.[1]

The Austrian state's activities among the region's Albanian-speaking populations and especially their leaders, demonstrate a clash between assumed imperial interests (and their incumbent capitulatory privileges) and the practical realities on the ground. What that often meant for Austrian officials operating in the area was that their state's interests were defined more to reflect how local populations mobilized (or articulated) their communities through a liberal flow of Montenegrin money, than dictates from Vienna or Istanbul, their assumed confessional protectors. The problem posed for both Austria and the Sublime Porte in this period of adjustment, therefore, lays in the fact that these populations were categorically "mixed," proving the diplomatic assumptions asserted in the Berlin Treaty simply did not recognize the inherent complexity of local realities.[2] As Consul Lippich and his successors discovered, loyalties based on faith could not be assumed in the highlands of Ottoman Albania, nor, as will be demonstrated later, on the plains of Kosova on the region's Slavic and Albanian-speakers.[3] Austria proved up to the task and modified its initial policies to accommodate the evolving realities on the ground.

In the case of the highland regions of Gruda and Hoti, for instance, an area with a "mixed" Catholic and Muslim Albanian-speaking population, Austrian interests ultimately lay in patronizing these mixed elements of local society to prevent these communities from being completely dependent on Cetinje's largess. Such patronage categorically contradicted the very Austrian claims of certain privileges in the Ottoman territories based on Vienna's religious affiliation with Albanian Catholics. Catholicism, the assumed wedge with which Austrian interests were to be framed, had a particular socioeconomic and political role in Northern Albania that did not fit well with the rigid categorical requirements of the modern diplomatic order. This reality gave locals room in which they could operate in a world order defined by presumed confessional frontiers.

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[1] See the extensive reports presented to the Porte by Yusuf Ziya Pasha and others during the period in BBA YEE, 7/23. Compiled by Istanbul on 24 Ramazan 1303. [26 June 1886], documents 3, 5, and 6. See also BBA, MV 56/54, 4 Muharrem 1308 [21 August 1890] which speaks of Istanbul's concern over Prince Nicholas' payoffs to local Albanian leaders in Gruda.

[2] Albanian-speaking communities in Northern Albania were often made up of mixed Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim families. See Isa Blumi, "The Dynamics of Identity: The Albanian in the Ottoman Empire." in *ACTA Viennensia Ottomanica Akten der 13 CIEPO-Symposiums*, (ed.) Gisela Prochazka-Eisl (Vienna: University of Vienna, 1999): 21-34.

[3] See Theodore Ippen, "Das religiöse Protectorat Österreich-Ungarns in der Türkei," in: *Die Kultur*, III (1902): 298-310.

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Austria's privileged role in protecting Ottoman Catholics was immediately questioned with the growing activities of Albanians based in Iskdora who were cultivating relations across the frontiers that divided the "Orthodox" world and the Muslim/Catholic Albanians.[1] To add to Vienna's problems, local Albanians also solicited and received extensive assistance from Italy.[2] In sum, it is clear that local Albanian-speaking communities would adopt certain ethnic, sectarian or political claims to suite the diplomatic capabilities of the various states seeking influence in the region. This is a fact that ultimately forced Austria (as well as the Russians and Ottoman state) to adapt to local realities throughout the region.[3]

While Austria quickly learned to adopt its policies to fit local conditions better, the fluid sectarian identities of local communities most directly affected Ottoman policy in the area. While historians of the late Ottoman state focus on Istanbul's imperial pretensions, as much as Austrians discovered as far as its relations with "Catholics," the Sublime Porte had to frequently modify these ambitions in regards to its "Muslim" population.[4] One of the interesting consequences of these sectarian "abnormalities" presented by how local communities lived, was the dynamic of local power that gave small communities the capacity to balance the Austrians, Russians and Ottomans off one another by both using formal diplomatic structures as well as forcing their modification. This local capacity to mobilize contradictory forces is made most clear in the number of confrontations between local communities and the Ottoman State as Istanbul sought to consolidate its control of its new frontiers. Local Albanians often reached out to Austrian consulate officials in seeking protection from Ottoman state persecution.[5] In addition, as already noted, they welcomed Montenegrin Prince Nicholas' assistance in arms and money and often served as Cetinje's mercenary army.[6] Again, the best way to read these events is not in terms of a "failure" or "success" of the state. Rather, we should observe how local

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[1]There is evidence in the Albanian archives that economic cooperation between Albanian merchant families in Bar and Ulqin and the new Montenegrin state continue well into the 1890s. See for instance Austrian reports attesting to the economic activity in Montenegro's ports in 1884, AQSH F.143.D.1071.f.6-21; D.1073.f.41, 48-50, 53-58, 62-63 and AQSH F.143.D.915.f.10 for activities as late as 1901.

[2]Italy became a key rival to Austrian efforts to monopolize Catholic Church affairs in the region. On the rivalry between Italy and Austria over Albania see Alessandro Duce, *L'Albania nei rapporti italo-austriaci, 1897-1913,* (Milano: Giuffre, 1983).

[3]This is made clear in the recommendations made by Scutari consul Ippen to the foreign ministry. See HHStA PA XII/312 Turkei LIASSE XXXIV/2, dated Scutari, 15 November 1902, Ippen to Foreign Ministry, documents 53-62.

[4]Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: the Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)," *IJMES,* 23 (1991): 345-359.

[5]HHStA PA XII/312 Turkei LIASSE XXXIV/2 dated Scutari 24 January 1902, Kral to Foreign Ministry, documents 12-18.

[6]This is made clear of a report by consul Ippen to Vienna, see HHStA PA XIV/14 LIASSE IX/1 dated Scutari, 24 August 1897, Ippen to Goluchowski, documents 9-12.

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Albanians actively engaged in the structures of state present on the ground and actively challenged the assumed privileges of various agencies in order to secure for at least thirty years local freedom from centralization efforts.

Converting the Empire

To address this more clearly, we may look at how religious conversions both helped facilitate as well as confound specific Austrian agendas in the region. According to local church records, Austria used every opportunity to work with church officials in order to protect the local Catholic population, as its capitulatory powers allowed.[1] As suggested above, in the first few years after the Berlin Congress there was a fear that both Montenegro and the Ottoman Empire were actively seeking to solidify the religious loyalties of their respective populations, either by cleansing whole areas of problematic populations or by converting local Albanian Catholics living along the frontier. In response, Austria encouraged church officials to "convert" Orthodox and Muslim Albanian-speakers. What is important here is that we are not necessarily talking about conversion in the conventional way, but more one that adapted to the realities on the ground. Austria discovered that because so many families in the region had members representing all three *millets*, it could actively offer Austrian citizenship by way of their Catholic identity. Importantly, by enacting a procedure of "conversion" that exploited these multi-sectarian families, Austria could offer immunity from Ottoman or Montenegrin persecution to anyone it deemed of value to their interests.[2]

Local Albanians, of all faiths, capitalized by modifying their communal or more directly, personal confessional identities to fit diplomatic loopholes. The liberal issuance of Austrian travel documents to Albanians becomes a regular occurrence in the archives by the 1890s, suggesting growing numbers of Albanian families used the powers of the capitulations and Austria's need to secure local loyalties to send their children to Vienna or Rome for educational or commercial purposes.[3] Importantly, these "Reisezertifikate" were not limited to Albanian-speaking Catholics but were extended on a number of occasions to Muslim Albanians who were considered key to projecting Austrian influence in the region, suggesting that by the mid-1890s, formal

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[1]See how Austrian consul Ippen spent a great deal of time negotiating on behalf Catholic Malesore Albanians with Ottoman officials based in the Işkodra vilayet. HHStA PA XIV/14, dated Scutari, 10 June 1903 Report no. 36, Ippen to Goluchowski, documents 98-99.

[2]For extensive details of how this operated see AQSH, F.132.D.30.f.1-4, Austrian Foreign Ministry special report to Archbishop's office in Scutari, 6 October 1903.

[3]See for instance see HHStA PA XXXVIII/ 423 Report No. 12, Kral to Aehrenthal, Scutari 22 January 1908, where a number of Albanian Catholics are granted "Reisezertifikate" to study at a school in Rome.

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affiliation to the Church was no longer necessary to win Austrian diplomatic support.[1]

Unfortunately for both local church officials and the Austrian State, conversions were widely used to operate within a world in which locals sought ways of manipulating the great power competitive dynamic, not fix their identity. This meant conversion was occurring in all directions among populations whose families, again, had members in at least two of the three major religious denominations of the area. Indeed, there was a sense of panic among some church officials that it was "losing" thousands upon thousands to Islam.[2] This dynamic immediately explains the reciprocal flexibility the Vienna government had to take in dealing with local politics and their leaders.[3]

Informatively, Vienna demonstrated better than their imperial rivals an appreciation for the fact that assumptions based on sectarian identities were not reflective of how locals operated. While Russia and Serbia more often pursued exclusionist policies in Kosova (as discussed below), Vienna recognized it was unrealistic to assume it could maintain any influence in the Balkans by sticking only to protecting Catholics. Vienna, because it did demonstrate its flexibility to defend whole communities that were both Muslim and Catholic, proved very successful in securing local loyalties over the long term.

Russian and Serb Intrigue in Kosova

The case of Russian efforts in the post-Berlin period to assert its authority over Slav Orthodox communities in Kosova prove less delicate than Vienna's search to winning local favor. Official Russian policy had always been to honor the agreement with Austria to avoid confrontation in the Balkans, but growing legions of radical pan-Slavists had sabotaged this official policy.[4] Advocates of an expansionist role for Russia had infiltrated the foreign ministry of the empire and subsequently posted a number of particularly strident nationalists to positions in Kosova's Prishtina, Prizren and Mitrovica consulates. These men would seek to use the capitulation privileges granted to them to sabotage any Ottoman and Austrian effort to

[1]For an example of Austria's intervention in the case of a number of local Albanian leaders exiled by the Ottoman government, many of whom were Muslim, see HHStA, PA XIV/14 Albanien Folios 9-12, Consul Ippen to Foreign Minister Goluchowski, Scutrai, 24 August 1897.
[2]AQSH, F.132 D.40.f.1-30, report of conversions in 1895 from Archbishop's office in Scutari.
[3]For Italian concerns with the conversion of Albanian Catholics in Yakova in 1907 see ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia B. 25 F.3 "Protezione dei cattolici in Albania 1892-1913."
[4]M. de Bartholomei, "Notes extraites des mémoires d'un diplomate russe," in: *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 48 (Jan.-March 1934), 35.

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effectively keep relations in the region peaceful.[1] The story, at least until the 1912 Balkan Wars, thus proves of particular interest for our purposes here because as with the Austrian example above, conventional wisdom about how Russian influence could be used do not necessarily prove accurate in the historical record.

The Ottoman state archives are filled with cases of Russian consuls exploiting their diplomatic privileges over the course of the post-Berlin Congress period in the frontier zones of Kosova and Macedonia. The northern frontiers of the Ottoman Empire, especially those populated by a mixture of Albanian and Slav-speaking populations, was apparently the perfect ground for such free-lance Russian intrigue. Russian consuls instigated so-called inter-communal riots in Kosova, actively lobbied for the construction of schools staffed by anti-Muslim proselytizers and the persecution of individuals who resisted these projects.

Interestingly, the initial concerns with the spread of Russian influence were limited in these widely integrated regions that, despite common assumptions, were not "ethnically" divided at the time. Slavs and Albanians lived side by side in communities that had common interests in protecting the commune's land and its resources from outsiders. These common goals translated as well to the defense of the community's social harmony.[2] This reality initially confounded Russian efforts, explaining the sudden rise in the construction of Russian-financed and administered schools after the 1890s which were intended to "educate" local Slavs about where their loyalties should lay.[3] In what may be considered somewhat surprising in light of what is widely assumed to be the case today in the Balkans, even with ten years of such an aggressive "educational" program in force, Russian and their Belgrade Serb allies' efforts failed to create a local Slav/Albanian divide. Local Serbs living in well integrated communities actively resisted efforts by pan-Slavist "outsiders" sent from Belgrade, often joining forces with local Albanian "warlords," who actively resisted Russian/Serb incursions.

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[1]British Prizren vice-consul St. John suggests recent anti-Catholic violence has been the work of the active Russian consul who had openly said he would bring the region to its knees. See PRO FO 78/2988, dated Prizren, 24 September 1879, Political Report number 6, St. John to Foreign Office.

[2]For a joint "Latin" (Albanian) and "Orthodox" (Serb) commission on the negotiation of a village school in the Ipek (Peja, Pec) Sancak in 1318/1900 under the guise of community improvement, see BBA SD 1986/18.

[3]For an extensive report on one particular school, the San Savo complex in Prizren, and Istanbul's supreme council's decision not to create a diplomatic row with Russia by closing it down as requested by the commissioned report, see BBA I.MF 2/Ra.1313. [22 September, 1895].

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At the same time, Ottoman efforts to consolidate its fiscal control over these communities resulted in well-documented revolts that have erroneously been interpreted as testament of a "natural" Serb yearning for freedom from "Ottoman oppression."[1] This is simply false as the local revolts that dominate Ottoman attention during the time were joint village responses to either abusive tax collectors or raids from radical Serbian nationalists and not products of Serb or Albanian nationalist fervor.[2] The violence that did transpire in the region certainly, at times, had an element of sectarian tension in them, as Russian and Serbian efforts noted below will suggest. But such manifested communal tension was more often then not, a result of the infiltration of outsiders from Serbia proper and the reaction of local communities that sought to resist them.[3] Returning to the proselytizing efforts of Russian consuls best makes this point.

Using their capitulatory privileges, Russian officials such as Mitrovica Consul Mashkov often provided the necessary cover for Serb radicals to infiltrate Ottoman territories, hiring them as teachers in schools that were quickly growing beyond the control of Ottoman officials. Armed with Russian citizenship, teachers cum nationalists established seminaries, schools and cultural centers, creating a complex web of networks which colonized areas of Kosova and Macedonia with large communities of non-Kosovar Serbs bent on instigating conflict. The fact that many of these men were being arrested (although eventually released due to Russian intervention) suggests Istanbul and local officials as well as local inhabitants knew what was going on. Much effort, in fact, was made by locally based officials and Austrian consuls to thwart the expansion of these "educational" complexes into sensitive mixed areas, particularly around Mitrovica.[4] The subsequent violence was often a joint reaction by Ottoman officials and locals seeking to defend themselves from increasingly obtrusive "outsiders" armed and protected by Russia. What is important again to stress, is that many of those resisting "Serb" nationalist activists were Serb neighbors who fought to defend the local community against outsiders.[5] In these tense years that pitted the local against the universal claims of Slavic nationalism and diplomatic conventions of sectarian

[1]Rade Mihaljcic, ed., *Boj na Kosovu-starija i novija saznanja*, (Belgrade: 1992), 46-52.

[2]BBA TFR.1.KV 28/2774 various dates clearly demonstrates this reality as both local Serb and Albanian leaders petition Ottoman administrators to halt the abuse of regional tax collectors in face of serious economic hardship.

[3]See for instance efforts to raise a local, mixed gendarmerie to resist raids by Serb radicals in the sancak of Peja throughout 1903. TFR.1.AS 4/396 see especially documents 3, 23 and 25.

[4]TFR.1.KV 10/929 1 Kanun Thani 1318 [January 1902].

[5]HHStA PA XII/449 Various documents on Serb and Albanian relations along the frontier zone which included defending village water sources and forests from outsiders including occupants of neighboring Serb/Russian schools.

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loyalties, there were frequent attacks on the Russian consuls themselves, eventually resulting in the murder of the Mitrovica consul Mashkov in 1902.[1]

By the 1870s Mitrovica became a center for Russian (and Serbian) intrigue. A new Serbian elite emerged that specifically existed on the basis of direct patronage with various Russian consuls and the newly created independent Serb state. This translated into a new exclusionist dynamic to Mitrovica and its surrounding villages that forever transformed life in Kosova as a whole. Communal and sectarian tensions rose as Russian money articulated new possibilities for specific groups that it identified as allies and others that it did not. The same could be said for Ipek, Prizren, Uskup and later Prishtina. The Ottoman administration did not fail to see the impact of this political trend and unfortunately adopted a similar approach to ruling the region as a response. Instead of improving tax collection and law and order, however, this approach intensified a sense of occupation as Ottoman officers and their soldiers increasingly operated along lines that distinguished themselves from locals. Essentially, the state began to target specific "communities" as identified by European policy makers who pursued their own interests at the expense of local harmony. Much as we saw elsewhere in the Ottoman Empire (especially Mount Lebanon), the language of sectarianism poisoned the Kosovar mystique by the end of the nineteenth century, leading outside powers to demand "reforms" discussed below in the case of Macedonia.

Initially, Istanbul tried to introduce its own "reforms" by asserting a greater military presence in the region. The fact that Kosova became the center of repressive measures introduced by the Ottoman State (and Russian and Serb agents) ultimately, albeit slowly, changed how locals lived with each other. Through the template of the Ottoman bureaucracy, codified to an extent by schools that educated a small percentage of the local population, a bastardization of all that was positive about the empire registered over decades in the back alleys and local tea house conversations of Kosovars.

A good example is this is the change of attitudes locals and Ottoman administrators had of one another in regards to their respective cultural practices. While Ottoman Turkish was the common language for the outsider and local to engage in trade, this vibrant and complex (non-Turkish) milieu serving as the engine for Kosova's distinctive character would become a point

[1]Ottoman troops had to protect the Russian consul on several occasions, BBA TFR.1.KV 10/929 Telegram from Prishtina Mutasarrıf, sent from Mitrovica on 23 Sevval 1318 [2 January, 1901]. In less than a year's time, locals successfully breached defenses and killed the provocative consul. See BBA YA.HUS, 436/6, From Sublime Porte to Ministry of War, 1 Cemaziyelahir, 1320/November 5 1902.

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of tension in a world shaped by Great Power intrigue, Ottoman reforms and neighboring territorial ambitions.[1]

It is safe to say that the subsequent encroachment of state power was resisted by almost everyone in Kosova. Albanians were not in any way "privileged" in regards to its dealing with the state, as suggested by Serbian historians today, but responded to increased taxation, the centralization of local power and forced conscription much as their Serb neighbors did. In large part, these reforms were not seen from the local perspective as positive things, but rather as devises to enhance the power of the Ottoman elite over the majority of the region's inhabitants. While school reforms, for instance, seemed to promote new levels of citizenship to the outsider, they often reinforced disparities of power between local and administrator.[2] Those administrators sent from Istanbul had little legitimacy among Kosovars in the Abdülhamid period, irregardless of one's "ethnic" or "sectarian" identity and soon, any measure taken by the state was situated in rather crude terms of "us" and "them."[3]

There is archival evidence that Ottoman officials did begin to administer Kosovar towns along a criteria based first by faith (millets) and then, at the end of the Berlin Congress, a differentiation between "Albanian, Serb and Bulgar" in ways that simply empowered the instigators who wanted communal war. In one such case, we find a long report is filled with references to the Albanian neighborhoods of Prizren accompanied with more general derogatory remarks made towards the population as a whole for their lack of knowledge of "Turkish." In distinguishing himself and the administrative class he represented, the official meant to assert a social hierarchy that would prove, in the end, detrimental of Ottoman rule as it would antagonize key segments of the Albanian-speaking population. On the surface this report suggests the unnamed official is reinforcing a sense of ethnic distinction nationalist scholars have been claiming for decades. I would suggest, on the other hand, that this document attests to an imperial position vis-à-vis the local population, one which held little regard for the local inhabitants, regardless of assumed ethnic loyalties.[4] The communal template used by the Ottoman official was indicative of the extensive changes in state administrative practice in the period, a practice that treatEd locals as subjects meant to be ruled over. These changes slowly transformed how Kosovar cities were viewed by the

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[1]For a specific study on the impact Tanzimat reforms had on Kosova, see Emin Pllana, *Kosova dhe Reformat në Turqi* (Pristinë, 1978).

[2]BBA TFR.1.KV 28/2774 various dates. See also Mustafa Ergün, *II. Meşrutiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri, 1908-1914*, (Ankara, 1996) and Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *IJMES*, 32:3 (August 2000), 369-393.

[3]See for instance, Süleyman Külçe, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Arnavutluk* (İzmir, 1944), 247-264.

[4]BBA, TFR.1.M 1/19, 3 Mart 1319.

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states that would administer them and much like in other colonial situations around the world, violence and significant periods of collective resistance followed.[1]

What this suggests is that long term strategies of the Ottoman government did not contradict those of their Greek, Russian, Bulgarian or Serb counterparts. The modern state Istanbul was trying to impose ultimately distorted relations on the ground between state representatives and inhabitants.[2] Kosova became the center of exclusionist projects, pursued both by Serbs and Albanians, eventually rendering criteria used by Europeans like language and faith pertinent to daily interactions. An interesting case in point is the intervention of "European powers" in Kosova/Macedonia in 1903.

The underlying logic behind European intervention in Ottoman Balkans in 1903 was to halt the explosion of "inter-sectarian violence" (primarily between Christian minority groups and their Albanian Muslim neighbors).[3] Taking into account my concerns listed above about how locals were often confronted with a number of options that did not necessarily mean taking an ethnic approach, it is interesting to look back at the materials produced at the time on the 1903 crisis to see how much identity politics was introduced from the outside. It is clear to me that the conditions on the ground were largely shaped by the manner in which European powers, seeking to separate "warring communities" instituted demands on the Ottoman state to grant considerable autonomy to Serb, Bulgarian and Greek communities. In effect, the British, French, Italians, Russians and Germans understood conflict in Kosova and Manastir as reflections of ethnic tensions and quickly instituted projects that sought to address violence along these terms. In attempt to confront this, the international governing body imposed a decentralized administrative regime in Macedonia, a regime that would permit "communities" to be administered by "their own" ethnic community leaders. What is remarkable in this project is just how manipulated the spirit of intervention came to be by local actors. Much like international intervention in the Balkans today has distorted local relations by adapting an ethnic understanding of conflict, European intervention in Macedonia in 1903 ultimately exasperated rural and urban violence and within three years, Europe's intervention had been determined a failure.

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[1]Again, reports from *Tanin* are most revealing, see for instance, dispatch from Yakova, 4 Cemaziyelahir 1328, 11 June, 1910.

[2]Çağlar Keyder, "The Ottoman Empire" in *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building. The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman and Habsburg Empires*, eds. Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen (Boulder, 1997), 30-44.

[3]For a comprehensive explanation of this see Fikret Adanır, *Die Makedonische Frage*, (Wien: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979).

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Much as it has been in recent years, the Ottoman administrative efforts to rule Kosova, was marred by the manipulation of sectarian differences by outside entities and astute locals who began to see their immediate interests were served by claiming exclusionist identities. Through a number of imposed "reforms" in which extensive administrative autonomy would be given to communities based on a linguistic/sectarian criteria, the European powers—Britain, France, Italy, Russia and Austria-Hungary—initiated the first large scale intervention of the 20th century that empowered a new generation of local leaders so identified because they claimed ethnic and sectarian identities.[1] Countless commissions visited the region, meeting with "community leaders" whose principle goal was to invite general condemnation of the Ottoman/Muslim power structures existing in the region's villages and towns in order to institute a dramatic shift in local power. Among the recommendations from these delegations of European observers was to institute a formal separation of the populations by way of the creation of autonomous administrative enclaves. As the Russian delegation insisted upon, significant "rights" of separation were to be granted to Serbian and Bulgarian residents with clearly defined administrative boundaries erected. Within these boundaries, these communities were to operate free of Ottoman state taxation, were allowed to administer their own militias with the assistance of those sent from participating European countries and to direct their educational and cultural lives free of Ottoman interference.[2]

The actual implementation of these imposed "reforms" resulted in the creation of dozens of incongruent autonomous enclaves throughout the Kosova vilayet by April of 1903. The frontiers of these enclaves, vaguely perceived to fit the limits of each community were immediately causing problems with these enclaves' neighboring, mostly Albanian Muslim communities. Protected by gendarmeries sent by participating powers like Italy, Russia and France, Serb and Bulgarian "communities" constantly "raided" "Albanian" territories, demanding an extension of their formally recognized limits of their communities at the expense of non Slavs. While the German and Austrian observers on the ground grew increasingly frustrated with these tactics, they also expressed fear that as a consequence, similar demands made by Albanian inhabitants would destabilize the whole region.[3]

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[1]Detailed reports from the Austrian consulate in the Kosova Vilayet's capital, Üsküp (Skopje) may be found in HHStA, PA XXXVIII/433 Para to Goluchowski, Uskup, 4 April, 1903. Report No. 100.

[2]See report from Austrian consul Kral in HHStA, PA XXXVIII/392 Kral to Goluchowski, Manastir, 10 March 1903 No. 21.

[3]See Baron Marschall von Bieberstein's report in PAAA Türkei 156, c. 49, A. 721 dated 15 January 1904.

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It is indeed unfortunate that the late Ottoman case is rarely cited as we reflect on what to do with Kosova today. Not only are there obvious parallels and indeed, even the main players are strikingly familiar, but the institutional rationale used to institute "reform" are remarkably unchanged as well. Ultimately, with a loosely defined and hastily construed administrative scheme, reform in the Ottoman Empire's third province was implemented under pressure from the European powers. The costs of maintaining a huge but largely decentralized bureaucracy that was at once meant to assure the security of these communities and basically subsidize the concessions made to Serbian and Bulgarian communities destabilized the entire region. The efforts to institute the reforms as demanded beyond these volatile enclaves began to overwhelm the capacities of the Ottoman administration. Albanian resentment took on violent form throughout the Kosova vilayet where, from its Northern frontiers in Novi Pazar to Manastir, Albanians demanded the state resist these reform efforts that disfavored them so clearly. In Kosovar districts such as Prishtina, Mitrovica, Gjakova and Prizren, Austrian consuls identified a growing movement to resist these reforms.[1] Ottoman reforms elsewhere in the Kosova vilayet reflected efforts to reign in autonomous regional "bayraktars" (or village heads) who exerted local influence, exactly the opposite to what was being granted to Serb and Bulgarian communities. These Albanian community patriarchs, much like Isa Boletini in Llap, about whom I discuss later, had exhibited great resistance to efforts to streamline economic and administrative performance of the Ottoman state during the period.

Much like their Serb and Bulgar neighbors, Albanian community autonomy was predicated on its ability to exert pressures on the imperial dynamics that surrounded their communities. What was vastly different in the case of many of these Albanian entities is they did not have foreign patrons to assure their protection from Ottoman persecution. As the Ottoman Empire during the course of the next three years sought to redefine its administrative structures, the advent of the modernist autocratic regime of the Young Turks in 1908 resulted in the significant rise of state violence against what were historically autonomous communities.

As one can see, the parallels with today are compelling enough reasons to rethink this race to decentralization being impose by the United Nations today, as the end result of the three year effort by the Europeans to impose "reform" in the Balkans was utter chaos. Two major wars which ultimately led to the First World War emerged from the social and cultural rubble created by these Serb/Bulgarian enclaves who increasingly tested the extent to which they could win more concessions and by default, expand their political and

[1] In 31 March 1904, Albanians in Vushtrri and Mitrovica attacked Ottoman barracks to protest rising taxes which many say as imposed to help subsidize the lost revenues from Serb exemptions. See report from consul Para, HHStA, PA XXXVIII/433 31 March, 1904, No. 16.

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commercial power at the expense of their Albanian neighbors. The pre-existing social networks that instigated the violence and brought the Great Powers to impose reform in the region in 1903 in the first place did not fade into the distance, but evolved to the new conditions brought forward by the intervention and eventual administrative chaos that followed. Decentralization actually empowered parties to adapt more "legitimate" means to expand their interests at the expense of the region's majority population.

The symbolic gesture of giving communities their right of self-governance served as a pretext for greater differentiation between communities which had for centuries lived side by side and often in harmony. Local power circles, who adapted to the institutional frontiers found new powers within the context of these decentralizing reforms and created a dynamic of violence that ultimately led to the Balkan wars and Kosova's annexation by Serbia.

Conclusion

While all of the above is certainly part of my argument, I would like to stress that the 20th Century was not the logical conclusion of 500 years of Ottoman rule. As hinted at above, Russian persistence eventually paid off in the Balkans. By the end of 1912, the enclaves of radical Pan-Slav activists created a new dynamic to local relations that neither Isa Boletini nor local Serbs could resist. Money, weapons and organization filtered out to targeted audiences, leading to a new rhetorical range of interactions between local Slavs and their Albanian-speaking neighbors. By 1912, Russian interference effectively tilted the local balance of financial and military power. Local Slavs gradually understood the power of such relations, and ambitions were reformulated to fit these increasingly rigid and inflammatory confines of imperial rivalries. The social order of Kosova had been irreparably changed.

Much as Russian efforts in Kosova took more than three decades to materialize, Austrian interests, often shaped by local initiative, could no longer expect a clear-cut world based on European demographic categories. It needed to engage the region on its own terms. This is precisely where Russian activities prove quite intriguing as it demonstrates their far less flexible and in the end, counter productive approach to its capitulatory powers within Ottoman boundaries had mixed results.

As much as Russian intrigue played a role in empowering local Orthodox Slavic speakers in the early 20th Century, we can say a similar effect was felt in areas under which Austrian and Italian claims to the local population's well-being were of concern. But this all took place over a period of thirty years. What has been demonstrated in this chapter is that initial

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assumptions about the capabilities of Russian and Austrian policy in the northern frontier regions proved erroneous. The Kosova and Iskodra Vilayets, a region problematically divided by a newly established international frontier, proves particularly intriguing as we search for patterns of exchange that were affected by historically complex processes such as modernization, economic integration and new standards of diplomacy. Both these regions of the Ottoman Empire proved to be at once contradictory and confounding to a regime of diplomacy that, while proving transformative, was not the single determining element to day-to-day life in the region. More research using this local perspective that does not over privilege the assumed criteria for how the Great Powers operated may help shed new light into the nature of great power diplomacy and the capacities of local populations to productively assert their interests in face of the emerging modern world.

That Russia had to actively modify initial strategies because their assumptions about where local Kosovar Serb loyalties lay were wrong should be a starting point for a fresh look into inter-faith relations in the Balkans before the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. In addition, how we observed the impact of fluid loyalties on Austrian policies in the vital frontier zones of the Albanian Alps equally suggest new study into the local capacities to appreciate the options available to them would be productive. How this translates into the study of nationalism and sectarianism in earlier periods, I suggest, is of particular importance as raising new questions about the relevance of the textual in face of the local. This could help us rewrite Ottoman and European history and avoid reinforcing nationalist myths that have distorted how we understand inter-human relations.[1]

In the future one hopes we could develop narrative strategies that allow various peoples to emerge in history by providing a conceptual space to recall their most important symbols, and retell the stories that have given their multiple identities temporary coherence. While we may find new ways of understanding the devolution of the Ottoman Empire using this method, I suspect such an approach has equal value in rethinking current areas of tension. One, for instance, can foresee more fruitful analysis of conflicts that have until now been marred by blanket charges of "terrorism" used by states to silence local communities who resist their abusive power. To better appreciate the complex social and economic origins of the conflicts in places like Macedonia, the Preshova Valley, Palestine and Chechnya it is suggested we can redirect our focus from a state-centered perspective to one that considers factors discussed here.

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[1]Ger Duijzings, *Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo,* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

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6

DEFYING THE STATE AND DEFINING THE STATE: LOCAL POLITICS IN EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN THE VILAYETS OF MANASTIR AND YANYA, 1878-1912[1]

Introduction

Over the past thirty years a great deal of attention has been paid to how late nineteenth century educational reform affected the development of modern identities in Europe and the United States.[2] As documented in recent scholarship by historians of the late Ottoman Empire, the same theories of pedagogy that found much interest in Western Europe and America also influenced Ottoman thinking about education.[3] Due to factors discussed below, the Balkans in particular was the focus of educational reforms instituted during the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909).[4] The schools built in the Balkans, much like their European and American counterparts, were meant to inculcate a level of homogeneity over otherwise culturally diverse populations. While this interest in state-led education has subsequently influenced our understanding of the period, it may have obscured an appreciation for the very processes required for schools to actually complete their task of indoctrinating an entire population.[5]

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[1]An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "Teaching Loyalty in the Late Ottoman Balkans: Educational Reform in the Vilayets of Manastir and Yanya, 1878-1912" in *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* [October 2001]: 15-23.

[2]One fine example is Gary B. Cohen, *Education and Middle-Class Society in Imperial Austria, 1848-1918*. (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1996). For an excellent survey of the influential American Progressive Movement and general issues pertaining to this period, see Mustafa Emirbayer, "Beyond Structuralism and Voluntarism: The Politics and Discourse of Progressive School Reform, 1890-1930." *Theory and Society*, 21 (1992): 621-644.

[3]See for instance, Ali Çaksu (ed.), *Learning and Education in the Ottoman World*. (Istanbul: IRCICA, 2001) and Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *IJMES*, 32:3 (2000): 369-393. For examples of Italian and French influence on Ottoman intellectuals bent on "reform" see PAAA 733/3, Die Jungtürken, 198 (Bd.4-6) and Sabahaddin, *Türkiye Nasil Kurtarilabilir? Meslek-i Ictima'a ve Programi* (Istanbul, 1334 [1918]).

[4]This use of education as a tool of centralization was adopted with even greater enthusiasm by the Young Turk regime after 1908. Mustafa Ergün, *II. Meşrutiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri, 1908-1914*. (Ankara, 1996), 157-354 and Abdullah Cevdet, *Dimag ve Melakat-i Akliyenin Fizyolociya ve Hifzisihhasi*. (Istanbul, 1919), 352-359. For a helpful interpretation of Abdülhamid's intentions see Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I. B. Tarius, 1998), 98-111.

[5]Abram de Swaan, *In the Care of the State* (Oxford, 1988), 52-117. For influential proponents of interventionist educational reform in the period, see Emile Durkheim, *The Evolution of Educational Thought*, tr. Peter Collins (London, 1977 [1904-1905]), Edmond Demolins, *L'Éducation nouvelle: l'École des Roches* (Paris, 1898) and Reginald D. Archambault ed., *John Dewey on Education*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

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To better understand the nuances of educational reform in the late Ottoman Balkans and how locals may have frustrated Istanbul's "social engineering" goals, this chapter specifically focuses on the empire's Albanian-speaking population based in the regions of Manastir and Yanya.[1] These two areas are particularly interesting because Albanian-speaking Orthodox Christians and Muslims coexisted with other Christian communities there, creating the pretext for what will prove to be a substantial effort to distance Albanian-speakers from each other along religious lines.[2] As we shall see below, schools built in the region became a central point of confrontation between local communities and their imperial patrons. Some historians have suggested that these battles over the region's schools and school curricula marked a decisive period of constituting the modern identities of the Balkans. Contrary to the claims of Albanian historians, however, the activities of the local Albanian-speaking population were not limited to resisting these Ottoman state and *Rum* Orthodox Church institutions that actively sought to subjugate them.[3] On the contrary, Albanian-speakers actively lobbied Istanbul for the construction of these Ottoman and *Rum* Church schools in their communities, and not necessarily their closure.[4]

Such lobbying was used by local Albanian-speakers to forge a greater individual or group role in regional political and economic affairs. As the frequent shifts in the focus of these local efforts will suggest, however, the activities of local communities should not only be exclusively interpreted as "nationalist" in nature. Ultimately, therefore, this article disputes the association between schools, school curricula, and the mechanics of national development. At the same time, it suggests that we should be skeptical about the effectiveness of local schools in securing the "moral norms" or "loyalty" sought by the Sultan and *Rum* Patriarch. Simply put, schools proved incapable of inculcating the loyalty Istanbul-based officials had envisioned.

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[1] Feroz Ahmed adopted the notion of Ottoman "social engineering" to describe the late-19th century effort to inculcate collective loyalty to the state, a description that is particularly evocative of the ambitions of the Ottoman state since the late *Tanzimat*. It does little however, to explain whether or not they were successful. See Feroz Ahmed, "The State and Intervention in Turkey," *Turcica* XVI (1984), 56.

[2] See French consular report for details of the Greek-speaking, Bulgar, Vlach and the Muslim Albanian-speaking communities in the region. AMAE Nantes, Constantinople Serie D Correspondence avec les Echelles, Janina, 1890-1913 No. 15 [henceforth CCJ, 1890-1913], vice-consul of France in Janina to Chargé d'Affaires at the French Embassy in Constantinople dated Janina, 20 April 1894. No. 6.

[3] For an example of how Albanian historians treated the question, see Zija Shkodra, *Qyteti Shqiptar Gjatë Rilindjes Kombetarë*, (Tiranë, 1984), 73-88.

[4] It is suggested here that for much of the Hamidian period, the *Rum* Patriarch (often misnamed "Greek") and the Ottoman state shared a common goal in establishing cultural and political hegemony over the Albanian-speaking population. This seemingly contradictory alliance had been noted by many at the time, including Federico Guicciardini, an influential Italian politician at the turn-of-the century. "Impressioni d'Albania, II" *Nuova Antologia*, XCIV (1 July 1901): 1-32.

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Knowing this, locals often used these "colonizing" institutions to dictate the terms of state penetration in their lives and thus maintain a balance of power between themselves and the outside world.

The Imperial Order of the Balkans: Pretext for Intervention

The factors that shaped the Ottoman Empire's policies on local education took on unprecedented significance during the latter half of the nineteenth century, much as with other empires during the period.[1] The assertion, however, that these policies could effectively and uniformly be realized in regions as diverse as the Southern Balkans ignores the fundamental tensions surrounding the provinces in which schools were built.[2] Much like other empires which sought to assert greater central control over their diverse populations, the goal of reformers in Istanbul to create a uniformity in how the empire's citizens traded, communicated and acted, frequently could not be sustained on the ground.[3]

Often, the impediments to empire in the Balkans have been identified in terms of sectarian (and later ethnic) loyalties—Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim—among local communities. These assumed loyalties have thus been used by historians to explain the extent to which some people "resisted" Ottoman reforms, while others, supposedly did not.[4] Unfortunately for the historian, the loyalties of many Balkan communities in the late Ottoman period were not based on a strict link between one's religious affiliation and apparent ethno-national identity. In view of this, there remain important distinctions within sectarian and ethnic categories, at the time identified in Ottoman bureaucratic parlance as *millet,* which deserve greater attention.

The aggressive efforts of the *Rum* Church to build schools in the empire after the 1870s best reflects the schismatic nature of the region's population and the motivations behind educational reform for both the Patriarch and the Ottoman state. At the time, the *Rum* Church was actively creating a cultural monolith that sought to eliminate the particularistic

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[1]For a comprehensive summary of Istanbul's activities up to 1903 see Education Ministry Yearbook: *Salname-i Nezareti Maarifi Umumiye* (Istanbul, 1321).

[2]For Benedict Anderson, the very persistence of colonial "habits" instituted by schools led to the successful penetration of imperial values into subject populations, a conclusion that evidence provided here disputes. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 169.

[3]As scholars of colonial Africa have clearly demonstrated, a number of local factors attributed for the divergence and specific lack of uniformity that frustrated idealist state-builders in Paris, London and indeed, Istanbul. For a survey of this new generation of scholarship, see Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review* 99/5 (1994): 1516-1545.

[4]Most recently, Tom Gallagher, *Outcast Europe: The Balkans, 1789-1989.* (London, 2001), 31-35.

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loyalties of the many Southern Albanian-speaking Orthodox communities in the region in order to move them away from the dangerous trajectory on which Serbs, Bulgarians and Vlachs had recently traveled.[1] Paradoxically, it was due to the fears of Albanian separatism that the Porte backed the *Rum* Church's fight against, among other things, Albanian Orthodox Christian demands for the creation of an Albanian church.[2] According to European observers sympathetic to the region's Albanian-speakers, Ottoman "reforms" were nothing more than tools meant to thwart the expression of the "natural" ethno-linguistic identity of these communities.[3] As noted by European consuls based in the region, the Sultan actively prohibited the establishment of institutions such as non-denominational schools that used Albanian as the language of instruction.[4]

The shared *Rum* Church and Ottoman policy of restraining possible nationalist ambitions of Albanian-speaking Catholics, Muslims and Orthodox Christians has its origins in the Slav uprisings in Bosnia and subsequent Russo-Ottoman conflict in 1876-1877. It was a consequence of the new frontiers imposed by the subsequent Berlin Peace Treaty (1878), that the Ottoman state sought to cultivate a new generation of Ottoman citizens who would be loyal to "Ottoman values," and not Albania, Greece or Serbia.[5] This problem of loyalties was at the time highlighted by the success of Catholic and Sunni Muslim Albanian-speakers in resisting the frontiers established by the Berlin Congress.[6] In addition, Russian success in redirecting the loyalties of Slav Orthodox Christians towards St. Petersburg posed a serious threat to the *Rum* Patriarchate and Hellenism in general.[7] In reflecting on the

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[1] See H.N. Brailsford, *Macedonia: Its Races and Their Future*. (London, 1906), 188.

[2] For example, the Boston-funded *Görice Arnavut Ortodokslarin Kilise İttifaki* petitioned the Porte for formal recognition, which it failed to obtain after protests from the Patriarch. BBA Bab-ı Ali Evrak Odası, 265991, 2 Saban 1325 [10 September 1907] and for the later repression of the *Arnavud Ortodoks Hristiyan Cemiyeti*, which continued to struggle for a national church, see BBA DH.MUI 31-0/25 1 Sevval 1328 [6 October 1910].

[3] J. Matl, "Neuer Beitrag zur inneren Geschichte Südalbaniens in den 60er Jahren des 19. Jr. s-Bericht des k.k. Consuls in Janina de dato 24 Juni 1868," *Südost-Forschungen*, XVI/2 (1957): 414-443.

[4] This took place at a time when other communities were granted institutional, political and spiritual autonomy from Ottoman and Patriarch controls. See AMAE Paris, Turquie, Politique intérieure, Albanie, 1897, Vol. 1: Ledoux to Hanotaux, dated Manastir, 8 January 1897, No. 1; and HHStA, PA XIV/24, Albanien. "Mémoire über Albanien (Ende 1901 bis Anfang 1905)," Calice to Goluchowski, dated Constantinople, 16 November 1898, No. 49 B.

[5] This fear of separatism could also be linked to the activities in Istanbul of an Albanian élite who, in response to the Berlin fiasco, actively lobbied the Austrian consul in Istanbul, Zichy, for extensive autonomy of all territories inhabited by Albanian-speakers. See Andre Novotny, *Österreich, die Türkei und das Balkanproblem im Jahre des Berliner Kongresses (Quellen und Studien zur Geschichte des Berliner Kongresses 1878)* (Graz-Köln, 1957), 335.

[6] Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malësore, 1878-1912." in *IJMES*, 35/2, [2003]: 237-256.

[7] Both the Greek state and locally-based Rum Orthodox clergy worked together to pressure Ottoman officials to stop such penetration of Russian interests. In ASAME SAP Pacco 666, dated Salonika, 2 May 1905 no. 945/194 Consulate to Rome, for example, the Greek Consul General and Church leadership in Salonika openly protested the opening of a Bulgarian school in the city, causing the diplomatic community based in the city to be divided.

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subsequent clashes over these issues, some historians have thus explained Albanian actions as manifestations of an "awakened" sense of ethno-national identity.[1] As a consequence, it was assumed that the Ottoman state and *Rum* Church attempted to fortify collective loyalties at the expense of possible Albanian national ambitions through the establishment of schools.[2]

A potentially controversial but helpful way of understanding this process of, "making Albanians into Ottomans (and Greek Christians)," to borrow from Eugene Weber, is to put it into a larger context of European colonialization. Despite the reluctance of most Ottoman scholars to recognize this parallel to European colonialism, a recent study clearly demonstrates that the same notions of cultural superiority and, more importantly, the ambitions to centralize power found in France and Britain, also informed Ottoman reforms.[3] Much like their colonial counterparts elsewhere, *Rum* Church and Ottoman state schools were meant to monitor, supervise and manipulate local populations that had been previously neglected by Istanbul. It is by appreciating the colonizing ambitions of Istanbul that this study can provide greater insight into the tensions of empire throughout the period. What makes the case particularly important is that Istanbul appears to have *reacted* to events on the ground in equal measure to its attempts to dictate policy.

The examples of the *Rum* Church and the Sultan's fears of Russian "penetration" into the region are particularly emblematic of the reactionary dynamic taking place after 1878 throughout the world. Russian-financed Orthodox seminaries and churches emerged throughout the region after 1878, creating what one scholar has characterized as a "spirit of competition" between rival imperial powers seeking to win the minds of locals.[4] Such factors ultimately forced the *Rum* Church, and later Sultan Abdülhamid II's regime, to dedicate resources to "reform" the region's educational system out of fear of "losing" large numbers of what were assumed to be vital components to Istanbul's dwindling capacity to reign in the Balkans.[5] In the

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[1]Examples of this rhetoric may be found in works written by contemporaries of the period, Christo Dako, *Albania, The Master Key to the Near East.* (Boston, 1919) and Süleyman Külçe, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Arnavutluk* (İzmir, 1944), 247-264.

[2]A conclusion that can be drawn from the more general work on the subject by Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi.* (Istanbul, 1991) and Necdet Sakaoğlu, *Osmanlı Eğitim Tarihi.* (Istanbul, 1991), 32-43.

[3]M. Şükrü Hanioğlu has done a remarkable service for the field by illuminating the extent to which popular European notions of social hierarchy were shared by Ottoman society's elite well before the revolt of 1908. See Hanioğlu's *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908.* (Oxford, 2001), 82-129, 289-311.

[4]Benjamin C. Fortna, "Education for the Empire: Ottoman State Secondary Schools During the Reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1997).

[5]See, for instance, reports on the construction of schools which Russia financed in 1897: BBA İrade-i Hususi 100/26.R.1315 (Serb school in Prizren) and İrade-i Hususi 53/21.N.1315 (Bulgar school in Ohrid). By 1910, Serbia and Bulgaria were able to finance and staff schools without direct Russian assistance. A report from the Italian consul in Uskub revealed that the Serb school in the city had a staff of 10 imported teachers while the Bulgars had a gymnasium and were building an elementary school. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 669, dated Uskub, 11 January 1910, no. 9/3, consul to MAE.

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end, little could be done to directly resist Russian pan-Slavic efforts to gain a foothold in the region at the expense of both the Porte and *Rum* Church.[1] On the other hand, institutions that were not protected by treaties, such as schools funded by the Albanian diaspora, American and British missionaries, or private Italian interest groups, were actively targeted.[2]

In one case reported in the Manastir vilayet in 1905 by Ottoman authorities, villagers in Bihiliste began sending students to a recently opened school operated by an unidentified Protestant group. In response, the local Metropolitan in Görice threatened to excommunicate the Vlach and Albanian families of Bihiliste who sent their children to the school despite the fact that no alternative Orthodox school existed in the area.[3]

In another case, *Rum* Church tactics in regard to the Italian-funded "scuola professionalla" opened in June of 1902 in the town of Yanya offers an even clearer example of its fight to eradicate "incursions" on the Church's ever-shrinking theological, political, and cultural sphere of influence. As the French consul based in Yanya reports, more than 60 local students, 15 of whom were Muslim Albanians, studied masonry and watch-making from Italian craftsmen sent from Italy. In response, representatives of the Yanya Metropolitan, as well as the inspector-general of the Greek consulate in Yanya, M. Gennadis, threatened the excommunication of those families who had children attending classes.[4] In a campaign that was clearly coordinated between the Greek state and local Church officials, threats of violence were printed in local and Athens-based newspapers; in some articles the threats were even directed towards school staff and the Italian consul.[5] Indeed, as is evidenced throughout the period, heavy concern over Italian "penetration" in

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[1]It was under Tsar Alexander II's pressure that on April 11, 1872 the Exarchate of the Bulgarian Church was formed. Although the patriarch declared the Bulgarian Church schismatic the following month, under Russian protection, no further action was undertaken to disrupt its development. See Richard von Mach, *The Bulgarian Exarchate: Its History and the Extent of its Authority in Turkey.* (London, 1905), 10-22.

[2]For an example of how the *Rum* Church blocked the construction of a Protestant Church in Ohrid, Macedonia in 1903 by first putting pressure on local authorities, then ultimately, on the Sultan himself, see BBA, İrade-i Hususi 18/3.Z.1311 [9 May 1894].

[3]See BBA TFR.1.MN 74/7333 3 Eylül [1]321 [16 September 1905].

[4]French reports on Orthodox officials using sermons to "violently attack the Catholics" may be found throughout the period. See for instance, AMAE Nantes: CCJ, 1890-1913, vice consul to French Embassy, dated Janina, 26 February 1896 no. 48.

[5]Within six months the school's staff, citing threats and a shrinking student-body, returned to Italy. See AMAE Nantes, Constantinople Serie D Correspondance avec les Echelles, Scutari d'Albanie 1900/1911 [henceforth CCS, 1900/1911] Consul of France in Scutari to Ambassador Coustans in Constantinople, dated Scutari, 26 July 1902 report number 285. For an earlier example see AMAE Nantes: CCJ, 1890-1913 vice consul of Janina to Linbert, dated Janina, 4 December 1890 No. 33 and vice consul of Janina to embassy in Constantinople, dated Janina, 30 June 1891.

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particular, animated much of the activities of the Greek consuls operating in the area.[1]

While it would be wrong to suggest that there was an air-tight alliance between the Patriarchate and Greece, the appearance of such a close relationship in the joint efforts to close down the Italian trade school, carried a great deal of political weight in the region.[2] For one, it instilled a perception of political ascendancy that was important in the Church's relationship with the local population during the 1870s and 1880s. As will be demonstrated below, it was often through Church and Greek state officials that local Albanians issued complaints, sought patronage, and educated their children. For many, therefore, the Ottoman state, at least until the late 1880s, had at best a distant claim to authority among the region's Muslim and Christian population of the region.[3] Indeed, as Italian records suggest, there was even an open disdain of education among some administrators, whose main task was to suppress Albanian-language demands, forcing many Muslim Albanians into the hands of Rum Orthodox schools.[4]

What some characterized as "Greek" ascendancy would inspire accusations from the Ottoman Muslim opposition against the Sultan. In July of 1909, the most influential Young Turk newspaper (*Tanin*), for example, exposed the discrepancy between the number of Greek-language schools in operation (supposedly inculcating Greek nationalism) and Ottoman funded schools. The editorial reported that at both the primary (*Iptidai*) and intermediate levels (*Rüshdi*), Greek-language schools out-numbered Ottoman state schools 663 to 135.[5] *Tanin* argued that the *Rum* leadership had successfully convinced the Ottoman state to concede the right to educate the region's Orthodox children to the *Rum* Church, despite the apparent contradiction with Ottoman attempts to instill greater loyalty to the Sultan

[1]In a translated article of the Keri newspaper, dated 9 January 1902, it is clear that Greek concerns of Italian influence over the Albanian speaking population. The newspaper suggested that Italian "created" an Albanian population and filling it with ideas of liberation, something Greeks could not stand for. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 665 dated Athens, 12 January 1902 no. 106/29 Legation to Rome.

[2]That said, Italian efforts often seemed to be more driven by fear of Austrian penetration in the region. ASMAE SAP Pacco 664, dated Janina, 15 October 1900 no. 326/78 consul to Rome. The consul reports that while visiting Prevese recently, an Albanian Catholic from north Albania with an Austrian passport was distributing Austrian propaganda and books written in Albanian. Another Albanian is in prison in Prevesa for disseminating Austrian propaganda in Premeti region.

[3]In an extensive report on the education system in Yanya in the 1880s, the French consul notes that due to an utter lack of state schools, the Muslims of the area did not speak Ottoman Turkish. Rather, they spoke their native Albanian and the Greek and Italian languages in which they sometimes conducted trade. See AMAE Nantes: CCJ, 1890-1913, vice consul to Linbert dated Janina, 20 April 1894 no. 6.

[4]ASMAE SAP Pacco 664, dated Janina, 2 April 1900 no. 95/34 consul to Rome.

[5]Mustafa Sufi, "Yanya vilayetinin ahval-ı umumiyesi," *Tanin*, 16 Temmuz 1325.

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and Ottomanism.[1] On these grounds, *Tanin* accused the Abdülhamid regime of ultimately allowing the marriage between the Orthodox Church's claim to a monopoly on the spiritual education of the *Rum millet* and the Greek nationalist claim of *megale idea* to gain leverage inside Ottoman territories. Not only were these accusations themselves revealing, but the fact that the Young Turk regime put so much weight into the threats posed by the "Greek" school is suggestive of its own efforts to address the question of the survival of the Ottoman state through educational reforms.[2]

Hijacking "Education" to Resist Church and State Hegemony

How the institutional alliances discussed above translated on the ground as far as Albanian-speakers were concerned is also instructive. For locals who may be assumed to have resented "Greek" incursions, initially at least, the large discrepancy in the number of *Rum* Church institutions and Ottoman state-funded schools did not necessarily prove to be of central concern. In fact, the large-scale construction of schools taking place in the region after 1870 may be seen partially as a product of locals lobbying Istanbul, Athens and the outside world for the construction of those schools. As will be demonstrated below, the discrepancy in school construction noted in *Tanin* goes a long way towards explaining the dynamics of local politics, and offers a good chance to counter previous scholarship, which has tied far too much significance to the "ethno-religious" foundations of those institutions.[3] In other words, rather than thinking of the hundreds of schools built during the period as exclusively products of state or Church ambitions, we can interpret this productivity as partially a result of the manipulation of the shifting ideological and political currents by locals.

We can gauge this by recalling the impact the Berlin Congress had on perceptions among Ottoman policy makers. It became clear to a number of well-established Albanian-speaking members of the Ottoman élite that imperial fragmentation and political intrigue in Istanbul had serious consequences for their home areas in the southern Balkans.[4] As often noted,

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[1] Similar concessions in 1891 were given to Austria-Hungary as per the Empire's Catholic (Latin) population in the Balkans, primarily in the hope of separating Albanian Catholics from their Albanian-speaking Muslim neighbors. See BBA YA.RES 98/7 for a variety of exchanges between the Ottoman Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Austrian consuls as concerns these concessions.

[2] That said, the new Young Turk regime continued to use the *Rum* Church in order to constrain the Albanian-speaking population in the region. See the order to build a *Rum* Church school in Çatalca, a town authorities acknowledged was "Albanian" in the subsequent report. BBA DH.MUI 49-1/7 16 Zilhicce 1327 [30 December 1909].

[3] See for instance, P.M. Kitromilides, *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe*, (London, 1994), 64-69.

[4] For background on the preponderance of southern Albanians in Ottoman power structures, see chapter 2.

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these élite responded with a series of demands made of the Porte. Initially, however, schools were not seen as a political or cultural end in and of themselves and were excluded from these demands.[1] It is instructive, therefore, that schools would eventually become an important part of future local demands, a reflection of the evolving nature of regional political and economic structures, and, perhaps more importantly, the shifting parameters of the debate in Istanbul. In other words, the more education became an issue of interest to the state, the more locals came to adopt the theme, ultimately soliciting state funds to construct schools in their communities as they searched for greater local power.[2] Significantly, rather than demanding for the construction of "Albanian schools," something to which both the Patriarchate and the Porte were adamantly opposed, local Albanian-speakers actively lobbied for first Orthodox, and subsequently Ottoman state schools. That is to say, locals clearly understood their limitations and worked within the confines of the current rhetoric for educational reform in order to solicit institutional funding.

As noted above, the clear discrepancy in power on the ground in the 1870s and early 1880s resulted in an initial period in which the *Rum* Church was ascendant in the region. An early report from the French consul, for instance, suggests that the Ottoman state was all but non-existent in the Yanya region in the early 1880s. This was most visible in the number of schools built in the area, of which 665 "Greek" schools were teaching 23,368 students in 1882 while there were but a few Ottoman counterparts.[3] To explain the political consequences of this requires a better appreciation for how locals interpreted the discrepancy, and perhaps ties in the lack of interest in Ottoman schools to a local perception that *Rum* Church and Greek schools better suited their interests.

What is key to understanding why Albanian-speakers initially sent their children to "Greek" schools and actively lobbied for their construction is that in the end, these schools could not effectively manufacture loyal "Greek" Orthodox subjects as intended. Instead, these institutions appeared to have provided the social context to create social networks that were instrumental to

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[1]BBA YA HUS 159/109 5 Sevval 1295 [2 October 1878]. The Kosova Vali (governor), Dervish Pasha, reported to the Sublime Porte that in southern Tosk lands, Albanians were demanding the creation of a single Albanian *vilayet* and political autonomy, he does not mention, however, any demands for Albanian-language schools.

[2]For the Ottoman state, full-scale implementation of an education infrastructure began in 1881-1882. See for instance the declaration by the Education Ministry for the creation of vilayet-based education councils. BBA Ayniyat Defterleri, 1420, 1 Safer 1299 [23 December 1881] and specifically for the creation of a Meclis-i maârif in Yanya and Selanik, see document dated 16 Cemaziyelevvel 1299 [6 April 1882].

[3]The consul notes that a total of 559 Muslim students were educated in Ottoman state schools in the entire province. See the annexes A, B, C and E in AMAE Paris: Turquie, Correspondance politique des consuls, 1881-1884, Janina, Vol. XI. Wiet to Freycinet, Janina, 3 June 1882, Report No. 81.

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a development of a number of future Albanian nationalists and more immediately, provide access to circles of power in the region otherwise closed off to locals. The most famous example was the *Zosama* school in Yanya, which attracted Albanian-speaking students from all over the Balkans.[1] Many of the Albanian-speaking élite who have historically been portrayed as the force behind the Albanian national consciousness, such as the Frashëri brothers, Ismail Kemal Bey, Daut Boriçi, Hodo Sokoli, and Jusuf Tabaku, attended this Greek state-funded high school.

This is significant on two fronts. First, a large number of Muslim students voluntarily attended a decidedly Orthodox school at a time when growing fears of Orthodox ascendancy circulated throughout the empire. Second, the school's stated goal was to halt the development of the Albanian written language, which was beginning to appear in Greek-lettered newspapers and illegal textbooks.[2] Despite this agenda, it was precisely out of *Zosama* that some of the late Ottoman period's most prominent Albanian national heroes—Sami Frashëri (Şemseddin Sami) or Ismail Kemal Bey—graduated.[3] To explain this paradox, a far greater appreciation of the local context and the motivations of the region's inhabitants, and not merely Hamidian or Church ambitions, is necessary.

Interestingly, by the late 1880s there is a clear shift in perceptions about the Ottoman school as Istanbul actively sought to establish a foothold in the region by engaging local interests. This can be observed first in the number of schools built in the region and more importantly, in which communities. If we compare the situation in Yanya as reported by the French consul in 1882 with the *Tanin* report of 1909, in twenty years the Ottoman state built more than 130 state schools in the Yanya region. While many would explain this by exclusively citing imperial ambitions to indoctrinate the population, I would suggest locals played a leading role in the process, initiating a reaction from Istanbul as opposed to being passive targets of Ottoman reform.

This is apparent by the active lobbying by locals of the Ottoman state to build schools in their villages. It appears that locals manipulated the pseudo-nationalist fears expressed by Ottoman reformers who saw "Greek" hegemony in the numerical discrepancy of schools in their areas. The Ottoman school, as articulated by local demands, was to serve as an impediment to

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[1]For a detailed report on the school and its role in educating the region's multi-confessional population, see AMAE Nantes: CCS, 1900/1911, Consul in Scutari to Ambassador Coustans, dated Scutari 19 March 1902 no. 207.

[2]Shkëlzen Raça, *Marrëdhëniet Shqiptaro-Greke, 1829-1881* (Prishtinë, 1990), 123-271.

[3]For autobiographical reflections on studying in Greek-language schools see Sommerville Story, (ed.) *The Memoirs of Ismail Kemal Bey*, (London, 1920), 17-18.

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"Greek" expansionism. Among the many means of attracting Istanbul's attention was the evocation of Islam, a particularly effective method of soliciting state money for the construction of schools in a given village.[1] While there is evidence of an assertive Islamization policy in operation in such "mixed" regions as Manastir and Yanya, there is another way to interpret Istanbul's heightened attention to the plight of its Muslim subjects. A documented attempt by local ulema soliciting Ottoman protection from "abusive Christian outsiders" in Manastir, for instance, could be read as an example of how locals understood their opportunities and activated current themes of imperial concern to maximize state attention and funding.

The chief of the ulema in the Manastir and Prizren districts, Abdül Halim wrote a letter that local Muslims needed immediate state assistance to help thwart "growing Christian influence" in the area. Using language that stressed their loyalty to the Sultan, in particular by reiterating Abdülhamid's claims to be the "Caliph of all Muslims," the local ulema clearly knew which rhetorical terms would resonate in Istanbul. The end result was state money for the construction of new religious schools in these areas and large stipends for Abdül Halim.[2]

This explicit and successful use of Ottoman state rhetoric to lobby officials in order to fund schools were not restricted to Muslims. A joint "Latin and Orthodox" commission set up in April of 1893, also in Manastir, sought assistance from the Ottoman state in order to construct village schools that would operate free of Greek state or *Rum* Patriarchate influence. This search for Ottoman state money in the 1890s in order to balance the power of the Patriarch suggests a shift in perceptions among locals that had serious consequences for the *Rum* Patriarch. As locals came to realize that the Porte's articulated concerns about loyalty to the Ottoman project could result in the funding of local projects if promoted in the right language, local Christians and Muslims redirected their lobbying energies to keep at arm's length *Rum* Church institutions.[3]

Locals in search of autonomy often used similar tactics in soliciting European support for the construction and maintenance of locally run schools. In September of 1903, the request for 150 Napoleons a year by a Draç (Durres/Durrazio) Orthodox school's administration is indicative of such

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[1]Many historians of the period suggest that the key ambition of the Hamidian regime was the unification of Muslims, enacted by the symbolic claim to the caliphate. Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992), 23-76.

[2]BBA Y.MTV 204/106 1316 [1899].

[3]BBA Sura-yı Devlet Evrakı 1986/18 [April 1893].

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efforts to lobby outside powers.[1] In sum, these local (Albanian-speaking) Orthodox Christians solicited French (Catholic) assistance in order to maintain a school that would operate free of *Rum* Church interference. Interestingly, the priests who signed the request promised their French interlocutor that they would teach students attending the school in the French language, a strategy that revealed an appreciation for French desires to gain a cultural foothold in what was an Austrian sphere of influence in the Balkans.

We see such manipulation of imperial concerns in a number of other examples, including the case of Hussain Bey Dima, brother of Abbedine Pasha, a former foreign minister. Through his family's Istanbul connections, Dima proved capable of securing funds to build a number of schools in villages surrounding his base of Preveza. What is curious about this case is that Dima actively solicited funds from both the Church and the Ottoman state over a period of twenty years. In the beginning, he sought funds to build Orthodox-run schools that would be operated by local Orthodox clergy. By the 1890s, however, as the Porte began to dedicate more funds to building its own schools, the same opportunities noted above enabled Dima, a Muslim, to use Ottoman state fears of losing its Muslim subjects to Hellenism. Dima began to solicit funding to build those Ottoman schools envisioned by the Porte, often side by side with the "Greek" schools he had built a decade earlier.[2] What Dima's case best highlights are the shifting political fortunes of the Porte in the region and the capacity of locals to lobby Istanbul for, in Dima's case, an extensive investment of state funds to a region that had been previously neglected.

The Dima example also suggests, however, that we are not necessarily talking about a single "Albanian" effort to resist the cultural hegemony of two colonizing entities. Rather, the cases noted above are better understood as examples of local Albanian-speakers seeking to develop their regions in ways that assured economic and political autonomy at the same time as satisfy personal ambitions. This is key to appreciating the role educational reforms played in the region and perhaps throughout the colonized world. Simply put, reform in the Balkans frequently reflected the influence of particular communities who lobbied for state money to be spent in their districts at the expense of others. How this translates in the Balkans is clear when we compare the rate of state activity in the regions under study here to that in the vilayets of Kosova and Iskodra.

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[1]The following men signed the request, Paul Terca (Albanian) Zessi Mangaritti (Albanian) A.N. Zanggevridi (Albanian?) A. Manuali (Albanian?) A.I. Morsi (Albanian) C. Spiroulis (Greek). AMAE Nantes: CCS, 1900/1911 Consul of Scutari to Ambassador Constans, dated Scutari, 13 September 1902 no. 243

[2]In either case, as the French consul reports, these schools were used by local Albanian clergy and teachers to secretly instruct students in Albanian. See AMAE Nantes: CCJ, 1890-1913, vice consul to Linbert dated Janina, 20 April 1894 no. 6.

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State financed schools appeared in disproportionate numbers throughout Manastir and Yanya beginning in the 1880s, reflecting the greater influence that southern Albanians had in Istanbul in comparison to Albanian-speakers further north.[1] As noted earlier, over 130 government schools were built in Yanya by 1908. In Kosova, on the other hand, there were only 7 Ottoman state-funded primary schools built in all of the Prishtina Sancak by the turn—of—the century.[2] Throughout the Northern regions, in fact, schools were primarily built in administrative centers as opposed to in villages despite the clear importance the region had for Ottoman hopes in maintaining a presence in the Balkans. In Manastir and Yanya, on the other hand, schools were built in a large number of villages, replacing traditional madrasas as the principal rural cite for education. My explanation for this discrepancy is that while Istanbul feared the expansion of nationalist sentiments in Kosova and Iskodra, the south received most of Istanbul funding largely because of those who lobbied the state. In a report from the Interior Ministry in 1880, for example, it is noted that the Bucharest and Sofia based newspapers "Shqiptari" and "Drita" were agitating local Albanians in the south to resist the educational hegemony of local "Greeks" by lobbying Ottoman officials for the construction of Ottoman schools in their villages.[3] The audience of these papers was exclusively southern Albanian-speakers based in Istanbul and in the region's main towns, suggesting a clear recognition of the collective lobbying power of this geographically situated interest group.

The educational "reforms" demanded by some Albanian-speakers, therefore, must be considered a partial reflection of the political currents circulating in Istanbul at the time.[4] Again, by the 1880s, there was an appetite for reform in Istanbul and money was readily available to those who knew how to access it. Since Southern Albanian-speakers were very much a part of Istanbul's power circles, their growing manipulation of Ottoman state concerns resulted in the rapid construction of schools in their home areas. This capacity to divert large amounts of state funds to their home districts created, in the end, a political (and economic) dynamic that greatly affected how reform throughout the empire would be implemented during the period and have a tremendous impact on how the post-Ottoman Balkans would develop. That said, it was not only through the physical construction of schools that locals were able to balance the colonial ambitions of the *Rum* Patriarch and Ottoman state. Albanian-speaking Christians also demonstrated an ability to become integral parts of the Orthodox and imperial educational system in ways that often thwarted Istanbul's colonialist goals.

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[1]Compare the number of state schools in each vilayet as reported in the 1903 *Salname-i Nezareti Maarifi Umumiye*, 318-322, 627-650, 661-676 and 698-706. See also Jashar Rexhepagiq, *Zhvillimi i Arsimit dhe i Sistemit Shkollor të Kombësisë Shqiptare në Territorin e Jugosllavisë.* (Prishtina, 1970), 151-52.

[2]Hysni Myzyri, *Shkollat e para Kombëtare Shqipe*. (Tirana, 1978), 32.

[3]BBA YA.HUS 217/67. Report from the Interior Minister, number 202 dated 15 April 1880. The Ministry also speaks of subsequent Greek state lobbying in Istanbul, demanding the Sublime Porte put pressure on the Romanian autonomous government to shut the newspaper down.

[4]Evidence of this can be found in the second issue of the bi-lingual newspaper *La Renaissance Albanaise* (Perlindja Shqiptare), published by Thoma Abrami in Bucharest. [3 July 1903].

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Infiltrating the Colonial School

Observers have suggested that the driving force behind the boom in the construction of Orthodox schools in the period was the quest to eradicate Albanian sensibilities.[1] Armed with the power to excommunicate prominent locals who did not comply with Orthodox policies and the Ottoman military at its disposal, the various metropolitans of the region engaged in what one visitor described as a "politics of occupation."[2] Despite the impressions of outsiders who expressed surprise over the lack of violent resistance, many among the local population did not acquiesce to this form of cultural colonialism. Rather, as often the case in such situations, locals adapted and used the very institutions meant to eliminate their respective localisms in ways that maximized their resistance to *Rum* (and Ottoman Turkish) hegemony.

Looking at how this adaptation took place in the operation of schools, therefore, may prove helpful in illuminating this point. It was often the case, for instance, that after the construction of a school, the *Rum* Church often appointed a local trained in Greece to teach the local students.[3] In fact, the use of locals trained in the "metropole" was a common tactic practiced by colonial powers everywhere at the time. Indeed, the Ottoman state adopted similar strategies by establishing military, medical and professional academies in Istanbul and other major cities.[4]

Ironically, these tactics of using locals to help indoctrinate the indigenous population often provided a prime vehicle to the resistance of state/church hegemony. It can be observed that despite *Rum* Church and Greek consular efforts, many of the instructors who taught at the "Greek" schools in the region were advocates for communal "rights" that contradicted Church claims of Greek cultural superiority.[5] An early example is the case of Koto

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[1]See for instance, HHStA, Ges. Arch Konstantinopel, Fasz. 422, authored by Zwiedinek, "Die albanesische Action des k. und k. Ministeriums des Aeussern im Jahre 1897." Dated Vienna, 11 January 1898, p. 5-8.

[2]Italian statesman Giuliano said as much in 1903 after visiting the region. See Giuseppi Shiro, *Gli albanesi e la questione balcanica* (Napoli, 1904), 428-429.

[3]For details of this process, see report of two recent graduates returning to their villages after receiving an education in Athens. AMAE Nantes: CCJ, 1890-1913, vice consul to Linbert, Chargé d'Affaires French Embassy in Constantinople, dated Janina, 30 July 1890 no. 22.

[4]One of the more informative examples was the Sultan's "Tribal School," which was meant to incorporate the empire's "tribal" peoples (including some Northern Albanian boys) in the fold of Ottoman governance. See Eugene Rogan, "*Aşiret Mektebi*: Abülhamid II's School for Tribes, 1892-1907," *IJMES* 28 (1996): 83-107.

[5]By 1898, Greece and an organization based in Athens, Sillogo, actively financed scholarships and the salaries of teachers in Ottoman territories in order to promote the expansion of Hellenic culture. In the Vilayet of Yanya, Sillogo invested in 1898, 2750 Gold Napoleons in schools located in Delvino, Premeti, Berat, Valona, Conitza, Prevesa and Gjirokaster. See details in Italian consular report, ASMAE SAP Pacco 666, dated Janina, 1 March 1898, no. 57/16 Consulate to Rome.

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Hoxhi (1824-1895), a teacher at the Greek state-funded teachers college in Qestorat near Ergiri (Gjirokaster). While the teachers' college was meant to build a cadre of like-minded "Greek" Orthodox teachers, Hoxhi secretly taught the Albanian language and history to his students, among whom were important future activists Paneli Sotiri and Petro Nini Luarasi. Ultimately, the bishop of Ergiri excommunicated Hoxhi, but his ability to conduct such classes for several years demonstrates schools' limitations in performing the intended colonizing duties.[1]

One can partially explain the failure to indoctrinate the region's Orthodox population by the fact that there had developed a veritable network of like-minded individuals involved in educating local children. While it is impossible here to discuss the socio-cultural dynamic of this network further, the active participation of large segments of the community in this process of defying the *Rum* Church in its Hellenization program is frequently noted in the archives.[2] In addition, parents felt confident that their children would both receive a superior education by attending *Rum* Orthodox schools and gain access to important circles of power.[3] In time, the Ottoman state, with the help of local representatives, recognized this dynamic and actively sought to improve the drawing power of its own institutions by increasing the inducements for those who attended their schools.[4] Lake Ohrid native Ibrahim Temo, for example, one of the four founders of the anti-Hamidian Committee for Union and Progress (CUP), became a student at the Imperial Medical School in Istanbul as Istanbul actively recruited promising students like Temo away from "Greek" or "Italian" alternatives.[5] Ironically, these schools provided the social environment for many future Albanian nationalists to meet and organize as well as the ideal forum for the creation of the Anti-Hamidian CUP itself, demonstrating in a dramatic way the failure of these institutions to instill loyalty in its students.

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[1]Starvo Skendi, *The Albanian National Awakening, 1878-1912.* (Princeton, 1967), 133-134.

[2]This is made clear as the Italian consul in Yanya reports of Albanian efforts to coordinate a common policy in local education. Albanians in Colonia, Castoria, Ghioriza in Manastir are working together with those in Lescovic, Premeti, Arghirocastro, Berat, Vallona, Delvino, and Filates in the Yanya vilayet on a common policy towards demands for schools and use of their language. They are having much support from local troops it is reported. ASMAE SAP Pacco 667, dated Janina, 28 April 1906, consul to Rome.

[3]See Bojka Sokol, "Origine sociale de l'intelligentsia albanaise à l'époque de la Renaissance," *Etudes balkaniques*, I (1982): 113-124 and Robert Graves, *Storm Centers of the Near East.* (London, 1933), 272.

[4]A wide range of "professional" schools received extensive funding from the Porte during this period, including a medical school that would prove key to twentieth century Ottoman social history. See BBA İrade-i Hususi, 133/22.S.1312 [July 1894].

[5]This school was by far the most secular and important institute to Ottoman politics of the last fifty years, and many of the CUP's leaders created firm links to ideas of constitutionalism while attending the school. See Rıza Tahsin, *Mir'at-i Mekteb-i Tibbiye.* (Istanbul, 1906).

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There are important sociological factors involved in this dynamic. The fact that education became increasingly important in the eyes of locals probably increased the necessity (or perhaps the hopes) to engage locals in the process of inculcating Church or state values.[1] The marked rise in students being sent to schools, however, also empowered local agitators eager to resist more openly the colonial policies of Istanbul. Moreover, it enabled locals to capitalize on this rising interest in education. In the case of *Rum* schools, not only did that mean that more Albanian-speaking students would infiltrate the teaching cadre educated by the Greek state, it also meant that more Albanian-speakers became members of the Orthodox clergy. Papa Kristo Negovani, a priest who received his secondary education in Athens on a Greek State scholarship, is a good example of the consequences of this demographic influx.

What Negovani's generation of agitators did was change the fundamental content of the "Greek" schools and create a new political site in which the cultural wars of the Ottoman Empire could be fought. More specifically, Negovani represented an important vanguard in efforts to institutionalize the Albanian language by secretly teaching it in Church-financed schools. Eventually, Negovani attracted thousands of supporters, leading him to openly preach the liturgy in Albanian, an act of defiance against Church propaganda that at once disturbed claims of Greek cultural superiority as well as instigate a harsh campaign against these Albanian-speaking clergy.[2]

Negovani 's actions caused institutional responses that ultimately intensified the contradictions facing the Church and its imperial patron. In the end, Papa Kristo Negovani was murdered for his acts of defiance to the explicit orders of the Metropolitan of Kastoria, Karavangjelis, concerning the use of Albanian during mass.[3] The subsequent list of southern Orthodox and Muslim Albanian intellectuals persecuted and murdered by the *Rum* Church during this heightened period of tension is a long one. Petro Nini Luarasi, Gjerasim Qiriazi, Nuçi Naço, Baba Duda Karbunara, Hamdi Ohri, Said Hoxha, Balil Tahiri, and Sotir Ollani all taught Albanian nationalist values or preached

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[1]Mirk Pirraku, "Gjurmë të veprimtarisë letrare shqipe me alfabetin arab në Kosovë," *Gjurmime Albanologjike*, IX, (1978): 203-16 and Muzaffer Tufan, "Makedonya Arnavutları ve Türkleri 'Case Study': Gostivar" in *Güney-Doğu Avrupa Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 12 (1982-1998): 363-393.

[2]Others who followed Negovani's lead were a local priest named Vassil, who taught in Negovan, the birthplace of Negovani. Vassil's teacher, Christo had been murdered on the road to Manastir in 28 November 1907 by Greek bandits. Vassil himself preached in Albanian well into 1909 in the commune of Negovan but was ultimately silenced much like Negovani and Christo by Rum church authorities. See detailed history of the use of Albanian in church liturgy and Greek resistance in ASMAE SAP Pacco 668, dated Manastir, no date, no. 227/79 consular report to Rome.

[3]He was murdered on February 12 1905, just two days after the Albanian-language sermon he performed in front of the Metropolitan. Jürgen Faensen, *Die Albanische Nationalbewegung*, (Berlin, 1980), 133-134.

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against Hellenism at *Rum* or Ottoman institutions. These men represented what could be called a Southern movement that challenged the culturally hegemonic forces of Istanbul from the inside, ultimately leading to their persecution by both sovereign entities.[1] Ironically, such persecution may have been the underlying force for inspiring future acts of resistance by a population not initially inclined to confront the state and Church.

The Albanian School

While most of the Albanian-speaking population continued to operate from within the institutional dynamics operating out of Istanbul, a small minority believed that the Berlin Congress signaled the opportunity to move beyond the clandestine use of Albanian. In 1885, with the assistance of influential members of the Southern Albanian élite in Istanbul and Bucharest, local Albanian Christians in Görice (Korçë) founded the first Albanian school for boys. According to Faik Konitza, just as southern lobbying helped secure funds for the construction of Ottoman and Patriarch schools in the region, Sami Frashëri's active pressure in Istanbul helped secure the necessary permits for the project.[2] The school's first director was Pandeli Sotiri who had been a student of Koto Hoxhi in the Greek teachers college in Qestorat and the editor of the first Albanian language newspaper of the Ottoman Empire, *Dituria*. In the first two years, the school would prove a success. As many as 200 local boys attended the school, suggesting to this small group of activists that there was a future for Albanian language schools. In response to the initial success of the Korçë school, Petro Nini Luarasi, Sotiri's fellow student in Qestorat, raised money and helped establish Albanian schools in a number of villages nearby.[3] An elaborate educational infrastructure slowly developed to accommodate the material needs of these schools. Textbooks prepared by the Istanbul based *Shoqëri e të shtypuri shkronja shqip* (Society for the Publication of Albanian Writing, directed by Sami Frashëri) and published by the Bucharest group, *Drita* were reportedly used by all these schools.

In response, Church authorities issued their usual threats of excommunication. At the same time, despite active support from the *Mutasarrif* of the city, Mahmud Pasha Elbasani, a native Albanian-speaker, *Rum* officials successfully convinced Ottoman officials to intervene, ultimately resulting in the barring of Muslims from attending classes in 1887. Over time, the effects of *Rum* Church lobbying of the state left the school with little formal protection in Istanbul, resulting in the forced exile of Sotiri by the end of 1887.

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[1]Hysni Myzyri, *Shkollat e para Kombëtare Shqipe*, 114, 137, 141, 161, 181, 218-220, 226.

[2]HHStA PA XIV/18 Albanien XII/2. Faik Konitza, "Mémoire sur le mouvement national albanais," p. 11, dated Brussels, January 1899.

[3]By 1892, Luarasi was able to establish Albanian schools in the villages of Luaras, Selenicë, Vodicë and Treskë with the assistance of Bucharest-based Nikolla Naço. G. Schiro, *Gli Albanesi e la questione balkanica*, 88 and Nuçi Naçi, "Shkolla shqipe ne Korçë," *Diturija* (1 March 1927), 170.

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Despite this fierce campaign, the school continued to operate, perhaps a sign of the level of influence supporters of the school in Istanbul had. Nevertheless, after Petro Nini Luarasi replaced Sotiri as director, the school had difficulty in attracting students. Eventually, the Metropolitan of Kastoria, Philaretos, successfully forced Luarasi out of the region as well, charging him of supporting "free masonry and Protestantism" as well as teaching "a language that does not exist." In labeling Luarasi and others associated with the school an "enemy of the faith" a large-scale program of excommunicating Albanian Orthodox Christians involved in the school started in earnest.[1] While these attacks were effective, the Church's belligerence alone cannot account for the eventual failure of these schools.[2] Ultimately, locals found no clear advantage to sending children to an Albanian school that incited so much ire and in all likelihood, opened few if any doors within the hierarchies of imperial power for those who graduated.[3]

That is not to say efforts to inscribe a "national" educational system halted altogether. Many still attempted to develop a curriculum and a student body that would eventually infiltrate Albanian society as a whole. In 1900, for instance, a report from Elbasan, at the edges of the Manastir and Janina vilayets, reveals efforts in that important trading city began as early as 1875 to install Albanian as a language of instruction. Two important local figures, Muhammad Has Topal and Hussain Zecca were actively engaged in conducting private classes in their homes. They also worked with the Bucharest-based group who published the textbooks for the school in Korça.[4] Five years later, there was clearly an attempt to continue this process on the fringes of Ottoman territories in Korfu, where the well-known activist Gaspare Jakova opened a private elementary school which used both Greek and Albania as the languages of instruction. Despite all efforts to attract students to this school, it appears no more than fifteen students studied at the school at any given time.[5]

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[1]There is a circular letter written in Greek which is addressed to the priests and the population of Korytsa (Korçë) that outlines the threats. HHStA PA XIV/21, Albanien XIII/18 dated 20 September 1892, signed by Archbishop Philaretos. See also Adelaida Ismyrliadou, *Koritsa: expaideuse, emergetes, oikonoma, 1850-1908* (Thessalonike, 1992), 27. [I thank Dino for this citation].

[2]Despite such pressures, the school remained open and an Albanian school for girls was even founded in 1891, reflecting a dogged belief in the merits of Albanian schools. The girls school was established in Korçë with money raised by Gjerasim Qirias and American and English Protestant groups. The school's staff were all Albanian graduates of Robert College in Istanbul or the Samokov American School in Bulgaria. By 1898, the school, able to survive despite Istanbul's opposition because of active lobbying from the American Board of Missions in Manastir; had forty-five full-time students, providing the only educational opportunity for girls in the region. HHStA PA XIV/24, Albanien Liasse XVI/4, Prochaska to Goluchowski, dated Manastir, 9 January 1905, no. 3.

[3]HHStA PA XIV/24 Albanien Liasse XIV/4, Kral to Goluchowski, dated Manastir, 6 August 1902, no. 56.

[4]ASMAE SAP Pacco 664, dated Manastir, 15 September 1900 no. 47/25 consul to Rome, an enclosed letter in French addressed to ambassador in Istanbul discusses the national aspirations of Albanians in Elbasan.

[5]See ASMAE SAP Pacco 666, dated Athens, 1 October 1905, no. 797/391, consul to Rome.

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These isolated efforts reflect the overwhelming failure of local communities to instigate a significant educational movement at this stage. I suggest the reason for this lies in the realities of local life and how locals understood those realities. The perceptions of what were the limitations for locals to engage in an open confrontation with the powerful entities in Istanbul suggest a great deal about the nature of late Ottoman politics. Rather than supporting the project of Albanian-language schools, most locals recognized the importance of remaining firmly embedded in an imperial system that was not necessarily seen as doomed to failure. Thus, by 1898 most advocates of Albanian education based in the south recognized that there were few means of pressuring Istanbul for Albanian schools.[1] In a revealing telegram sent to the Porte, advocates conceded the central role of the Ottoman state by demanding that Albanian be taught *within* the curriculum of those Ottoman state schools already built in Albanian territories.[2] This is a telling indicator of the limits of local agency and the parameters in which locals of empire could operate. It was clear to many that as long as Albanian-speakers operated within the rhetorical confines articulated by Istanbul, there was room to maneuver.[3] Once a community or individual drifted beyond those parameters, however, they were faced the repressive powers of the institutions of state and church.[4]

Conclusion

The story of these short-lived Albanian schools, glorified by Albanian historians as emblematic of an emerging Albanian national identity, clearly outlines the cultural wars that were taking place within Ottoman society. More importantly, however, the failure of these schools suggests that this particular anti-colonial struggle was most effective when conducted from within the very institutions of the colonializing entities. In this sense, historians who focus on the few Albanian schools erected in the period have

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[1]This would change again with the Young Turk revolution as witnessed in the elaborate demands made by delegates attending a congress organized by the CUP in Dibra, in what is now western Macedonia, in July of 1909. The gathering was intended to unify support for the new regime but it ended up producing a long list of demands for greater cultural freedoms. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 668, dated Manstir, 3 August 1909 no. 180/40 from consul to Rome.

[2]Nuçi Naçi, "Shkolla shqipe në Korçë," 166-169. See also HHStA PA XIV/24, Albanien Liasse XVI/4. Orhan Bey and Athanas Sina "Aperçu über die albanesische Knabenschule in Kortscha und die Notwendigkeit ihrer Weiterentwicklung," [Written in November 1899] enclosed in Kral to Goluchowski, dated Manastir, 4 January 1901, no. 2.

[3]Indeed, as a report in 1904 by the Italian consul in Yanya suggested, Church authorities openly acknowledged it had little control over the hearts and minds of local children, despite they had been educating them for years. In Argirocastro (Ergiri), Premeti and other areas, neither Greece nor the Rum church had influence on the Christian population. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 666, dated Janina, 12 June 1904 no. 17/4, consul to Rome.

[4]BBA DH.ID 126/33 1320 [1902]. Interior minister report, number 356 asks the supreme council to order the closing of Albanian schools as students are reported to have been taught ideas contrary to state interests.

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missed the central animating force of the period.[1] Locals understood the repressive capacities of the Ottoman state and *Rum* Patriarch and countered Istanbul's centralizing ambitions by infiltrating the very institutions erected to "educate" them. In sum, the underlying goals of both state and church officials, along with like-minded "Albanian modernists" who advocated Albanian schools were largely unrealizable in the late imperial context.

More generally, the very confines of empire as determined by the institutions assumed by modern theories of state to best inculcate loyalty, shaped the extent to which suspicion towards Albanian-speakers articulated policy in Istanbul. Albanian-speakers in the south quickly learned the parameters of this new imperial matrix and with the exception of a few overly ambitious dreamers, practiced an effective policy of lobbying for schools from within the confines of the imperial order. The central lesson to be drawn from this story, therefore, is that practical limits to creating a "national" or "imperial" identity set by the empire or local agitators shaped the very values of both the local population and Istanbul.

This chapter has suggested our focus should be one that questions both the functionalist assumptions about the role schools play in creating political loyalties, and anachronistic notions of a unified, monolithic "Albanian" national ethos. The question that this subject begs, therefore, is how regional tensions articulated themselves in institutions that often sought to sustain local differences. We must in the future explore the relations between the institutionalization of cultural expressions and the manifestation of local aspirations in the end of the nineteenth century while avoiding the automatic assertion of ethno-national significance to those acts. Upon taking such precautions, a study of this kind should pose a number of new questions that have comparative value to those who are studying other parts of the colonized world in the early period of modernity. This study may also help to conceptualize a different path of analysis that actively engages local actors, an approach as-of-yet-neglected in Ottoman studies.

[1] It should be pointed out again that not all Albanian-speakers supported these schools. Indeed, a good number of those involved in administering the provinces, such as Görice's mayor, Mehmed Ali Pasha Delvina, actively lobbied Istanbul to crack down on the school. See HHStA PA XIV/24 Albanien Liasse XIV/4, Calice to Goluchowski, dated Constantinople, 16 November 1898, no. 49v.

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LOCATING FRAGMENTED IDENTITIES IN SWITZERLAND'S OTTOMAN-ALBANIAN DIASPORA, 1899-1920[1]

Introduction

Historians studying modern European history have become increasingly interested in the role émigré communities play in the development of nationalist sentiments within diaspora-based political parties and cultural organizations. While this scholarship generally focuses on the post World War II period, it should not be forgotten that Western Europe, and Switzerland in particular, had also been a destination for Eastern Europe's and the Middle East's immigrants throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries.[2] I wish to explore this forgotten period in respect to Albanian immigration to Switzerland since it serves as an important reminder to, in particular, theorists of nationalism that so-called national communities are far from unified in key periods of political and ideological "development." Specifically, I will draw a picture of how Albanian subjects of the Ottoman Empire interacted in Swiss cities during a period that saw a dramatic rise in political activities among a number of immigrant communities. As will be demonstrated below, these activities included political violence, the lobbying of European powers and the publication of opposition newspapers and books. Lastly, as discussed with the case of Mid'hat Frashëri, this chapter will also demonstrate that Switzerland itself provided at the time of growing aspirations among the so-called "smaller" nations, a model for political and social cohesion between otherwise disparate communities. This, interestingly enough, took place when nationalism, as advocated by United States' President Woodrow Wilson's principle of self-determination, provides the ideological and diplomatic framework for the fragmentation of European powers along ethnic lines.[3] Serving as the ideal model for Mid'hat Frashëri's ambition to save what he

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[1] An earlier version of this chapter appeared as "Publishers, Hitmen, Diplomats, and Dreamers: Switzerland's Ottoman-Albanian Diaspora, 1899-1920" *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte/Revue Suisse d'Histoire* [2002-2003]: 309-320.

[2] Indeed, an Albanian Protestant actually traveled in Albania with a Swiss passport in 1906, proselytizing. ASMAE SAP Pacco 667, dated Scutari, 25 November 1906, no. 642/284, consul to Rome.

[3] For more on Wilson's ideological intervention see Donald Heater, *National Self-Determination: Woodrow Wilson and his Legacy* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

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conceived of as Albania from extinction, may suggest that Switzerland's place in the larger social and political scheme of European political history after World War I deserves a second look.

Switzerland: The Era's Social and Political Melting Pot

The first impression one gains from studying Switzerland at the turn-of-the-century is the plethora of ethnic groups that settled there. Along with Albanians various Armenian, Arab, Slav or Turkish communities were also active in Switzerland at the time. Often, because they shared a common interest in reforming the Ottoman Empire, a great deal of informal interaction in Switzerland took place between these communities.[1] While here is not the place to consider the significance of this interaction at length, I would suggest what happened in Switzerland among its Ottoman immigrant communities greatly affected how societies in the Balkans, Caucuses and Eastern Europe were to adjust to the post-imperial world which they inherited.

In this context, it is important to consider what impact the emerging liberal principles circulating in Europe at the time had on how Ottoman citizens in exile understood their world. While the notions of social equality, individual rights (for men) and a parliamentary democracy found great support among many members of these Ottoman communities in Switzerland, it is clear that such principles often clashed with more parochial ambitions. In particular, there arose a pronounced tension between the universal claims of European Liberalism as championed by those who would eventually take over the reign of the Ottoman Empire in 1908 and the equally popular advocacy of ethno-national rights. These at times diametrically opposed principles proved important in transforming how the Ottoman Empire's subjects would understand the limits of their political futures both before and after the First World War.

The story of how these diaspora networks operated in Europe at the time has been illuminated by some of the scholarship on the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP).[2] While the literature is helpful in understanding the CUP in Europe, it does not seek to situate any of the distinctive diasporas' activities within the geographical regions from which they came. For Albanian-speakers, for example, especially those originating from Southern

[1]For an appreciation of the diversity found in Switzerland during the period, the SNA prove illuminating. See 21/10557 for extensive reports on activities of the Young Turk activists resident in the country; 21/10563 on Zionists; and 21/10564 on foreign student groups operating in Switzerland.

[2]M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *The Young Turks in Opposition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 71-74 and *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 49-62.

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Tosk regions, political opposition to the Abdülhamid II regime was at once politically variable and geographically spread throughout the world. Aside from the colonies of Southern Albanian would-be state makers in places as far a field as Boston, Brussels, Cairo, and Bucharest, a number of individuals set up networks of self-promoting, often clashing social/political organizations in Switzerland.[1] It is important to stress, therefore, that while these organizations and the individuals who created them were living far from Albania, they still actively engaged in the political and economic events taking place in the Balkans.[2] It is in this larger Albanian context that we may best appreciate the nature of political opposition to the Sultan in places like Switzerland in all its inherent complexity.

Along with these more general observations to be made, we can pinpoint a dramatic shift in political rhetoric among the Ottoman diaspora over the period in question with a few key events, beginning with Sultan Abdülhamid's nullification of the 1876 constitution. Such a blatant move on the balance of executive power set off a chain of opposition movements that quickly found financial patronage among the Ottoman merchant families established abroad, among whom Albanian-speakers were most conspicuous.[3] Later, growing tensions within the empire manifested themselves in myriad of political factions that adopted the ideological precepts circulating Europe at the turn-of-the-century. In this way, much like the Albanians, Armenians, Greeks and Bulgars pursued a double, seemingly contradictory set of goals. The Albanians in Switzerland, in particular, sought to promote a variety of often contradictory political solutions to the "Albania problem" which emerged after the Russo-Ottoman war of 1876-1877. What is key for this chapter is to stress that these Albanians did not necessarily adopt a separatist position when seeking to deal with the empire's crisis. Initially, most educated Southern Albanians, today identified in the historiography as ardent Albanian nationalists, were in fact actively operating within the networks of the CUP movement. For our interests here, this translated into CUP activism among Albanians in Switzerland that did not seek an independent Albania, but one that remained in the integral part of the Ottoman state.[4]

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[1]SNA 21/13948 "Polizeiwesen, Uberwachung des 'Comité Central Macédonien' in Genf und dessen Vorbereitungen zu einem mazedonischen Kongress in Genf, 1899." HHStA PA XIV/16 LIASSE 3 Mémoire signed by Naço Niçio, President of Albanian Cultural Organization Drita, dated Bucharest, 14 February 1904, documents 44-47.

[2]The Italians were particularly interested in the activities of Albanians in Romania as a report from its consular based in Bucharest attests. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 667 dated Bucharest, 22 May 1902 no. 1144/103, consul to Rome.

[3]See Faik Konitza, "Mémoire sur le mouvement national albanais," Brussels, January 1899, found in HHStA, PA XIV, Karton 18, Albanien XII/2 p. 11-12.

[4]See for instance, SNA, 21/14248 "Jungtürkische Bewegung" BAr 1: Le Conseiller d'etat chargé du départment de Justice et Police, Geneve, le 23 Novembre 1895.

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The most visible of these Albanian/CUP activists, Dervish Hima frequented Switzerland during the 1902-1904 period.[1] Hima, a consummate organizer, had developed an extensive network of correspondence with various nationalists and Ottoman reformists by the time he visited Switzerland for the first time in May of 1902.[2] What is important about Hima is that he, like so many of his fellow Albanians who demanded concessions from Istanbul--Albanian-language rights and administrative autonomy--did not advocate independence from the Ottoman Empire. Hima was a strong supporter of the CUP and its quest to reform the Empire, not promote its fragmentation.[3] Together with Halil Muvaffak, the effort Geneva-based Albanians made to advocate for change was often confused in regards to how to approach the Ottoman Empire.[4] Again, Hima's seemingly contradictory ideological position found much support among key figures of the Albanian community in Switzerland. In their minds, the only way Albania could survive the expansionist ambitions of its neighbors was in union with a potentially great power.

Spending more than 15 months in Switzerland, mainly in Lausanne and Geneva, Hima engaged the activists residing there to help create a chain of closely linked opposition groups who were beginning to promote the CUP agenda in Europe.[5] Hima, by using the CUP platform as his ideological foundation, also organized Albanians in an effort to lobby the great powers on issues that concerned Albanians.[6] These initial efforts to influence Western policies towards the joint CUP/Albanian cause produced interesting alliances between Albanians who passed through Switzerland at the time. Among the more intriguing individuals with whom Hima worked in Switzerland in the pre-1908 period was the Spanish-born diplomat and political adventurer Prince Alasandro Kastrioti, a frequently quoted activist who claimed to be a descendent of the fifteenth century Albanian national hero, George Kastriati

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[1]Born Ibrahim Mehmet Naxhi in Ohrid in 1872, Hima became the chief liaison between fellow Albanian Ibrahim Temo, a leader of the CUP and the larger Albanian community throughout Europe. Most of the material gathered on Hima's activities in Switzerland comes from Ibrahim Temo's file in the Albanian Central State Archives (henceforth AQSH) Fondi (F. 19).

[2]For a complete police record on Hima in Switzerland, SNA E 21/E2001 A 80-83. Bern, 25 Juni 1902. "Die Schweizerische Bundesanwaltschaft an das Schweizerische Justiz und Polizei department: Dervich Hima, Kirektor der Zeitung Albania und drei Diener".

[3]Albanians living in Geneva established in February of 1903 *İttihad-i Osmani — La Fédération Ottomane*, which explored a number of solutions to the crisis plaguing the Ottoman Empire, one being the adoption of a French model of Federalism. These efforts, according to Hima, were generously supported by members of the Albanian community in Switzerland. Dervish Hima, "Muhterem Arnavud Vatandaşlarımıza ve Dostlarımıza," *Serbesti*, [28 January 1909].

[4]See Swiss police reports on Halil Muvaffak in SNA E 21/14248 dated Geneva, 14 December 1902, Report from Department of Justice and Police to the Minister of Interior, no. 548.

[5]Italian spies in Bucharest reveal the close relationship between Albanians in Romania, especially those behind the publication of Drita, an influential nationalist newspaper and Dervish Hima based in Geneva at the time. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 665, dated Bucharest, 22 May 1902, no. 1144/103, Consul to Rome.

[6]AQSH F.19 D.32/2 f.235-236.

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(Skenderbeg).[1] While Kastrioti's overall historical importance is minimal, he did help initiate a number of informal diplomatic projects, most of which involved extensive meetings with representatives from Russia, England and Austria. The context for these meetings is important as it is often forgotten how much diplomacy between the Great Powers relied on precisely these kinds of informal meetings with members of the Ottoman diaspora.[2]

What such informal meetings between activists and European diplomats accomplished was the flow of information and ideas that was otherwise obstructed by the more rigid diplomatic mainstream. European powers at the time were particularly keen on finding a sustainable solution to the crisis in Macedonia, in which a plethora of Bulgarian, Serb and Greek factions attempted to wrest the region away from Istanbul.[3] The crisis in Macedonia may be said, therefore, to have been one of those unifying moments that enabled men like Hima to use their extensive influence to link one understanding of where Albanian interests' lay, the CUP as the only viable opposition group in the region and European powers.

Part of Hima's strategies in influencing European policy towards Macedonia and at the same time indoctrinate Albanians living in Europe, was the establishment of a newspaper in Geneva. In September of 1903, Hima launched the weekly *Albania*, published in the French, Albanian and Ottoman languages.[4] To finance the paper, Hima, used his close contacts with the Austrian consul in Manastir to secure funds from the Austrian Embassy in Bern.[5] Hima's efforts as per the establishment of *Albania* in Switzerland signal to us that conventional wisdom about the role in Balkan politics of European powers is misguided. It was an Albanian, and not the Austrian state, who was ultimately responsible for reaching out and securing the funds that translated into the publication of an Albanian-language anti-Hamidian

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[1]One meeting in Lausanne was meant to consolidate efforts to lobby European powers about Albanian claims in the region. AQSH F.19 D32/2 f.233-234.

[2]ASMAE SAP Pacco 665. Throughout Kastrioti is arranging meetings in Paris and Geneva to solicit sympathy among Albanians living there.

[3]Because a large portion of the population in Macedonia were either Orthodox or Muslim Albanians, any negotiations on the issue had to include men like Dervish Hima, a native of the area. Hima conducted a number face-to-face meetings with representatives of Bulgarian separatist movements in the summer of 1903 in Geneva. AQSH F.19 D.32/2 f. 278, 283-286. Later in the summer, Hima wrote Ibrahim Temo that he also met with Bulgarian socialists, AQSH F.19 D 32/2 f. 273-274.

[4]For examples of this journal found in the National Library in Bern (with correspondent code number) see Albania 1903 Qq 512 1-17.

[5]On Hima's relationship with the Austrian Consul in Manastir, Kral, see AQSH F. 19 D.32/2 f.244; and for a letter from Kral himself, encouraging Hima in his Geneva project, see AQSH F. 19 D. 32/2 f. 279. See also later evidence of Austrian money supplied by the Bern embassy for Albanian newspapers: HHStA XIV/17 Liasse 16, 136-137 No. XXXI. von Gagern to k.u.k. Ministerium des Aeussern, Bern 22 Marz, 1913.

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journals.[1] This is a key point to which we must frequently return: There is a need to restore immediate political and ideological agency to these activists.

The journal *Albania* itself lasted two years, providing an extensive readership in Switzerland and throughout Europe an editorial focus that complimented the CUP message disseminated in other publications of the time.[2] In Hima's own words, the Young Turk organ *La Fédération Ottomane*, a publication in which he was also involved in Geneva, was meant to create an ideological continuity for Albanians that tied them to the CUP's larger agenda. This we can assume is what *Albania* was attempting to accomplish as well.

Not everyone shared Hima's ideas about what was in Albanians' best interests. While *Albania* clearly tried to promote "Albanian interests" it also actively sought to silence those within the diaspora who were demanding Albania's independence from the Ottoman Empire, a sentiment the Albanian leaders of the CUP rejected.[3] As evidenced in his editorials, Hima would actively seek to counteract separatist sentiments with his strong CUP-leanings.[4] In Hima's mind, calls for Albania's separation was only meant to divide the Ottoman nation and aid Greek and Slav expansionists. Hima's unapologetic support for the CUP platform, in the end, highlighted tensions among some important elements of the Albanian diaspora, in particular Faik Bey Konitza, the Belgium-based publisher.[5]

In addition to Hima's activities in the Swiss Confederation, Faik Bey Konitza is known to have an impact on Albanian community politics in Switzerland. Konitza's activism instigated, in the process, a rivalry between Bucharest-based Ottoman reformists like Hima and Ibrahim Temo and those in Western Europe who became convinced that Albania's independence from the Ottoman Empire was the only solution. The acrimonious exchange of editorials in Hima and Konitza's papers resulted in the counter-productive factionalization of the Albanian communities in both Switzerland and

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[1]For details of some of these publications financed by Austrian funds see Ahmet Kondo, *Çështja Kombëtare në Faqe të Shtypit të Rilindjes* (Tirana: 8 Nëntori, 1982).

[2]SNA 21/14249 Band 3 File on the Young Turk journal "Osmanlı".

[3]For instance, Italian reports from Vienna and Northern Albania that an Austrian funded Albanian organization founded by Giorgio Pekmezi, professor of Albanian at the Institute of Oriental Languages in Vienna is active. Pekmezi's group promoted the advancement of the study of Albanian language, a northern alphabet and Austrian interests. The organization also published a newspaper in Albanian and German which circulated among Albanians throughout Europe, including Switzerland. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 667 dated Scutari, 22 March 1906, no. 123/62 consul to Rome.

[4]In his diary-like letter to Ibrahim Temo, Hima recounts his numerous meetings with top CUP figures in Geneva. In one particular meeting, Hima goes to great lengths to apologize for an attack by pro-Hamidian Albanians on the staff of the CUP organ *Şura-i Ümmet* based in Kosova. In the days that followed, Hima drafted an editorial condemning his fellow Albanians for the attack. AQSH F. 19 D 32/3 f. 494-495.

[5]In Hima's correspondence with Ibrahim Temo, it is clear such a strategy created tensions within the Albanian-speaking community. AQSH F. 19 D. 32/3 f. 260-261.

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Belgium.[1] This factionalism was particularly damaging in face of the well-organized and sophisticated lobbying of European powers by Serbian, Montenegrin and Greek state agents.[2] The consequences of this infighting would manifest itself most clearly during the disastrous Balkan wars of 1912 and 1913 when Europe failed to intervene to protect Albanian territories from aggressive neighboring states.[3]

While that side of the story needs far more space than available here it should be stressed that the political sensibilities among Albanians cannot be assumed. There is a great deal of nuance to how individuals and the groups within which they participated operated along the margins of the modern world. Ultimately, the politics of this new era in global affairs translated into a pronounced rise in the murder of rivals, arson and other forms of politically-motivated violence within the Ottoman diaspora that alarmed the Swiss authorities.

Documents obtained from the Swiss National Archives in Bern reveal that Istanbul had a direct hand in this rise. Officially, the Sultan's offices lobbied the Swiss government to crack down on anti-Hamidian activities, something the Swiss authorities were not immediately willing to do.[4] Unable to convince the Swiss State to crack down on its opponents, Istanbul apparently stepped up its own efforts to deal with the CUP and other anti-Hamidian groups by infiltrating the Swiss diaspora with spies and possibly even assassins. It becomes clear over time that Istanbul's infiltration of local opposition groups led to the documented rise in political violence, ultimately forcing a change in the attitude Swiss authorities had towards their previously welcome guests. Greater surveillance of Ottoman opposition figures and the Sultan's agents begin to emerge in police records.[5] Among these files one may find the case of Visko Babatahsi, providing a colorful example of how parochial Albanian issues and larger Ottoman politics intersected.[6]

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[1]On activities of Albanians in Brussels, in particular Faik Konitza, see ASMAE SAP Pacco 665 dated Brussels, 10 September 1902 no. 504/209 ambassador to Rome.

[2]According to one account, Mitar Martinovic, a Belgrade spy, met with a Montenegrin delegation and their Russian counterparts in a Geneva restaurant on July 6, 1912 to organize the attack of Northern Albania the following month. Zhiyko Pavlovic, *Opsada Skadra* [The Siege of Shkoder] (Belgrade, 1926), 23-25.

[3]For a summery of Hima's activities after the CUP came to power and his slow disillusionment with the regime in Istanbul see ASMAE SAP Pacco 668, dated Scutari, 31 March 1909, no. 277/104 consul to Rome.

[4]SNA 21/14250 Jungtürische Bewegung 1900. Enclosed in this file are a series of letters from the Ottoman consul in Geneva informing local authorities that he would intervene against the Young Turk press and wanted their assistance.

[5]SNA 21/14248 BAr 132 reports of the activities of a number of "Anarchist" groups organizing the assignation of the Sultan. See BArs 148 and 149 for the list of those interrogated and the transcripts of those interrogations. Eventually, the Swiss authorities did put pressure on the Albanians living in the Federation, Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution*, 53 ff. 22.

[6]On Visko Babatahsi's activities in Brussels, see ASMAE SAP Pacco 665, dated Brussels, 10 September 1902, no. 504/209 Ambassador to Rome.

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We first run into Visko through an informant to the Geneva municipal police, Rahmi Mustapha, who was being interrogated for his own possible involvement in a Hamidian plot to sabotage CUP activities. Visko was identified as "un agent provocateur...un Albanais qui... d'après les renseignements que j'ai [Mustapha] sur lui, est excessivement dangereux, capable parfaitement d'un crime."[1] Alarmed by these accusations, local authorities surveyed Visko's home located on 4 Quai du Cheval Blanc in Geneva, in the hope of preventing Visko from committing any acts of violence.[2]

In addition to following Visko on his daily activities in Geneva, Swiss authorities conducted a background check on him, working closely with their homologues in France and Belgium.[3] Upon learning of Visko's colorful criminal past in Belgium, Geneva police took him into custody for questioning on October 6, 1899.[4] In the records of the subsequent interrogation, Visko, self-described as an Ottoman subject and a journalist by trade, proved incapable of telling a straight story. According to the transcript of the interrogation, for example, the police repeatedly asked Visko about his apparent relationship with the Ottoman consul in Geneva, Resoul [sic], with whom, it was already known by police, Visko met on a number of occasions. Visko insisted that he simply was attempting to obtain a passport, replacing the one that expired during his stay in the country. Despite his denials of being an "agent" of the consul, the police had collected strong material evidence that proved otherwise.[5]

The interrogation of Visko provides a fascinating window into the workings of local authorities as they tried to deal with an increasingly tense situation in the country. The authorities were quite thorough with Visko and seemed determined to find a reason to evict him. The police cite a letter found in Visko's apartment in which Visko apparently scribbled hastily "Je suis brûlé." Visko's attempt to deny any significance to the sentence — "Cette

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[1]SNA 21/14248 "Jungtürkische Bewegung" BAr 127: 29 Septembre, 1899.

[2]SNA 21/14249 BAr 150: A letter from the Hôtel du Ville dated Mercredi le 27 Septembre 1899 provides the initial information gathered on Visko Babatahsi which included news that he was seen speaking to staff members of the local Albanian newspaper. SNA 21/14249 Band 1 Jungtürk Bewegung—Bericht der Bundesanwaltschaft vom 30.10.1899 Bar 3: contains the order to "faire surveiller Babatahsi".

[3]SNA 21/14248 BAr 132: Some key information taken from the full report on Babatahsi reveals that he, among other things, was arrested in Brussels earlier in 1899 for one month on charges of "outrage aux mœurs".

[4]The full transcript of this interrogation can be found in SNA 21/14248 BAr: 159. Please note that the police report is filed in SNA 21/14248 Bar 132.

[5]The Italians too, were apparently interested in Babatashi and had been following his movements since his stay in Brussels, where he reportedly had good relations with Faik Konitza, one of Sultan Abdulhamid's principle enemies in the Albanian diaspora. I suggest Babatashi was busy spying on Konitza when he was arrested and thrown out of Belgium. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 665, dated Brussels, 10 September 1902, no. 504/209 Ambassador to Rome.

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phrase était écrite pour faire partie d'une lettre d'amour et devait signifier je suis brûlé d'amour"—did not assuage the suspicions of Geneva's police.[1] While the intended recipient of Visko's "love letter" is never identified, by the end of the interrogation authorities had had enough of Visko's "lies" and recommended that he be thrown out of the Confederation.[2]

If indeed Visko was an agent, as Swiss authorities believed, this case suggests that Abdülhamid's security apparatus, on the grounds of intelligence gathered in Cairo, (from where some of the material evidence found on Visko originated) organized through its Paris, Brussels and Geneva consulates the infiltration of the local opposition community in Geneva. The Visko case offers intriguing possibilities, one that can only be appreciated in the context of the many inter-Albanian rivalries previously noted. It needs to be stressed again, therefore, that not all Albanians were opposed to the Sultan. The case of Visko points to this perfectly. The same holds true to the fact that not all among those who opposed the Sultan necessarily agitated for an independent Albania. That this ideological diversity existed among Albanians leading up to the 1908 coup that put elements of the CUP into power in Istanbul complicates the various histories of the Ottoman opposition and the diaspora out of which the anti-Hamidian forces came. This deeper appreciation of these contradictory forces should help refocus our attention to spend more time on previously assumed secondary issues.

Prominent Exiles: The Case of Mid'hat Frashëri

Dervish Hima and to a lesser extent Visko Babatahsi operated in Europe during a highly contentious period that nevertheless offered them a number options. Much of these political possibilities available to members of the Albanian diaspora were eliminated by the time of the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. I introduce Mid'hat Frashëri to this study because his activities in Switzerland provide a fine overview of the impact this late period of disintegration and uncertainty had on the ambitions of Albanians living in Switzerland.[3] Once an Ottoman bureaucrat in Palestine and the nephew of prominent Albanian nationalists Samsaddin Sami (Sami Frashëri) and Naim Frashëri, Mid'hat Frashëri began his activist career in the years leading up to the CUP take over of power. Through the publication in French of a number of articles under the pseudonym, Lumo Skëndo, Frashëri personified the Balkan intellectual persona who sought to shape the future of their respective nations. While Frashëri abandoned the ideals of Ottomanism after 1908, that did not mean he gave up on integrationist models all together.

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[1] SNA 21/14248 BAr 161.

[2] SNA 21/14248 BAr 141. On October 14 authorities expelled Visko from Switzerland.

[3] A new, authoritative study on Mid'hat Frashëri has been released in Albania, which nevertheless, fails to put him into the larger political context of the period. Uran Butka, *Gjeniu i Kombit,* (Tirana: Drier, 2001).

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Frashëri was deeply impressed by Switzerland when he settled down in Lausanne in 1915. Its apparent success in sustaining harmony despite the linguistic, cultural and socio-economic differences of its population represented an actualization of long-held Ottomanist values. The country ultimately would become the political and legal model upon which Frashëri would base his ambitious program for a future, independent Albania.

During the Great War, Switzerland was the safe haven of Europe's intellectuals and, importantly, many of the would-be nation-builders. Abbas Hilmi, the exiled Egyptian Khedive, for example, met with prominent Albanians in Zurich and Geneva in 1915 in seeking to mobilize sympathy among his fellow Albanians, against British intrigue.[1] Other prominent Albanian activists, most notably the publisher who wrote under the pseudonym Tourtoulis, operated out of Switzerland during the war. Tourtoulis, much like Frashëri, actively published in a number of European journals and newspapers and lobbied European powers about the need to protect neutral Albania from Serbian, Bulgarian and Greek designs.[2]

What is particularly interesting about Tourtoulis' case is that he departed from the tactics of his fellow countrymen. Tourtoulis was the only Albanian in Europe who actively engaged the United States in his attempts to protect Albanian interests. This foresight may prove key to appreciating the general impact President Wilson's ideas had on European peoples at the time. More importantly for our purposes, however, Tourtoulis' articles and his championing of the Americans represented another significant fissure between Albanian activists.[3]

Quite contrary to Tourtoulis, Frashëri sought to cultivate a continental readership. While in Switzerland, Frashëri actively published polemical articles concerning Balkan ethnic communities and political guidebooks for his fellow countrymen in the hope of shaping their still unrefined notions of what Albania should look like when the war ended. Most conspicuous was his evocative publication "Letter from a trip to Zurich" published in Sofia, 1916.[4]

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[1]SNA 21/14254 BAr 20, reports on the Khedive of Egypt's visit in Geneva. In BAr 15, dated May 6 1915, Abbas Hilmi is reported to have met with Nomeddin Bey Vlora, a prominent Albanian who had many links in Egypt.

[2]SNA 21/14254 BAr 25 for interview of Tourtoulis in September 1915 issue of the Journal *Suisse*.

[3]See USNA RG 59/M1211 Roll 1, 875700/6 To Wilson from le Comité Albanais, Lausanne, le 27 Février 1916. and USNA RG 59/M1211 Roll 1, 87500/10 an enclosed letter from Dr. M Tourtoulis, representative in Switzerland of the Albanian Federation of the USA, dated Lausanne, 17 September 1917.

[4]"Letra mbi një udhëtim në Zvicër," (Sofia: Kristo Luarasi, 1916). His fascination for the extensive educational system, the libraries and museums translated into an exalted admiration for Switzerland and how it could be a model for a future Albania. See Mid'hat Frashëri, *Mbresa udhëtimesh* (Tiranë: Lumo Skëndo, 1999).

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In this short text Frashëri took great pains to evoke the dramatic similarities between Switzerland and Albania, not only topographically but also socio-politically, a tactic clearly aimed at the embedded traditions of European power. According to Frashëri, Swiss stability and economic prosperity, despite its ethnic and linguistic diversity, served as the perfect model for a future Albania. Switzerland's success proved to Frashëri that Albania's own complexities and apparent "contradictions" (Albanians' confessional loyalties included the Orthodox and Catholic churches as well as myriad of Sufi orders and Sunni Islam) did not have to lead to the political chaos ravaging the region at the time. Elsewhere in his treatments on the Swiss model, Frashëri spent time emphasizing Switzerland's dedicated neutrality and yet formidable defense capabilities, a model particularly appealing for Albanians who at the time were being torn apart by the very system of alliances that Switzerland had successfully avoided.

In the end, Albanians such as Frashëri failed to win much sympathy from European diplomats whose interests in defeating the Germans meant Albania was but a bargaining piece for allied Balkan states like Serbia and Greece. Much like the significant differences of opinion between Konitza and Hima in 1903-1904, the realities facing Albanians during World War I led to Tourtoulis' still unappreciated approach to diplomacy noted above. The new tactic initiated by Tourtoulis to actively engage the United States proves that an interesting and perhaps telling break from past reliance on European powers had taken place among some of Europe's people.[1] That said, for the model as advocated by Frashëri, such particularistic agendas posed a serious threat to an Albanian "nation" that, much like Switzerland, suffered from the fact that its population may have had a number of contradictory loyalties vulnerable to outside manipulation. In the end, it appears Frashëri anticipated the political and economic chaos of the post World War I period in Albanian history, a period that saw the permanent separation of Kosova, the Malësore and Chameria from Albanian territories and the ultimate occupation of Albania itself by fascist Italy.

Conclusion

There is a general misunderstanding as to what role communities like those found in Switzerland played in the events that shaped the history of the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans in particular. What we learn from this brief overview of the Albanian diaspora in Switzerland at the turn-of-the-century is

[1] At the close of the war, suspicious of Europeans, local Albanians demanded that the US be granted a mandate to rule Albania in order to protect the country from Serbian and Greek forces. USNA RG 59/M1211 Roll 1, 87500/35 British Embassy, Washington DC to US Secretary of State, 6 November 1918.

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how much local politics fused with the global theatre in which Switzerland was situated. Individual and group agendas often clashed in Switzerland as a consequence. But as the dynamics of the Balkans spilled into the cafes and back streets of Swiss cities, so too did the serenity of the country provide the ideal arena in which new alliances could be made and guidelines for nations to be drawn. It is clear from the preceding material that there is a great need to develop a more sensitive medium of analysis in order that we pick out the details of regional and personal factors that help shape the events under study here. By studying the Albanian diaspora in Switzerland not as a monolith but as an extension of a social and political matrix of contradictory interests and needs, we may better appreciate the vibrancy of the turn-of-the-century Swiss cities, the contradictory forces influencing the political ambitions of men who lived in those cities, and ultimately the forces that shaped the post-War world.

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8

UNDRESSING MALËSORE ALBANIANS: REWRITING LATE OTTOMAN HISTORY THROUGH İTS MATERIAL CULTURE

Introduction

As indicated in recent scholarship there are an almost inexhaustible number of questions to be asked of the complex and multifaceted Ottoman Empire. Thanks to the innovations of a growing number of contributors to the field, these complex questions are being answered in ways that correspond with the critical attention other societies in Europe have been given over the last few decades. I wish to contribute to this body of work by exploring late nineteenth century Ottoman society through aspects of the material culture of the Malësore in Northern Albania. Although the area has largely been neglected in the historiography, it had nevertheless been very much the focus of turn-of-the-century diplomatic rivalries pitting the Great Powers against each other since the Berlin Congress of 1878. In many ways, because of the kinds of forces working within the highlands of Albania, one can argued that the Malësia is a perfect microcosm of the late Ottoman cultural, political and socioeconomic currents as a whole.

While the study here will have its empirical, even descriptive aspects to it, I wish to use this forum to also suggest that we keep in mind the larger methodological implications of studying the region's material culture. This has particularly important consequences when we take into consideration the largely neglected role ethno-historical questions have played in understanding the Ottoman legacy in the context of contemporary Balkan society. I have taken a particularly impressionistic approach for this chapter by studying Ottoman era photographs as well as drawings depicting daily life in the region. I suggest the kinds of social meaning locals attached to their clothing have a great deal to tell us about many of the events upon which historians have previously focused. A careful appreciation for the interactive gestures clothing patterns make among the daily participants of life in the region can demonstrate how, even in such seemingly "isolated" areas of the Ottoman

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Empire, the material translation of imperial rule and the fluid exchange of the symbols of power can be explored.[1]

Exploring Social History in Clothing

Quite correctly, dress has been characterized as an assemblage of body modifications and/or supplements presented by a person or people engaged in a process of "communicating" with other human beings.[2] As a tool for the historian, clothing thus potentially acts as a signifier in a society where dress was distinctively inscribed with regional distinctions, gendered and often modified with highly individualistic signifying patterns. According to Andromaqi Gjergji, an authority on Albanian dress of the 20th Century, "dressing remains one of the most powerful manifestations of [Albanian] popular culture,"[3] manifestations which take on four functions: practical, aesthetic, ceremonial and ritual.[4] While such statements are so obvious that they are almost indisputable, there is a danger in accepting such conclusions for the historian without careful analysis of particular temporal and geographic contexts.

It is suggested that the historian of the late 19th century have an invaluable, if until recently neglected, tool available to them in their search to better understand the history of the Ottoman Empire. Photos and paintings serve as important windows into the nature of domestic life among a particular group and refute certain assertions. In particular, photographs taken in the period may help decipher the status of interregional relations at any one moment, the currents of cultural and economic interaction as well as the nature of state and society interaction. Indeed, it will be suggested that a complex interactive process took place between people of quite complicated and diverse backgrounds that can be deciphered through these images.[5] Here, the Malësore

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[1]This type of inquiry is represented at this stage by the growing literature on cross-cultural dressing, a domain still dominated by gender studies. Fairly representative of this literature is Reina Lewis' recent article, "On Veiling, Vision and Voyage: Cross-Cultural Dressing and Narratives of Identity," *Interventions* 1 (4): 500-520.

[2]Joanne B. Fischer and Mary Ellen Roach-Higgins, *Dress and Gender: Making and Meaning in Cultural Contexts* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 8-28.

[3]Andromaqi Gjergji, *Veshjet Shqiptare në Shekuj: Origjina Tipologjia Zhvillimi*, (Tirana: Academy of Sciences, 1988), 233.

[4]Andromaqi Gjergji, "Variations in Traditional Clothing According to its Function," *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie*, 30, 2 (1994): 131-148.

[5]That said, I am aware of the complicated relationship between the photograph and its instrumentalization in the period covered here. Indeed, embedded in the pursuit of these images, we must not lose touch with the perspective of those recreating "Albanian" life and how connected it is with European fantasies of what was expected in the exotic Albanian Alps. For treatment on this issue of photography, ethnography and the European consumer culture that created the demand, see Christopher Pinney, "Classification and Fantasy in the Photographic Construction of Caste and Tribe," *Visual Anthropology*, 3, (1990): 259-88 and Elizabeth Edwards, "Photographic 'Types:' The Pursuit of Method," *Visual Anthropology*, 3, (1990): 235-58.

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of highland Albania serve as that geographic and ethnographic site of inspection precisely because it has often been associated with cultural rigidity and economic isolation. In analyzing the material culture reproduced in Malësore clothing patterns during the late 19th century, I argue we gain an important tool in understanding the extent to which social and political order was established and challenged during a crucial period of the Balkans' history.[1] Rather than simply helping us identify groups, material culture may also help us better appreciate the complexity of the sociopolitical environment in the late Ottoman Empire.

The Imperial Context

A key factor in shaping the region's material culture was the inherent intrusiveness of the Ottoman State, which to varying degrees ruled the region for over 500 years. As events occurred during the thirty years after the watershed of the 1878 Berlin Congress, a number of important state expansionist interventions introduced by the Abdülhamid regime subtly impacted the daily lives of the population of these areas. It is important to remember that the context in which schools, telegraph lines, military barracks, roads and daily newspapers were introduced in Northern Albanian helps us situate the at times tense interchange of individual and group with these state forces. Such interchanges were often the animating factors behind periodic outbreaks of violence in the mountains, leading to often forgotten consequences such as large movements of the local population, a migratory process that greatly impacted the nature of material cultural exchange.

In the past, much of this interactive process was framed in the language of confrontation, in which the outsider, (i.e. the state) faced local communities in an inevitable clash of values, interests and ambitions. On the other hand, it becomes clear from inspecting photographs of the era that there are often no clear boundaries between the "foreign" state and local life, however. The distinctive camps often fused into one another in a number of ways. To theorists of the material manifestations of power, it is the pronounced fluidity of practice and metaphors of body through dressing patterns that confuses the lines of imperial control in the 19th and 20th Centuries.[2] In our case as well,

[1]The Malësore prove particularly interesting as they are mixed Catholic and Muslim population whose categorical mobility and symbolic marginality within the political currents of the region provided an often misinterpreted opportunity to coexist with modernizing forces set to destroy these communities. For more see Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malësore, 1878-1912." *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 35/2 (May 2003): 237-256 and chapters 2 and 5 in this book.

[2]See for instance Ching-Liang Low, "White skins/black Masks: The Pleasures and Politics of Imperialism," *New Formations*, 9 (1989): 83-103 and Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October 28* (1984): 125-33.

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it is the incorporation of indigenous mores and their material reproduction into the corpus of imperial order that helped invest imperial rule with an illusion of continuity and legitimacy in highland Albania. Such a dynamic ultimately forces us to return to the agent who reproduces the indigenous culture and thus ask new questions as to what is the significance of choosing particular patterns of expression as opposed to others.

This is most indicative in the appropriation of a distinctively Albanian terminology in bureaucratic parlance (i.e. "Besa" meaning unbreakable agreement). While Ottoman officials frequently used local legal practices in their administration of the province, the very appropriation of local laws by another entity tended to impart new meanings and hitherto unknown symbolic importance to existing local practices. As the empire incorporated local codes of behavior, for the state AND locals, "tradition" became a site of contest, manipulation and modification. Behind this façade of the resistance/subordination so important to post-colonial studies were articulated, asserted and negotiated several other issues germane to our understanding of the resistance of indigenous communities to Ottoman, Montenegrin and European attempts of domination. These modifications are particularly interesting once we add the study of material culture to our understanding of the past.

In a pioneering study of dress and fashion in French history, Daniel Roche has argued how the complex symbolism of appearances implicit in clothing signified a variety of social and political ideas, such as hierarchy, exclusion and respect.[1] In the case of Ottoman "rule" in North Albanian, it can be argued that there were superficial appearances of control and manipulation represented in the clothing choices people made, much as boundaries were drawn on maps, manifestos were published in newspapers and the state marched troops through town. But when we observe locals wearing the fez or adopt a fashionable way to wear their mustache, I suggest there are other ways of reading the generic image of Ottoman culture. The Ottoman template is suddenly interpreted on a second level, that of the subject presumably adapting a “foreign” look to make an immediate statement. Much as historians and ethnographers of the past have been wrong to rely solely on the superficial use of terminology or ceremony to understand meaning, so too must we abandon simple assumptions about the fez reflecting Ottoman or worst yet, Turkish cultural domination. The Malësia was very much a place of contention and the persistent reapplication of the use of indigenous clothing must be read as a continuous reflection of that process.

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[1] Daniel Roche, *The Culture of Clothing: Dress and Fashion in the "Ancient Regime,"* (Cambridge, 1994), 33.

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The selective appropriation of traditional cultural practices was one of the many means of establishing a perception of hegemony that Ottoman/modern imperialist reformers sought in areas such as Northern Albania. Much as 20th century totalitarian states tried to impose uniformity in how people dressed, so too did the Ottoman state contemplate a number of homogenizing strategies that often used locally-informed clothing patterns. Some recent scholarship on the Hamidian era sees state reforms as indicative of this spirit.[1] While taking this assertion for granted, one is often left to ask what about those who adopted the Ottoman cultural practices assumed to have been so important in shaping loyalty to the Sultan? Are individuals wearing "modern" Ottoman dress to be assumed to have been "converted" Ottomans (or Frenchmen, Englishmen etc.) on account of their clothing choices or is there room to consider the possibility of the manipulation of certain currents? Indeed, one must ask similar questions when we see images of British administrators "going native" in order to legitimize certain assertions of power in colonial era Africa or India and of those electing to continue to wear indigenous clothing. Often, the imagined powers of ideas or institutionally imposed practices do not bear out in history and such seemingly obvious indicators provide a false sense of knowledge.[2]

It is clear from archival material that local reproduction of unofficial clothing disturbed certain zones of power deemed necessary for Ottoman officials. In reading the correspondence between Ottoman administrators and the Austrian Consul in Shkodër (Scutari) the principal city of the region, one observes a disdain for the "natives." It appears much of the derision Austrian consul Ippen observed among his Ottoman counterparts was in fact an expression of a sort of siege mentality. The persistent lack of uniformity in how the subject dressed, as far as the Ottoman/Imperial State was concerned, were grounds for concern.[3] The lack of uniformity signified a certain detachment from the imperial center that explicitly meant that the Malësore Catholics and Muslims who came to town armed and in their "colorful" regalia did not think themselves citizens of the Hamidian state and were thus "flaunting their resistance."[4] That officials sequestered in their government

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[1] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 98-111

[2] As scholars of colonial Africa have clearly demonstrated, a number of local factors attributed for the divergence and specific lack of uniformity that frustrated idealist state-builders in Paris, London and indeed, Istanbul. For a survey of this new generation of scholarship, see Frederick Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History."

[3] See image of a street scene of Ipek, the principal commercial center in Western Kosova located in AMAE, Nantes, Albanie no. 214 Uskub folder, dated Uskub, 12 April 1900. Here we can see the Ottoman official on the far right peering into a good representation of the numerous clothing styles adopted by locals, a confusion that frightened officials not from the area.

[4] This fixation of not being loyal to the state was key for Ottoman officials after the wars of 1880 where the Malësore became a community that straddled the boundaries between two antagonistic states, the Ottoman and Montenegrin. For the extensive correspondences between Ottoman officials and the Austrian Consul, see AQSH, F. 81. D.143 and F.143.D.1011. For Ottoman preoccupations with the activities of the "disloyal" Malësore, see for instance the extensive reports presented to the Porte by Yusuf Ziya Pasha , BBA Yıldız Esas Evraki series (YEE), 7/23. Compiled by Istanbul on 24.N.1303. [June 1886].

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offices in the region had no choice but deal with their subjects on cultural terms that they themselves did not approve of or understand, should be read critically.

As noted earlier, one can see the reluctant adaptation of local codes of behavior/adjudication by Ottoman officials not only as an effective manipulation of "tradition" by the state, but perhaps more convincingly as a dramatic concession by the imperial center. That the Malësore persistently used locally informed clothing patterns, even when such indecipherable signifiers proved threatening to Ottoman officials, suggests Ottoman rule in the region was itself, in a constant process of modification and negotiation. Put differently, the clothes the men and women wore in this area could be read as key signifiers of the capacity of the Ottoman State to make any claims of sovereignty in Northern Albania.

In stark contrast, neighboring Montenegro banned such types of clothing that distinguished "Albanian" from "Montenegrin," a policy similarly adopted in Greece by actively claiming indigenous clothing, (i.e. Tosk Albanian clothing) as its own. In stark contrast Ottoman officials have permitted and even in some provinces in southern Albania, encouraged the application of dress patterns among a group of Albanian men who asserted power in the southern districts of Manastir at the turn of the century.[1] These acts of extrication and co-optation are clear manifestations of modern state-building (or maintenance) strategies that both marked the brutal ethnocide of many Balkan communities and the failure of some states to establish hegemony in their territories. That the Ottoman Empire tried to standardize clothing patterns for its military units and bureaucrats in the region, if not also its civilians, suggests the continued search for a way to eliminate the cultural, linguistic and regional distinctions of the provinces was a shared one in the Balkans. Despite any number of attempts to create a visually and spiritually homogeneous population, the fact that these distinctions survived Hamidian reforms and Serbian and Greek policies suggests a complicated social exchange that levied great political value to, among other things, clothing patterns that persisted to animate people's actions. These confrontations should be considered a part of the social and political fabric of the period.

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[1] In the case of the Pushkullu, an Albanian group identified by the head gear of the same name, local power was often negotiated through them, a process some Ottoman officials appreciated and sought to harness as opposed to suppressing. As a consequence the Pushkullu solidified their authority in the region and effectively expanded their ranks through the use of their men in the local militia who also wore the distinctive head gear. See PRO FO 195/2111 Salonika, No. 88 July 27, 1901.

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Ottoman society in the Balkans, if such a thing existed in the singular, clearly graded levels of acceptability in spaces of exchange the state could control. Often the notions of what was acceptable as determined by standards set in Istanbul and exported to the provinces were entrenched in how market pressures and economic interests shifted purchasing patterns in these highly autonomous regions. Indeed, the single most identified characteristic of so-called "European" penetration into the "Orient" was the cheap manufactured cloth that replaced locally produced fabrics and indeed, their finished products. The "fashions" often replicated by Ottoman "gentlemen" and aspiring "modern men and women" took on new dynamics in face of market fluctuations in the highly strategic trading zone of the Malësia. Administrators may have persisted in dawning the fez, suite and wear a mustache in a certain way, and of course some locals adopted these shadings of "civilization" to fit into particular niches as well, but the state and the "market" had little or no proven capacity to enforce such coding on locals. This inability to impose the homogeneity deemed necessary by "reformers" of the era either through the state or market forces serves as a useful reminder of those seemingly minor gestures of resistance noted by James Scott and others. Even more important, perhaps, is that the conscious gesture of "fitting in" did not necessarily reflect an individual's loyalty to the state project or "European civilization." In many ways, the fact that so many local Albanians would become in a public way "members" of modern Ottoman society in their conscious effort to not dress like their ancestors did not translate into their subservience to Ottoman state power.

At the same time, it would be unwise for historian to infer too much in terms of social or political cohesion among individuals who maintained their material traditions.[1] Multi-tiered exchanges that seemingly represent contradictions or a "clash of cultures" must be studied with a greater appreciation for the explicit ability of people to maintain a number of interpretive and interactive standards which changed over time. The only way to effectively understand the events which took place in and around the Malësia, therefore, is to read into photos such as those made during the Young Turk revolt of July 1908 as reflective of a society perfectly capable of adapting, absorbing and modifying the forces of the larger world.[2] The issue of

[1]The Tosk Albanian nationalist, Naim Frashëri, brother of Şamsaddin Sami, clearly felt more comfortable in imperial-informed "gentlemen's" clothing. Despite this attire, he was a key figure in the Southern Albanian separatist movement which celebrated Tosk culture (in particular its material artifacts) as the key unifying medium to base local resistance to Ottoman, Greek and Bulgarian threats.

[2]A diversity of clothing patterns as noted from a recently published volume of photos taken during 1908, suggest clothing patterns had a potentially deeper communicative function that requires the historian to develop a closer appreciation for the kinds of exchanges that had taken place among the Shala pictured on page 8. The "Ottoman gentlemen" wearing fez and "European" suites standing in the background are obviously capable of mixing with compatriots who clearly chose to represent themselves at this important political event as part of a collective, unified and decidedly unOttoman community. *The Proclamation of Freedom in Manastir, 1908-1909: The Manakis Brothers* ed. Roni Margulies (Istanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 1997), 8, 10.

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the impact of "modernity," or in today's parlance, "globalization" must return the focus to how it is possible that local communities and the individuals who make up these communities may just not be so utterly helpless and vulnerable to homogenizing forces. With this in mind, a new tool in appreciating local abilities to resist or indeed, incorporate such forces may be available and we can gain a new appreciation for local agency.

The positioning of the individual in this context, therefore, is key. Traditionally, we have sought out the manifested politics in texts, reports in the archives and newspapers that used undefined categories such as the "Albanian" to recall past events. If the goal of our research is to gain access to the "mood" of the period in question, clearly the best way is to explore these sources. But it is suggested here that noting what people are wearing in a variety of contexts and asking the right kind of questions of these gestures can be an important supplement to our sources. For not only were the "sources" largely written by men with little knowledge of the area, the photograph has the ability to give us a greater sense of this region's complexity if we know at what it is we are looking. As noted in the many of the sketches and photos taken of Malësore society at the time, the region manifested great socioeconomic, educational and existential diversity.[1]

Clothing Terminology in the Malësia

One of the central goals of this chapter is to expose the more important items of clothing that provide the historian with the opportunity to ask these potentially important questions about Malësore and Ottoman history at the end of the nineteenth century. While the materials under discussion are largely used for ceremonial purposes today, their communicative significance cannot be discarded when we situate them historically and they have proven invaluable to situating particularly photographs both in a temporal and geographic context.

The most prominent feature among men of the region is the white felt hat, the *Pligi*, which has clearly been an item most often associated with Northern Albania. The *Pligi* is not the generic piece of clothing adorned by men of Kosova and the highlands of present day Northern Albania, however. Variations of the *Pligi* are decorated, often with symbolic strands of dark horse hair, or in size as to help distinguish group and even rank of individual in usually urban society.[2]

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[1] Leon Gérom, "Albanian Guard" taken from Ferid Hudhri, *Shqiperia dhe Shqiptaret ne Vepra të Piktorëve të Huaj*, (Tirana, n.d.), 171; Leon Gérom, "Albanian" private collection, London; Caton R. Woodville, "End of a Rivalry" found in *Shribner's Monthly*, XXI, 1881; Woodville, "In Skrutari's Market" found in *Shribner's Monthly*, XXI, 1881.

[2] Woodville, "Her Lord and Master-Albania" found in *Shribner's Monthly*, XXI, 1881. The origins of this variation is under dispute among Albanian ethnographers, some suggesting it a style adopted from Venetian troops who periodically fought in these regions during the late medieval period.

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Another form of headgear worn specifically by males in the Rugova Pass region located above the regional city of Peja (İpek) is reminiscent of the Turag's use of the turban in the Sahara desert. The *Paft* is usually white in color and measures 5 to 6 meters in length. It is wrapped around the head and consisted of such an amount of fabric because it was often the case that men spent much of their lives fighting far from their homelands. The men of Rugova are famous for wrapping their fallen brethren in their *Paft* before burial on the battle field.

The decorated woolen pants worn by men is called the *Tirqi* and like the *Pligi*, is ubiquitous among the Northern Ghegs. It is said by archeologists that the ancient Illyrians wore pants similar to *Tirqi*, and evidence of such use have been located at grave sites and wall paintings composed during Roman times, suggesting this clothing and the people wearing them are indigenous to the region. The designs found along the legs and pocket areas, as well as color, varies and the use of specific symbols are meant to distinguish group affiliation. In Drenica for instance, the lines along the side of the leg are straight while in Dukagjin, in the mountains that now make the border of Albania and Kosova, the lines are more irregular, depending on the village group. It is important to note that there are distinguishing signs with the *Tirqi* that are key to making use of photographs. The *Tirqi* worn by highlanders, for example, are tight to the body as much climbing and running through bushes makes bagging pants impractical. In the Llap region, on the other hand, located in the areas of Nish (a region awarded to Serbia in the 1878 Berlin treaty) and Mitrovica in Kosova, the pants are worn loosely, some argue because the population is more "religious" and consider wearing tight pants provocative.

The vest, *Këmisha*, comes in many variations, again, to distinguish rank and group affiliation. A *Këmisha* with sleeves, called the *Xhamadani* (Jamadani) and those without sleeves—*Jelek*—are adorned with elaborate patterns that carry symbolic value to communicate a number of messages about the person wearing it.

The *Shalli* is tied around the waist and is patterned according to complicated systems of meaning that mix color and spacing scenarios, apparently changing over time and often determined by region. The *shalli* also serves as a belt that holds elaborately crafted pistols made famous by Albanian craftsmen who worked throughout the Mediterranean. While quite popular among those who depicted Malësore life in paintings, the use of the *foustanella* among Ghegs was basically reserved for formal occasions by groups in the Kelmendi, Hoti, Shala and Berisha village groups. On such important occasions as declarations of allegiance, the settlement of disputes and the election of paramount representatives, elite males would adorn these

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long white garments and wear their *tirq* underneath. The *foustanella* became famous once King Otto of Greece declared it the national dress of independent Greece, probably due to the fact his largely Albanian-speaking army wore it.[1]

For women of the Dukagjin region, *vëshe e katundit/vësha e Podjurit* (clothing from the countryside) were equally adorned with signifiers that must be studied in order to properly "read" photographs and paintings. The most common item is a long white shirt that extends to the knees. The shirt is called the *Këmisha e katundit* (shirt of the village) and is usually embroidered in ways specific to the artist's explicit and implicit message. Atop the *këmisha* is an embroidered *Jeleku* ornamented with shinny beads and the same item but without sleeves, the *xhamadani* is adorned with elaborate patterns to identify regional and familial affiliation. Women tie around their waist a *Pështjellak* that varies in design both in front and back, and is tied by another *Shawl*. Long black and elaborately designed socks, or *Çorapat*, are also key signifiers of region and family group. The head is often seen covered by two layers of material, the first is longer and is tied around the chin, called *Marhama,* and the embroidered piece draped atop the *Marhama* is usually white and called the *Hotoz* or *Lidhësa shami*.

Not only do these items of clothing function to signify group affiliation and region, but often they are meant to display marital status specific for public settings like the weekly market. Men who descended on Shkodër for business usually wore the *Tirqi* to demonstrate they were bachelors. Of course the trip to the regional capital also required elaborate displays of one's material wealth so more sophisticated men wore watches with chains, the *Qysteku*, and anyone from Kosova today can tell you their grandfather still has his father's silver cigarette case lodged in his breast pocket. Detailed descriptions of town life in Ipek (Peja) Yakova (Gjakova) as well as Shkodër demonstrate how important such displays were for those involved in coffeehouse discussions or business meetings.[2]

Some of the patterns found on clothing derived from older uses, often serving a dual purpose as identity marker and amulet to scare off evil forces that terrorized Balkan inhabitants in the late 19th Century. While space does not permit to go much beyond this simple observation, it may be worthwhile to demonstrate just how complex and potentially fruitful appreciating such

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[1]For a history of the adoption see Linda Welters, "Ethnicity in Greek Dress" in ed., Joanne B. Eicher. *Dress and Ethnicity* (London: Berg, 1995): 53-78.

[2]Hamdi Bushati, *Shkodra dhe Motet: Traditë Ngjarje Njerëz*, 2 volumes (Shkodër: Idromeno, 1998) vol. 2, 451-54.

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elements may be to our studying the social history of the Ottoman Empire.[1]

We know how clothing and body design (tattooing and piercing) reflects much of the outside world and how it is perceived among those who identify with specific designs. Extensive marking in clothing was complimented by tattooing among both Muslims and Catholics in the region, a practice that reportedly precedes Christianity. The motifs used in cloths and tattoos, while clearly changing over time, demonstrates important functional connections as they continued to distinguish between groups and/or fended off the evil spirits that haunted the daily life of the highlands. Children in particular, seen as the most vulnerable, were marked for special protection. What is key, again, is that the social meaning of these symbols are fluid and determinative at the same time. Each valley had a different understanding of the "traditions" that give these symbols meaning at a particular time and these communities expressed their interactive concerns with the outside world, therefore, in unique ways.

In this mix we must again insist on recognizing that much exchange has taken place between communities clearly seeking to maintain their exhibited distinctiveness while expecting that these public displays translate in the right way over time. The adoption of external symbols brought in by the Ottoman Empire, for instance, have been redeployed to supplant, correspond or compliment indigenous cures and curses, often signifying something that is vastly different from what it means in Anatolia. In a similar fashion, the cross of the Catholic and Eastern Church, Jewish motifs and Islamic symbols all paint the textual landscape of Malësore patterns. How and why these motifs are adopted prove intriguing questions for those concerned with the transfusion of culture over time.[2] I would also suggest the kinds of irregularities noted in Balkan Islam and Catholicism is as much a reflection of this process as in the patterns adopted in clothing.

This clear fusion of diverse Ottoman cultures is highly suggestive for social historians and should be expanded in research on the Balkans. How motifs are exchanged along with curatives and myths may be gauged by

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[1]As noted in the use of certain patterns found on both ceremonial and everyday clothing of the time, people adopted symbols emanating from other parts of the Ottoman Empire that may or may not be interpreted as cultural fusion and/or hegemony. One finds, for instance, the Star of Suleyman, a pattern that the Malësore clearly inherited from Anatolia. Abdyl Sula, *Visare Kulturorë nga Malësia e Gjakovës*, (Tirana, 2000), 23. That these patterns carry certain magical properties to the communities around Gjakova (Yakova) in present day Kosova suggests symbolic transfusions do not inherit word-for-word the symbolic meaning of the motifs. The patterns depicted here are used as sequential patterns on a number of types of clothing for men, women and children that distinguishes one village and family from another.

[2]See chapter on tattoo patterns that Edith Durham at the turn-of-the-century observed. Some of these patterns may still be found on both Muslim and Catholic individuals, Edith Durham, *Some Tribal Origins, Laws, and Customs of the Balkans* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1928), 101-146.

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studying how people dress their bodies. Such patterns give us an ideal representation of how complex and comprehensive economic links were in the Ottoman Empire. With this in mind, I wish to return us to how shared motifs have the power to articulate specifically local concerns, concerns that can only be understood by the historian who maintains the local perspective.

The interactive realities of Ottoman Northern Albania wrecked havoc on institutional projects such as that of the Austrian supported elements of the Catholic Church, which desperately attempted to formalize local spirituality in order that Vienna could maintain an influence over local Catholics.[1] Belief in witch-craft, a thorn in the Church's side, dominated life in the Albanian highlands until the Communist period. The witch, *Shtriga* permeates stories passed down to children and were incorporated into the daily lives during the late Ottoman period, despite early efforts to wipe out these pagan beliefs.[2] Often, children were tattooed with symbols that would protect them from evil spirits. Later, these symbols were translated into appropriate Catholic or Muslim signifiers. The Catholic Church in particular and many proselytizing Muslims are often noted in the archives of having attempted to silence these local customs that resisted uniformity. Indicative of their failures is the incorporation of local symbols into the practice of the Catholic faith in much of Northern Albania. By the late 19th Century, Franciscan priests begrudgingly admit that they had to allow locals to use pagan or even "Islamic" symbols in religious ceremonies held at Church in order that they could scare off the dangerous spirits.[3] Such remarkable concessions to local practices are highly suggestive of the symbolic and sociological importance of material culture and their capacity to transcend institutional boundaries over time.

As briefly mentioned above, tattooing found on both Muslim and Catholic bodies is an important indicator of material and cultural fusion. Local priests, as noted by horrified Franciscan officials who came to visit these mountain regions in the late 19th century, adopted tattoo patterns in order to scare off the evil spirits as well as win the confidence of locals. Much as Malësore tattooing, patterns incorporated into cloth had a similar genealogy. A mélange of indigenous symbols along with more generic Christian, Muslim and Jewish symbols covered the hands, legs and backs of many residents,

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[1] I explore this in Isa Blumi, "Capitulations in the Late Ottoman Empire: The Shifting Parameters of Russian and Austrian Interests in Ottoman Albania, 1878-1912." *Oriente Moderne* [Forthcoming].

[2] For details see Robert Elsie, *A Dictionary of Albanian Religion, Mythology, and Folk Culture* (London: Hurst and Co., 2001), 236-238.

[3] Catholic Priests reporting back to Rome often admit their failure to reign-in these embedded practices. Folder 133 of the Albanian State Archives in Tirana is filled with information of these local rituals and serves as the central source to this section. See AQSH, F.133. D.23. f. 32-34 for a particularly colorful example.

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again, including their priests. The cross, serpent, sun and moon played prominent roles in this ornamental universe. What is important here is that not only does cultural transfusion through pictorial motifs get expressed visually, but the community as a whole thus adopts those visual mechanisms. In the Malësia that means communities that are of "mixed" faith, a phenomenon that often confounded Ottoman and European observers and complicated imperial designs as noted in chapter 5. Muslims of the same village adopted the same patterns as Catholics to ward off evil spirits from their home and family. As a consequence, it was generally impossible to distinguish between Catholic and Muslim for a Muslim is often seen wearing "Christian" symbols on their bodies and clothing and vice-versa. While the *Pështjellak* may display a cross, one soon learns that these are patterns used by both Muslims and Christians. Most travelers passing through and the unaccustomed user of photographs may incorrectly interpret the wearing of a cross to mean the individual is Christian. On the contrary, the Catholic or Orthodox cross, as the Star of David, were universally accepted as shields from illness and evil spirits by Muslims and Christians alike.

It is important to reiterate that these are close-knit communities in the Malësia that are not organized along sectarian lines as so often assumed in the West. This can be observed among mountain women, who, both Muslim and Catholic, openly conducted their business without being veiled. Women from the mountains in photographs of the period will mostly appear dressed as the women in uncovered and free flowing garments while city women, both Catholic and Muslim, veiled themselves in northern Albania much as we are familiar with in conservative corners of the world today.[1] Such contrasts between rural and urban speak of norms and social interactive patterns that often do not recognize distinctions based on faith but on class in the cities and locale in highland areas. It is for this reason that clothing becomes the key marker for distinction among all inhabitants of the area and it is essential that historians learn how to read these distinctions.

Another important medium of distinction is the way highlanders styled their hair and for men, facial hair is particularly important.[2] Here again, customs among locals went a long way in shaping how the outside world interacted with them. Until the end of the Ottoman Empire, it has been noted by many Franciscan priests that they spent the first few months in Albania sequestered in Shkodër, taking the time to grow their mustaches according to local customs in order to be accepted as a "member" of the community.

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[1]See image of a Muslim Albanian woman from Ulqin in present day Montenegro, Durham, *Some Tribal Origins*, 296v, similar methods of veiling and more importantly, the patterns used, were used by Catholic women in Shkoder.

[2]Hudhri, *Shqiperia*, 164, and Durham, *Some Tribal Origins*, 316.

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How the hair on the heads of both males and females were cut was an important distinguishing marker for mountain communities. Catholic married women of Malesia e Madhe shaved their forehead and temple areas, and once married, dyed their hair black reportedly making their face look larger. The women of Mirdita and of neighboring areas, on the other hand, wore a fringe over the forehead and did not dye their hair. The men of the Malësia shaved a great part of the head, leaving either one great lump on the top or two big side tufts. In some cases, they shaved the back and left the front uncut. Men of Northern Albania, even among those from Shkodër who wore European dress almost always shaved the temples.

Entry into manhood was often indicated in how the hair was styled. Boys were not considered men until their heads would be shaved in a "first-hair cut" ceremony. Significantly, the act advertised to the outside world that the boy was a man and thus considered a representative of his community and could kill or be killed to honor the family's "blood" in the so-called blood feuds that make the area notorious. Mother's were known to have delayed the hair-cutting ceremony for as long as possible in order to protect the boy from the inevitable exposure to highland justice.

For those unfortunate individuals who went bald, they were derisively called *Chosé* and collectively dismissed. Since balding was rarely a problem among the Malësore, it became common knowledge that the Ottoman administrators living in the city and the outsiders so unfortunate to be *Chosé* were "unmanly" and "disgraced."[1] Interestingly, this also held true for the British soldiers who came to the region during the Balkan wars. That they were considered "unmanly" made it tough going for officers who were seeking respect (or rather fear) among local men with whom important military-related business needed to be conducted. In a clash of cultures that may have translated to many difficult moments during negotiations between English delegates and locals, being the clean-shaven "gentleman" so appreciated in other parts of the world was considered a sign of moral weakness among local Malësore men. It is indeed intriguing to consider what locals thought about the hairless men who came to their villages high in the mountains, demanding that they respect the ways of the outside world.

Methodological Suggestions

I wish to offer some suggestions as to how we may use this kind of material more effectively in order to paint us a picture of the daily lives of

[1]A telling entry into the diary of an important observer of Malësore history during the Hamidian period often refereed to Malësore perceptions of Ottoman officials in their unmanly fashions and demeanor. See AQSH, F.81.D.434.f.123-31.

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those who wear this clothing, decorate their body and prune their hair in certain ways. It is a conscious response by individuals to react to dramatic changes in their daily lives that takes the form of the clothing they wear. The marking of distinction of how the late 19th century Ottoman citizen projects herself in public must be considered an integral part of any attempt to write social history. The purposeful expression of distinction in a cultural context that is at once diverse but equally collectivized, demonstrates situations key to local history.

Consider the Ottoman official who insists on distinguishing himself in the streets of Shkodër from locals. In the late nineteenth century such a person is staking a number of claims at a sociopolitical level that conforms with the mechanics of imperial mentalities referred to in post-colonial literature. The process of walking down the street as an Ottoman gentleman brings back images evoked by Ehud Toledano of the Ottoman distinctions in Cairo of the 19th century.[1] Not only were foreigners attached to British, Russian, Italian or Austrian consulates eager to distinguish themselves as well, but their Ottoman counterparts were equally engaged in casting a public display of both conscious segregation and as a result, a manifestation of assumed domination. But as suggested with the "pretty" British troops above, such acts of distinction did not necessarily produce the right response.

Interestingly, it is the classic parvenu, what many identified as the subject "gone English," in this case, the local "abandoning" their own distinguishing garb to adapt to the material coding of Empire that can offer another interesting point of departure. Certainly, many Albanian-speakers, particularly from the south who became prominent players in Ottoman political history, dutifully adopted the latest fashions in Istanbul. Au courant Ghegs did exist, many of whom were merchants who had made their way to the imperial cities and engaged in trade on, if not neutral ground, at least hostile to their territorial identities. This suggests another important point however needs to be considered. One's dressing patterns are not fixed. There are plenty of examples of prominent local patriots who shed their distinguishing "traditional" dress to adopt to the environment around them. When a delegation of Malësore traveled at the request of the League of Prizren to Paris and Vienna, for instance, they were not dressed in their "native" garb as everyone expected them to be. They dressed as dignified gentlemen, causing somewhat of a stir among their European counterparts who were waiting for the "tribesman of the dreaded Malesore" to come into their chambers on horseback, guns ablazing.[2]

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[1]Ehud Toledano, *State and Society in mid-nineteenth century Egypt*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[2]As described in a letter by a Southern Albanian attending the negotiations, AQSH, F. 58. D. 131. f. 3-8, December, 1878.

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This then gives us a good reminder that clothes are not part of the human anatomy but decorative, strategic and laden with meaning. Therefore, the cultural motifs that are manifested in a generic, let us say, globalized Albanian culture, do have their particularities which are key to fine-tuning our research. That said, these clothes are persistently being used to exhibit messages meant for audiences that are capable of reading them. Locals were perfectly aware when and where their "traditional" clothing would suddenly become an impediment, something Franciscan priests learned very well when they scarred their bodies with tattoos and grew moustaches in the right way. This also has much to do with the actual production of material culture.

Cultural borrowing aside, in the areas under study, one may discover there is a specific language of the fabrics, often erroneously overly aestheticized in recent studies at the expense of an exploration into their social meaning and communicative value. From an iconographical point of view, attempts have been made to identify figurative motifs (flora, fauna, mythical scenes) or to interpret abstract forms that suggest the presence of more or less "recognizable" symbols in all the patterns. Efforts to isolate a possible lexicon, using a hierarchy exterior to the design and context of the cloth's production, have started with the most immediately legible (head, sun, hut) and abandoned the necessary work of deriving meaning. Unfortunately, such methods fail to note the syntax that would explain how the people using it articulate such elements within the whole of the cloth and among those who wear it.

I have noted that in every study produced in Albania on Albanian clothing, (there have been no serious studies produced outside Albania) there is the almost mechanical borrowing of static terminology originating from Marxist sociology. This way of seeing the material world of the Malësore intentionally decontextualizes the meaning of clothing and reduces in particular Northern Albanian clothing to the spectrum of "traditional," functionalist roles that marginalizes the human interchange involved.[1]

What shall we do when confronted by a hermetic landscape of bands and stripes, curves and symbols? I suggest we can read the material as a text, not as a "decoration" without history, but as a message behind which lies an evolving system that explains the message. The patterns on the clothing

[1]Albania's most prolific author on "traditional" clothing, Agim Bido, certainly falls into this category. See for instance his "Sistemi Tradicional Njëngjyrësh në Zbuurimin e Veshjeve dhe të Tekstileve Shqiptare," *Kultura Popullore*, 1,2 (1997): 35-45, see also Agim Bido, "Xhubleta ne Vështrim estetik" *Kultura Popullore* 2 (1986):119-143; F. Nopsca, *Albanien, Bauten, trachten und Geräte* (Leipzig, 1925), 113-132, 174-177, 215-217; Monique De Fontanes, "Një rast unik? Kostumi i grave të Malësisë së Madhe në Shqipërinë e Veriut" *Kultura popullore*, 1 (1982): 143-158; A.Gjergji, "Mbi origjinën dhe lashtësinë e disa elementëve të veshjeve popullore shqiptare" *Kultura Popullore*, 1, (1980): 65-80.

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displayed in the images clearly make distinctions and it is here that I wish to focus my future work in the domain. I have not yet conducted enough research, entailing extensive field work in the region, to confidently say I can read the "text" of all clothing in its late 19th century context, but I feel this aspect of our understanding of social interactions must be considered to better make use of photographs taken in the period.

One Example

When we visit photographs of the period we are witnesses to a formality of public engagement. When we observe individuals frozen in photographic time, we immediately must ask what is at stake in their conscious self-marking. I suggest we can find a great deal of information about current political alliances and the nature of the exchange from the photographs taken from political events. For instance, the impressive collection of photos taken by the Manakis Brothers in 1908 Manastir (today's Bitola in Macedonia) provides a wealth of information about the kind of communities that produced the Young Turk revolt and indeed, the initial demand for "universalist rights."

A good example of how misleading photos can be if read incorrectly is the caption written, presumably by the photographer, atop a photo taken during the events that suggests the men in the photo represent a band of "Serbs" who came to Manastir to offer their services to the "Young Turk" revolution.[1] The depiction made by the authors/editors of the book is simply wrong and the photo should not be read as indicative of "Serb" participation at all. What the photo does indicate, however, is just how fused and inter-connected so-called "ethnic" communities were at the time.

How can we conclude this? We must first note that in this photo, everyone is wearing distinctively "Albanian clothing." Both Albanians and Serbs are clearly present as we can tell them apart by their headgear. The most obvious Albanian is wearing the *pligi* and the Serbs a bandeta with the Serb religious insignia attached. Why I suggest this photo is important is that it demonstrates different "ethnic" communities fought together at a time when "Serbs" in Belgrade were actively pursuing policies of ethnic differentiation. This group most probably roamed the forests of Macedonia and Kosova looking for opportunities where ever they could find them and it is unlikely they would continue to support the authoritative Young Turk government much beyond the events that are depicted in the book from which the photo is taken.

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[1] *The Proclamation of Freedom in Manastir, 1908-1909,* 14.

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What is important here is that the tragic expansion of exclusionary, ethnicized policies of the new Serb, Greek and Montenegrin states have clearly made this picture hard to grasp in the 21st century. The myths of "ancient hatreds" have forever shaped how Balkan history is to be understood, a frame of reference that cannot accept that this photo is the rule in late Ottoman Kosova, rather than the exception. I believe the photo is emblematic of the Balkans under Ottoman rule: a serious message that demands considerable revision of how Balkan historians have interpreted the Ottoman period to date.

Ascertaining loyalties are not the only reasons to use photographs of course. The verifiable shift in clothing styles to fit better the moment can also be instructive for the social historian for other reasons. The "ethnic communities" represented in the book are visually expressing themselves as unified, dedicated and loyal to a principle far beyond ethnicity alone. While their presence is one important manifestation, there are more nuances involved. It is key to remember that among the men in the photo, there are codes of distinction that are central for the intra-group interaction as much as for the outside world. When one reads the diaries of men of the period, for instance, one is struck how essential it is for individuals to be associated with an exact geographic locale and family when interacting with others. The garb is worn not to differentiate "Albanian" from say, "Serb" as much as to distinguish one community, or even one family, from another.

While I took this opportunity to introduce a widely unknown material tradition I do not want to lose touch with the larger economic role material culture has to play in our revising social history. At once Albanian material culture has been a vital economic engine that animated regional growth and integrated social and cultural spaces by way of lucrative commercial networks, most readily identified by the craftsmanship required to produce such important pieces. Over the centuries, material traditions adapted to economic possibilities introduced by the Ottoman Empire. Kosova (Dardania), since Roman times a key mining region, attracted artisans who mastered leather, weaving and silversmith techniques. Those who inherited these skills produced products that became upper-end necessities in the Adriatic and entire Balkan economic zone. High demand for Albanian artisan and culinary skills meant a dispersal of such communities to the imperial capital and Balkan cities as far a field as Budapest and Zagreb. The geographic spread of Albanian men as soldiers who established colonies throughout the Arabic-speaking world and indeed, the Christian West, meant important cultural fusion throughout the Islamic world eventually returned home. This material spread needs to be investigated more closely in order to gauge better what I assume to be a far more integrated Balkan world than 19th and 20th century national boundaries would suggest.

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Conclusion

My central concern here was to stress that we cannot ignore clothing patterns and their value if we want to better appreciate the past. If the forms we survey seem to be indissolubly tied to the chromatic and spatial traits that allow them to express specific meanings unobtainable by us, these same forms may become dissociated from their positions on the woven surface and historical value. They may appear in new combinations, in other woven contexts that affect all of those using them in many ways, but that is not ground for discounting their significance. On the contrary, the woven text is an essential marker to the daily lives of our historical subjects. These historical subjects are not frozen in some monolithic, "tradition," but constantly adapting to the contingencies that mark history. Therefore, one should "read" these woven, stitched and melted forms as basic organizing elements within Malësore thought which is ordering a certain narrowness of significance well beyond the boundaries of the textile.

A greater appreciation of the time and effort put into making this clothing strengthens a sense of historical relevance to the article observed. In addition to the linear elements that determine geographic origins, Malësore clothing have distinctive methods of stitching that serve different meanings in different contexts; such stitches may differ in kind and number with each item produced, indicating personal interventions. Craft details, such as the fiber used, the twist given the thread in spinning, its length, and the like thus vary, all suggesting a deep, personal interchange that can be invaluable in understanding Ottoman social history. As with the analysis of the photograph, the system to craft these masterpieces may seem arbitrary in our world of factory-made clothing or worse yet as "indecipherable" if we lack an orientation point to help "understand" the signs and for the rules of their combinations.

Undeniably, textile patterns reflect conventions that make them unintelligible at first glance. But along with this conventional, arbitrary quality that leads us to dismiss their importance, there is a relation to and between the signifier and the signified that is frequently forgotten today. In the expressed notion of these markings, the textile idiom is located somewhere between two extremes: At one end, again, we find the purely arbitrary reference, whereas at the other there is an almost poetic commitment by those who crafted the cloth and those who are wearing it. It may be that these contrasts are only matters of degree, since these textiles also radiate the aesthetic of beauty and skill that do not need specific knowledge to recognize. We must resist the passive observant relationship 20th century tourism and museum-mentalities have established with objects that took days and perhaps weeks to produce.

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Like all the textiles we find in European high culture, so lovingly studied in other circles, the textiles of Northern Albania bind light and shade, then condense these in various spaces that are managed by a system of symbolic and cultural value. The blending of color and shape is infused by the conscious effort to interpret the messages that arm the human body with signs of association, protect it from the evil spirit or signal affiliation. The meaning of the message on this historical document, the magic action of the symbols, and the beauty of the *jelek* are all inextricably blended.

Understanding this leads us to the specific and strategic engagement of the artist who produces these markers of social history and those who wear them. I suggest the complex terminology that shifts regionally around the use and manufacture of these living texts deserves deeper inspection in our field. Observing the patterns makes one aware of subtle distinctions among the separate textiles and appreciate the shifting value of these messages. Behind this proliferation of distinction lies the capacity of weavers to formulate signifiers that are meant to communicate to many people. There is a voice and agency involved here that is not getting adequate attention in the ethnographic and social historical literature at this time. The question remains, are not these designs a way of expressing oneself reminiscent of language itself? To observe some of these fabrics and especially when they are worn, one feels caught up in a system of multiple relations that carried much weight in the late 19th Century. It, like the diary, the commissioned report sent to Istanbul or the court record, can tell us a lot about Ottoman social, political and economic history.

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9

RESISTING GLOBALIZATION THROUGH THE EYES OF ALBANIAN MUSLIMS: COMPARING THE SUCCESSES OF THE 19th CENTURY TO THE FAİLURES OF THE 21st

Introduction

> "Albanians have been Muslims for more than 500 years and they do not need outsiders [Arabs] to tell them what is the proper way to practice Islam."

Rexhep Boja, Mufti of Kosova

The quote above demonstrates how Kosova's most senior Sunni Muslim cleric, Rexhep Boja, sees the presence of Arab "non-governmental organizations" (NGOs) in Kosova today. Despite being the beneficiary of tens of thousands of aid dollars, much of which went to rebuild buildings of the Islamic Community of Kosova *bashkesia islame e Kosovës* [henceforth BIK] that Boja runs, Kosova's Mufti wants "the Arabs" out.[1]

These statements most succinctly highlight the nature of the concerns many urban Kosovar Albanians have about their Islamic legacy being hijacked by outside forces. It is not the first time in Kosova's modern history that a state or state-like bodies with imperial ambitions sought to dictate the content and method of practice in Kosova's Islamic community. In terms of institutional ambitions even operational methods, there is not that much which differs today from the two other cases I cover below. Tellingly, however, the conditions under which Saudi funded organizations operate today are far different than the far more competitive one in the past. This difference will prove key to appreciating the globalization of spiritual practice in the twenty-first century and it also demonstrates why understanding the late Ottoman period and Istanbul's own attempt to homogenize the region's Muslim population can help shed light on contemporary issues. Knowledge of the Ottoman past DOES have relevance to current affairs.

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[1]The latest manifestation came in reaction to my recent presentation at the Woodrow Wilson center on the subject, a lecture which was subsequently misquoted in an UPI news service report. See "Edhe një rrezik për Kosovën: Wahabitë," *Koha Ditore* 4 January 2003.

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Ostensibly, in rural Kosova today, the Saudis have created a web of "captured" and dependent recipients to their universalistic doctrines much as they had in many of the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan during the 1980s. Today, Saudi aid agencies educate, feed, house and in many ways, represent the only links rural communities devastated by war have with the outside world. While the food and clothing, the rebuilt homes and the new wells are appreciated, it is clear the rhetoric being used to educate local children is of concern, even to those who have received Saudi aid for more than three years now. Residents interviewed complain that the classes their children attend are segregated by sex and that the girls are learning nothing more than sewing and how to take care of babies, while the boys are being taught to memorize the Koran and Arabic. Worse still for many of the widows who have little means to control the fate of their children, they sense that the children are slowly being "taken away" from them.

One of the more glaring consequences of this distancing of the children from their community is the visible intolerance the older ones are beginning to display towards the traditions of Kosovar Islam. A recent letter written by a student of the Institute for Islamic Education in Prishtina reveals a rhetorical order that indicates the universalist claims of Wahhabism is becoming part of the mainstream discourse of locals. Armend Podvorica, in an open letter to Koha Ditore, Kosova's main daily newspaper, condemned the position taken by Rexhep Boja as it concerns his objections to the activities of Wahhabi groups in Kosova. Podvorica's reaction speaks of a particular sensitivity towards opposition to the growing influence of Saudi-based organizations. In responding to criticism, Podvorica also revealed the underlying Wahhabi intolerance towards, in particular, Kosova's Islamic heritage. In the process of defending Wahhabi doctrine as "a purist form" of faith, he goes on to explain how Kosovar Albanians, despite 500 years of an Islamic tradition, went wrong.

Revealingly, in Podvorica's words, Kosovars never learned the "true" Islam. Instead, it inherited the "bastardized" form from Turkey [sic] which "has nothing to do with religion." Podvorica goes on to challenge Rexhep Boja's stated concerns with extremism by qualifying the acts of "these Muslims" (interestingly, implying Boja is not one) who are running schools and "are well respected in Arabia." That "they follow the authentic path" is supposed to assuage any concerns readers of Koha Ditore may have about the legitimacy of Wahhabi doctrine and immediately dilute Boja's. As Podvorica's pious Arab Muslims are rhetorically distinguished from what he is clearly identifying as Boja's "bastardized" Islamic tradition, Podvorica exhibits a tell-tale sign of doctrinal rigidity that fails to accommodate the interpretations of other Muslims, a central point in Saudi educational strategies in their rural schools.[1]

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[1]Armend Podvorica, "Besimi i denjë nuk është ekstremizëm," *Koha Ditore* 7 January 2003, page 11.

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Podvorica's approach, in fact, perfectly demonstrates the tenants of Wahhabi practice in the past. Let it not be forgotten that 'Abd al-Wahhab's doctine not only identified *kufr* in idolatrous religions or non-Islamic monotheism, but non-Wahhabi fellow Muslims as well.[1] The principle of Sunni Islam, according to which all those who profess the *shahada* are Muslims, is therefore rejected by Wahhabis in favor of the necessity of struggling against other Muslims.[2] In the writings of Sulayman b. Abdallah b. Muhammad b. 'Abd al Wahhab, a prominent and influential descendant of the movement's founder, Wahhabism not only bans any alliance with the *kuffar*, but also their employment, consultation, trust, visiting, advice, friendship, emulation, cordiality and affability towards them.[3] This means in today's Kosova context that Saudi-based "humanitarian" agencies are actually projecting a doctrine of complete communal isolation that not only sees Christians and Pagans as the undesirable other, but also other Muslims like Boja who do not subscribe to their interpretive principles. Worse still, the underlying assumption of their superior values means they are compelled to actively destroy all other forms of spiritual expression, again, not only Christian, but "local" Muslim ones as well. By giving free reign to these organizations in rural "Muslim" areas, the International Community has invited disaster for Kosova's traditionally tolerant and idiosyncratic local traditions. It is these communities, until the 1998-1999, firmly embedded in Sufi traditions, that are now forced to adopt rigid and one could say, extremist views of the world.

I suspect Saudi strategies are fully cognizant of the limitations of their message in face of alternative sources of spiritual comfort and indeed, tradition. That this diversity is historically prevalent in the region clearly reflected the Saudi's initial interest in locating and colonizing the most inaccessible, economically and physically devastated communities. The Saudis were aware of the need to restrict the interaction of their subjects with the outside world and the physical presence of a past. It is important, therefore, to remind the reader that extensive efforts have been taken by the Saudis to be actively involved in the reparation of the hundreds of Islamic buildings that were damaged by Serb forces during the war. Again, much as with rural Kosovars, the UN showed little interested in repairing war-damaged Islamic buildings, some over six hundred years old, deferring the task to the Saudis. The problem is that the Saudis have used this monopoly to aggressive destroy Ottoman era mosques and grave sites with traditional Ottoman gravestone carvings and impose the bland Gulf esthetic to the buildings that replaced them.

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[1] Such a doctrine, according to the writings of prominent Wahhabis, makes conquest and subjugation incumbent upon the member. This interactive position with the outside world is both seen as the political act of an expanding polity and as a legal-religious obligation. W. Sharara, *Al-Ahl wa 'l-Ghanima: Muqawwimat al-Siyasa fi 'l-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Su'udiyya.* (Beirut: 1981), 124.

[2] *Majmu'at al-Tawhid*, (Saudia Arabia, n.d.), 284. Copy provided by Prishtina headquarters of Saudi NGO.

[3] *Majmu'at al-Tawhid*, 121-122 and cf. 251ff.

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The eradication of alternative channels to people's spirituality, cultural development or consumption are the requirements of the uniform Wahhabi doctrine Saudi Arabia is exporting today. It is telling that the modernizing state of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909) and later the Tito-era communist state of Yugoslavia also tried to establish this kind of spiritual hegemony over the region. Key for me here is to spell out why they failed and why the Saudis may succeed in the long run. While I believe there is much to say about the post cold war world, and the international NGO in particular, there is a need to historicize past attempts to impose uniformity in order to best pinpoint the uniqueness of our current situation, one which may finally see the elimination of the "local community" in war torn areas like rural Kosova and in post-Saddam Iraq.

Historicizing Albanian's Confrontation with Global Islam

It is not the first time in Kosova's history that the tools of the state or state-like institutions sought to dominate the local population through faith. Under the regime of Sultan Abdülhamid II, sectarian politics took on a central role in projected state power over the empire's disparate territories and considerable amounts of state resources were spent on doctrinally sanitizing diverse areas of the Empire.[1] Often, the issue had been constructed rhetorically in terms of loyalty to the Sultan, Empire and ultimately to the Hanafi doctrine of *ijtihad* that functioned as the state ideological/theological foundation in this period. The issue of loyalty to both faith and Sultan/State is clearly a rhetorical as well as a practical aspect of Hamidian politics.[2]

Others have recently explored this refocusing of state energies to assert a uniformity in Ottoman Islam through, for instance, Hamidian attempts to subjugate sectarian "anomalies" in Northern Iraq and the battles in the Najd and Yemen over the doctrinal challenges presented by the Zaydis and Wahhabis to the very claim to the Caliphate.[3] While these examples provide us a good sense of the challenges to the Hamidian state, a neglected but clear example of what were the impediments of this distinctive drive to establish uniformity in the empire is Northern Albania.

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[1]A number of scholars take this too much for granted when citing documents generated from Istanbul at the time, assuming as a result, that pan-Islamism resonated unambiguously in places such as Albania. See for instance, Cezmi Eraslan, *II. Abdülhamid ve İslam Birliği* (Istanbul: Ötüken, 1992).

[2]In a revealing file at the archives of the Italian Foreign Ministry, Enrico Comashi, an Albanian Catholic by birth, is being hunted down by the Ottoman authorities for "treason" for taking Italian citizenship at the turn-of-the-century. The issue is that Enrico had converted to Islam in the 1880s, becoming Ahmed Şevfik Efendi, thereby giving up his "Latin" identity to join the umma as asserted by Abdülhamid. His persecution became a concern to the Italians as it reflected a larger Ottoman state aggressiveness towards its assumed Muslim constituency. See ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia B.54 F.1, dated Scutari 31 July 1906, no. 437/24, consular report to Italian Embassy in Istanbul.

[3]Selim Deringil, "Legitimacy Structures in the Ottoman State: the Reign of Abdülhamid II (1876-1909)," *IJMES*, 23 (1991): 345-359.

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For this part of the Balkans, the Hamidian reforms were animated by the rivalry for ascendancy after the disastrous war of 1877 that ultimately resulted in the San Stefano and then Berlin Treaties of 1878. The principal factors animating the Balkans were the increasingly intrusive actions of European states and their use of long standing diplomatic concessions granted by the Sublime Porte to assert their respective influence on the region's Christian populations. One of the more widely studied of these diplomatic mechanisms is the infamous capitulation (*ahidname*) awarded to states with which the Sublime Porte signed a peace treaty.[1] By 1878, these capitulations played a conspicuous role as the Ottoman Empire implemented reforms in Albanian territories. In the context of these reforms, European powers made increasingly loud calls for expanding their intrusive privileges as a way to maximize access to the Empire's wealth and assure the "rights" of their "Christian brethren" found in large numbers throughout Albanian-speaking territories. This largely competitive imperial dynamic resulted in the consolidation of claims on various "nations" (*millets*) within the Empire as a means of assuring European influence over the Ottoman Empire's numerous Christian populations.[2] The concessions granted by the Sublime Porte in this context took the form of extensive European activities in the development of "Christian" education and trade among exclusively designated imperial/communal groups, a fundamental factor to Hamidian policy towards Northern Albania.[3]

Parallel to the growing influence Russia and Austria enjoyed within the Ottoman Balkans after the Berlin Congress of 1878, diplomatic tensions between the powers grew with the region being the central ground of contention. Initially, attempts were made to formalize spheres of interest in the region in order to avoid unnecessary confrontation. The Reichstadt Agreement of 1876, as we learned in chapter 5, was supposed to signal a delicate balance of power between Vienna and St. Petersburg. Widely forgotten in this diplomatic history are the roles played by so-called lesser states like Italy, who often threatened Austrian and Russian interests in the Balkans. Amid this, Istanbul expressed increasing concern that such influence not only threatened the state's economic and military control of the region, but the very

[1] Ahidnâmes were granted to Austria in 1699, 1718, and 1739 while Russia received them in 1701, 1721, 1739 and 1774 and Italy 1890.

[2] See Starvo Skendi, "The *Millet* System and its Contribution to the Blurring of Orthodox National Identity in Albania," in Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis eds., *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire* vol. 1, (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1982), 247.

[3] For details of Austria's program in the region see Engelbert Deusch, "Das Österreichische Kultusprotektorat in der Türkei," in *Österreich in Geschichte und Literatur mit Geographie*, 45, (2001): 3-23. Austria's recognized claim to the Albanian Catholics helped exclude other European Catholic powers from establishing a foothold in the region. The French, for instance, despite their active policy of supporting Catholic communities in the Levant, had not a single school in Northern Albania. AMAE NANTES: Constantinople Correspondances avec les Echelles Scutari d'Albanie (1885-1890) French Consul at Scutari to French Embassy in Constantinople, dated Scutari, le 25 Oct 1886 "Etablishment Scholaire."

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spiritual loyalty of the majority Muslim population there.[1] Attempts to assert Russian or Austrian funded schools in the region since the 1880s or the later attempt to "reform" Macedonia in 1903-1905, for instance, signaled to many within the Ottoman state's elite that not only were these powers interested in protecting their respective co-religionists, but "convert" the local Muslim population as well.[2]

For Istanbul, it became clear early on in the Hamidian regime that it had to cultivate an ideological mechanism that could at once challenge these outside influences and mobilize resistance to a number of diplomatic setbacks that occurred as a result of its military defeat in 1877. The first explicit example of this took on a sectarian coloration, reflecting as much the semantics of the era as much as realities on the ground. The League of Prizren, for instance, organized by local Albanians to lobby European powers meeting to decide the fate of Albanian populated territories was often seen by foreign councils as being a creation of the Sultan. How Italian and British councils interpreted this as emblematic of the Sultan's "fanatical Islam" is interesting in as much as these movements were largely multi-faith in nature. These factors were ignored however, as the tone of the moment during the Berlin meetings was almost exclusively set along these sectarian lines.[3]

Throughout the Hamid period tensions between regional powers took on this sectarian shape to them. That said, there is no way of differentiating from the "fanaticism" often claimed by European consuls and more local reactions to what were ostensibly local concerns of foreign influence (this includes the Ottoman State). The murder of a French engineer by an Albanian Muslim around Manastir in 1897, for instance, does speak of a general tone of "Muslim" resistance to foreign ascendancy in the region over the years. The assailant himself confessed that it was his "Muslim duty" to murder the infidels present on Muslim land.[4] As was expected, the European consuls complained to their foreign ministries that this reflected a policy from Istanbul to consolidate its control over its Muslim population by promoting fanaticism in its schools and media. This too may have some merit, if we were to take the Ottoman State for its word. It is clear that a general tenor was circulating in the region through official publications, translating into what appeared to

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[1] See Abd al-Ra'uf Sinnu's, *al-Naz'aat al-Kiyaaniyyah al-Islaamiyyah fi al-Dawlah al-Uthmaaniyyah, 1877-1881: Bilaad al-Shaam, al-Hijaaz, Kurdistaan, Albaaniyaa.* (Beirut, 1994), 143-155.

[2] For a comprehensive explanation of this in the case of Macedonia, see Fikret Adanır, *Die Makedonische Frage*, (Wien: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1979), 154-162.

[3] For an example of this European interpretation of the League of Prizren, see I Documenti Diplomatici Italiani (DDI) Seconda Serie 1870-1896 Volume X, Document 202, Scutari 23 giugno 1878 R. 353 il console a Scutari, Berio, al Presidente del consiglio, Cairoli.

[4] ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B.107 F. 2, dated Monastir, 14 November 1897, no. 349/23 consul to MAE.

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be inter sectarian fighting between Catholic Albanians in villages around Iskodra and Muslim inhabitants who on more than one occasion, volunteered to hunt down the "Christian trouble makers" in neighboring districts. There is no doubt that Istanbul sought to cultivate these anti-European (and by default, anti-Catholic) sentiments and direct much of that ire through Islamic channels to subjugate rebellious populations.[1]

But much of this can also be seen as generated from local initiatives – the League of Prizren for instance – with Istanbul capitalizing on the obvious anti-European sentiments circulating around them. Indeed, with Austrian occupation of Bosnia in 1878, a regional call for a boycott of Austrian products was later cultivated by Istanbul through the state media to spread throughout the empire. Similarly, heightened sectarian sensibilities during the Greco-Ottoman war of 1897 first translated into local hostility towards "Greek" neighbors living in the Balkans and only later fully cultivated by Istanbul to a more general "Islamic" reaction to the war.[2] This may suggest that in many ways, the Empire was stumbling towards its much talked about "Islamic policy" in the early stages. The key therefore, is to try to capture the mechanics of this reactive policy that was clearly attempting to effect cultural uniformity that would be mobilized by the state vis-à-vis its struggles with rival powers and rebellious subjects.

I believe looking at the Hamidian attempts to institutionalize this policy through schools is a most helpful way in making my ultimate claim that the project could not hope to succeed, despite its clear ambition. Benjamin Fortna has convincingly suggested in his work on Hamidian educational reform that there was a pervasive Islamic message projected by the Hamidian state through its rapid and extensive investment in schools.[3] How much this ideological current permeated local Albanian society is something I wish to suggest was more complicated than the simple construction of schools in the region, however, as noted in chapter 6. A better understanding of the complex factors engaging local Albanians, including the previously mentioned competitive dynamic with regional powers will demonstrate the attempt to homogenize the *umma* in Albania around the Sultan and his claim to the Caliphate is mediated by these same locals' ability to maintain their distinctive regional identities.[4]

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[1]ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B. 222 F. 3 Telegrama no. 407, Scutari, 4 February 1904. The telegram reported that 7000 Muslim Albanians from the city headed out to the mountains to help capture rebellious Catholic Albanian groups.

[2]ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B. 204 F.1, dated Hodeidah, 22 April 1897, no. 23/3 encloses a report from the Italian consul in Yemen that highlights the sudden outburst of violence towards the local Greek merchants in this, the opposite end of the empire. It was reported that local mosques and the government newspaper evoked the hostile language needed to stir up locals.

[3]Benjamin C. Fortna, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman 'Secular' Schools," *IJMES*, 32:3 (2000): 369-393.

[4]For how Istanbul tried to disseminate this to the Arab part of the world see Engin Akarlı, "Abdulhamid II's Attempt to Integrate Arabs into the Ottoman System," in *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period*, edited by David Kushner, (Leiden: Brill Press, 1986): 74-89.

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As a number of scholars have written, it is in the Hamidian period that the school becomes the central ideological battleground for imperial/colonial states.[1] Much like their imperial counterparts elsewhere, Russian, Austrian and Ottoman state-funded schools in the Balkans were from the very start meant to monitor, supervise and manipulate local populations to best suite long-term imperial ambitions. Lost, however, in the statistics about the construction of schools is that the various states involved in the expansion of education in the region *reacted* to events on the ground instigated by locals in equal measure to its attempts to dictate policy.

While on the surface the issue of educational "reform" may be read in a clear-cut instrumentalist manner, local conditions forced the hand of these imperial ambitions. Austrian state activities among the region's Albanian-speaking populations and especially their Catholic leaders over the thirty years after Berlin best demonstrate the clash between assumed imperial interests (and their incumbent capitulatory privileges) and the practical realities on the ground. What that often meant for Austrian officials operating in the area was that their state's interests were defined more as a reflection of how local populations mobilized (or articulated) their communities through a liberal flow of tertiary regional powers' money, than dictates from Vienna or Istanbul, their assumed confessional guardians.[2] The problem posed for both Austria and the Sublime Porte in this period, therefore, lays in the fact that these populations were not acting along the lines assumed to characterize them.

It is often forgotten that Albanian-speaking communities in Northern Albania were often made up of mixed Orthodox, Catholic and Muslim families.[3] Rather than acting within the firm boundaries of a Catholic or Muslim community, locals manipulated the rhetoric of sectarian patronage to best attract much desired money and weapons from various parties.[4] As Austrian and British Consuls in Scutari (Iskodra) often noted in their reports to unconvinced superiors in Vienna and London respectively, loyalties based on faith could not be assumed in Ottoman Albania.[5]

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[1] See for instance, Bayram Kodaman, *Abdülhamid Devri Eğitim Sistemi.* (Istanbul, 1991), 91-96, Hysni Myzyri, *Shkollat e para Kombëtare Shqipe.* (Tirana, 1978) and Mustafa Ergün, *II. Meşrutiyet Devrinde Eğitim Hareketleri, 1908-1914*, (Ankara, 1996), 4-26.

[2] See the extensive reports presented to the Porte by Yusuf Ziya Pasha and others during the period in BBA YEE, 7/23. Compiled by Istanbul on 24 Ramazan 1303. [June 26, 1886], documents 3, 5, and 6.

[3] See Isa Blumi, "The Dynamics of Identity: The Albanian in the Ottoman Empire." in *ACTA Viennensia Ottomanica Akten der 13 CIEPO-Symposiums*, (ed.) Gisela Prochazka-Eisl (Vienna, 1999): 21-34.

[4] See BBA MV 56/54, 4 Muharrem 1308 [August 21, 1890] in which Istanbul's concern over Montenegro's Prince Nicholas' payoffs to local Albanian leaders in Gruda is clearly based on the "surprising" willingness of local Muslims to take weapons from the Orthodox state.

[5] The British Consul at Scutari, Green, was quite aware of the fluid value sectarian identities had in the region see PRO FO 78/2628 N. 15, Consul Green to Foreign Office, Scutari, 3 March 1877.

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Despite these local nuances, due to the efforts of rival powers to influence local political and economic events, there was a dramatic increase in state investments in the construction of faith-based schools, armories, hospitals and other government structures after 1878. This again suggests that schools were seen to be very much a part of the process of installing greater state influence in the region by all regional parities.[1] Due to financial restraints and the need to establish a bureaucracy, Abdülhamid schools were being built only in the 1880s. But it is clear they were being built in great numbers in response to the numerous schools already in place or being developed and financed by other European states. In the case of Northern Albania, at least in the period immediately prior to and after the Berlin Congress of 1878, Austrian and Italian funded schools were of particular concern to the Ottoman state.[2] In correspondence between the Archbishop of Scutari and the Ottoman state, for instance, one notes that since 1875 a marked rise in Ottoman resistance to efforts to expand Catholic education by the Catholic Church, largely based on Istanbul's concerns that growing numbers of locals are attending these Catholic institutions, including the children of prominent Muslims. Among the tactics used to halt the rapid expansion of Catholic influence was bureaucratic obstructionism. Another was pitting the interests of Italian and factions inside the Vatican against those of the Austrians.[3]

In 1887 for example, the Archbishop of Scutari complained to both the Sublime Porte in Istanbul and the Italian consul about how local Ottoman officials have been "for years" blocking the "rightful" expansion of Church institutions.[4] In response, Istanbul asserted that the "rights" to build Catholic schools in the region were reserved exclusively to the Austrian state, which was not involved with many of these schools in question. The Ottomans, by reminding local Church officials of the nuances of local sectarian issues proved

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[1]For the Ottoman state, full-scale implementation of an education infrastructure began in 1881-1882. See for instance the declaration by the Education Ministry for the creation of vilayet-based education councils. BBA Ayniyat Defterleri, 1420, 1 Safer 1299 [23 December 1881]. By 1910, this policy is streamlined by the Young Turk regime. See BBA DH.MUI 80-3/18 1328.Ca.29 [8 June 1910] for a report on expenditures (*masraflar*) on schools.

[2]For over fifty years Austria and the Vatican was busy constructing schools in the region. For instance, documents dating as far back as 1849 demonstrate how the Propaganda Fida and the Scutari based Archbishop sought to introduce teachers in various village church complexes. See Albanian State Archives (henceforth AQSH), F.132.D.1.f.8 dated 28 June 1849, Bishop of Lezha to Church officials in Scutari and Rome. Later, the archbishop of Durrazo (Durres/Draç was also busy organizing a school with Austrian money. AQSH, F.131.D.2.f.1-13, dated 16 July, 1856. A year later, bishops in Scutari and Durrazo were discussing ways to finance private schools and the salaries of their teachers. AQSH F.132.D.29.f.1-2; D.31.f.1-3 dated Scutari and Durrazo throughout the spring of 1857.

[3]To appreciate Ottoman concerns about Austrian monetary and military support to Malësore "Catholics," and their understanding of what the Italians hoped to do about Austrian ascendancy, see BBA YEE 42/139, no date.

[4]AQSH F.132.D.28.f.1-6, correspondence between the office of the Catholic Archbishop of Scutari and various Ottoman officials. Dated between 9 March, 1887 and 15 March, 1887.

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adept in manipulating Austrian/Italian rivalries over the local Catholic population. Other documents clearly point out that in many cases from the 1880s onwards, factions within the Vatican, with the assistance of an increasingly assertive Italian state, intervened and circumvented Austrian efforts to monopolize Catholic education.[1] After all, it was Austrian efforts since the 1870s to reaffirm their role in its *Kultursprotektorat* that conflicted with the new realities of Italian politics.[2] This infringement on Austrian capitulation rights both frustrated Austria and served as a key leverage point not only for the Ottomans, but local Albanians as well.

What such correspondence tells us about the nature of regional educational politics is important on two levels. Firstly, the growing rivalry between European-funded Catholic and Abdülhamid's state schools which were just beginning to open their doors in the 1890s, appear on the surface to reveal how rival states wished to use education in order to gain influence among the local population. The construction of these schools required however, as much cooperation from locals as from the Ottoman state or Church officials. As an elaborate state education infrastructure emerged over the years, a number of local power brokers begin to appear as key components to the functioning of these schools.[3] What makes this issue somewhat more complicated, however, is that not only are locals being slowly integrated into the system (and presumably becoming "loyal subjects" of patron states) but that the clear cut division between Ottoman "Muslim" interests and "Catholics" are complicated by a growing Italian and Austrian rivalry that is desperately attempting to attract students to their schools.[4]

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[1] In a series of letters one can follow the concerns Austrians had for the "secular" schools being set up by unsanctioned Catholic and Italian state operations. AQSH F.132.D.23.f.1-56 Various correspondence between Scutari's Archbishop, the Propaganda Fide, and the Austrian consul in Scutari. Dated throughout 1899.

[2] Such tensions are revealed in a long list of correspondence between the region and Vienna. HHStA PA XIV/24, Albanien. "Mémoire über Albanien (Ende 1901 bis Anfang 1905)," Calice to Goluchowski, dated Constantinople, 16 November 1898.

[3] This policy of placating local leaders follows a pattern established by the Austrians, who by 1868 imported teachers to Scutari and Tivar (Bar) in order to influence local students in ways seemingly beneficiary to Austrian interests. See AQSH F.132.D.7.f.1-8 for a series of letters between local students and their teachers, dated May 1868. The Ottomans were also actively recruiting local leaders by employing them to administer recently built schools. In 1905 for instance, a local Albanian and former rebel, Hasan b. Murat was being paid a state salary for maintaining the key border town of Gosine's middle school. BBA TFR.1.ShKT 67/6629 dated 1323.4.12 [17 June 1905]. In another example, reports on the opening of a Mekteb-i Sultani in the city of Scutari reveals that the key administrator is also an important weapons merchant in the city. BBA DH.MUI 78/32 1328.Ra.16 [28 April 1910].

[4] On the rivalry between Italy and Austria over Albania see ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia, B. 25 F.2, dated Roma ,1 September 1892 no. 33005/282 MAE to Ambassador in Istanbul. The Ministry reminds the Italian ambassador of Rome's policy of protecting cultural institutes that are considered "Italian" in nature. Here they discount Austrian claims over Catholics, saying a number of Churches in Albania are Italian, noting in particular, that most of clerical class in the Ottoman Empire are Italian-born.

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As noted above, the Austrians were the first of the European powers to build in Albanian lands and were actively engaged in constructing schools since it opened in 1856 the first European-funded school in the region (*Collegio Severiano*). Despite the fact that by the beginning of World War I, Austria funded 24 schools scattered throughout Gheg Albania, including 19 schools in the city of Scutari itself, Vienna felt vulnerable to Italian influence in the region.[1] During the 1880s, and especially after the rise to power of Prime Minister Francesco Crispi in 1888, Italy invested state resources to create a solid political, economic and cultural hold on the area. In 1888/89 alone, the Italian state opened schools in the districts of Ishkodra, Avlonya (Vlora), Preveza, and Yanya (Janina). Italy constructed elementary and secondary schools for boys and girls as well as night schools for adults that not only attracted local Catholic students, but to the concern of Ottoman officials, also local Albanian Muslims.[2]

Importantly, these schools, seen as "modern" and well-financed by their patrons, began to attract students away from the Greek/Rum Orthodox, Ottoman and Austrian schools which until then monopolized the education of their respective millets. As noted by the British Consul over the decade between 1888 and 1898, the success of Italian schools caused alarm in the Austrian consulate and among local Ottoman officials. According to consul Lamb, Austria aggressively lobbied of the local Archbishop to close these "secular" schools through the direct intervention of the Church, seeking to halt the continuation of a "policy of differentiation" between Austrian-funded Catholic schools and of those supported by Italian money.[3] It is clear that such efforts were not successful in large part because Istanbul was not willing to formally close the Italian schools out of fear of the diplomatic repercussions and losing leverage on the Austrians. As noted by the British council, the student-body was taken from the poorest levels of the Catholic and Muslim population and many children benefited from the offer of free meal for the children of the poor has proved a strong attraction. The main short coming was that teachers were "entirely ignorant of the Albanian language, [and] are naturally unable to deal effectively with this crowd of children and some disorder seems at present to prevail."[4] In regards to the growing number of Muslim students attending the schools, Istanbul's concerns were as such that

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[1] HHStA PA I/710, Generalia, provides a list of German schools in all of the Balkans on pages 1-12, and in pages 19-68 one may find a list of all the Catholic schools in Albania.

[2] For a detailed report on these schools' role in educating the region's multi-confessional population, see AMAE Nantes: CCS, 1900/1911, Consul in Scutari to Ambassador Constans, dated Scutari 19 March 1902 no. 207.

[3] PRO FO195/1619 Scutari no. 25, 7 December 1888, Consul Lamb to White. Lamb described the strategy as such: "...signs are already apparent that the whole of the powerful influence of the Catholic Church in this place will be exerted to prevent its [a particular Italian school] success while from another side, efforts are being made to excite the suspicions of the local authority with regard to its objects."

[4] PRO FO 195/1646, Scutari no. 2, 9 February 1889.

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it initiated an irade formally banning Muslim Albanians to attend the schools in 1887 on the ground they were not studying their religious texts. It should be noted that it is 1887 that the first Hamidian school in Işkodra is opened.[1]

The reason for this concern was not only based on Italian actions alone. Austrian records reveal that locals had effectively lobbied the Italians in building these schools. Over time it also became clear that the more money well-endowed Italo-Albanians were willing to spend on developing a link through the Vatican to Albania, the more local interests were keen on capitalizing on their diversity. Local leaders throughout the region began to petition the Italian consul, the Scutari archbishop, local and Istanbul-based Ottoman agencies and the Austrians themselves for the construction of schools in their communities. As I have noted elsewhere, this practice of direct solicitation animated a veritable explosion of school construction as well as the subsequent empowerment of local leaders who proved adept at developing local economies.[2]

Seeing large numbers of Albanian Catholics and importantly for us, Muslims flock to the well-funded "Italian" schools that were beginning to make inroads into the region, Austria and its policy-minded consular staff based in the region had to devise new methods of attracting and sustaining their influence over the local Catholic population. The same held true for Ottomans.[3] The different tactics taken by the three powers in search of regional hegemony are revealing. The interest in propagating pro-Austrian sentiments through schools in response to the rise in Italian-funded schools, ultimately led to the active promotion of the use of the Albanian language as a medium of instruction in Austrian-funded schools, a program that would receive the largest resistance from the Hamidian regime. That the Ottoman state would in the end be the primary factor, along with the Orthodox Church based in Istanbul, in repressing local demands to be educated in their own language proved the largest impediment to Ottoman efforts to control the doctrinal message being promoted by the state. Indeed, due to its resistance to the use of the Albanian language, many former "allies" took up arms at various times of the Hamidian state, issuing demands that specifically asserted the Albanian demand for the use of their language.[4]

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[1]AQSH F.132.D.28.f.1-6, dated Scutari, 26 July 1887.

[2]For an example of how this worked in see chapter six.

[3]BBA YA.HUS 166/23 (29.1.1298), In Kosova, 20 Kanun evvel, 1296, telegram 553 states that "Muslims are going to Christian schools in İpek and Kalkadelen, Yakova, Prizren. In protest, local Muslim leaders march to Uskub and Prishtina to protest." These demonstrations represent a struggle of influence, pitting established local imams who were aligning themselves with the Sultan, and others who saw benefits in sending their children to Catholic schools being funded by Austria and Italy.

[4]HHStA No. 2A-B, Beilage, PA XIV/7, Albanien V/1, Ippen to Goluchowski, Scutari, 31 January 1901.The language problem would be the single issue that divided Albanian Muslims for decades, until finally, with the fall of the Hamidian regime, even loyalists to the promotion of the study of Ottoman and Arabic, demanded the use of Albanian in state-funded schools. Demands outlined by Albanian ulema in article in Tanin dated 11 February 1911.

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Closer research into the question of schools in the area, therefore, suggests we are neither dealing with a passive population vulnerable to indoctrination and thus globalizing forces, nor a Church or state capable of dictating events on their own terms. The competitive dynamic between regional states proved, first and foremost, to be a veritable windfall for locals. While the material benefits of such attention are important, it is the nature of the response locals made that seems crucial to understanding the period as a whole and the barriers to the globalization of faith, market or ideology. While the state agencies involved in implementing these projects operated within a sectarian logic, locals did not respect the intended purpose of these sectarian-based initiatives, instead, they utilized the *possibilities of identity* available to them to maximize their local interests.

Here then, the local perspective sheds new light into the dynamics of Great Power rivalries at play in the Balkans and just where ethno-national and sectarian identities stand in the day-to-day lives of locals. These actions also had a dramatic impact on how outside powers could operate in the region. Austria's privileged role in protecting Ottoman Catholics was immediately questioned with the growing activities of Albanians based in Iskdora and elsewhere, many of whom would align with Muslim family members to assure local communities would receive the state investment most needed for local economies.[1]

Austria quickly learned to adopt its policies to fit local conditions better. In addition to building schools and educating loyal subjects in the region, it used the enticement of study grants in distant, prestigious locations as an attempt to attract loyalty of the locals. One of the most interesting tactics adopted by Austria, was the offer to provide access to Europe by way of issuing travel documents. The issuance of travel documents to Albanians becomes a regular occurrence in the archives by the 1890s, suggesting growing numbers of Albanian families used the powers of the capitulations, and Austria's need to secure local loyalties, to send their children to Vienna or Rome for educational or commercial purposes. Importantly, these "Reisezertifikate" were not limited to Albanian-speaking Catholics but were extended on a number of occasions to Muslim Albanians who were considered key to projecting Austrian influence in the region.[2] Such active efforts to create cultural and political links between Albanians, irregardless of faith, suggest that by the mid-1890s, formal affiliation to the Church was no longer necessary to win Austrian diplomatic support.

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[1]For an example of how a "mixed" village in the mountains above Prizren organized a petition to both Istanbul AND Vienna for the construction of a school, see BBA TFR.1.KV 28/2774, various dates throughout 1907.

[2]See for instance HHStA PA XXXVIII/ 423 Report No. 12, Kral to Aehrenthal, Scutari 22 Jan. 1908, where a number of Albanian Catholics are granted "Reisezertifikate" to study at a school in Rome.

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Why this becomes increasingly an issue over the thirty years is precisely the policies that were meant to consolidate doctrinal and political uniformity. Rival imperial policies would actively seek out to take advantage of this flexible dynamic. The assumption in Vienna and the Archbishop's office in Scutari, for instance, was these measures would not only win over the hearts of local Catholics, but consolidate Austrian influence over local politics and perhaps encourage a wave of conversions among the Muslim population.[1] The same probably held true in Istanbul, as there are increasingly nervous reports coming from Italian consuls during the period about the large number of "conversions" that are taking place. This is suggestive of a shift taking place over the period.

This fear may in fact represent a reversal of fortunes in the 1907-1908 period for the Hamidian state, suggesting it was beginning to gain the loyalty of the local population. What accounts for this shift I suggest is the increasingly clear picture of European interests in the region, in respect to Macedonia, the increasingly influence Russia has in Kosova in promoting Serbian interests and the flood of refugees, many of them Catholic Albanians, who are being cleansed from Southern Serbia and Montenegro, regions recently ceded to these two countries by the European powers. In many ways, the conversions to Islam by Catholic Albanians in the 1907 period became a viable option for people now dependent on state funds for sustenance. Indeed, one sees as Ottoman state policy in regards to the tens of thousands of Albanians flooding across the border helped consolidate their trust and dependence. It is important to note that many at this time were already being moved to Anatolia, eastern Anatolian in Armenian areas. The stirring of sectarian anger reverberating in this context of exile, forced expulsion and handing over "Christian" land to citizens of the Muslim state helped consolidate Istanbul's claim as the only state willing to look after the interests of these people. The result of this is clear from an extensive report provided by the Italian consul in Valona (today's Vlora in central Albania) of the nature of local politics being dominated by these refugees who flooded the region. We see a radicalization of these communities and a sense of outrage that the European powers were actively promoting a further territorial expansion of Serbia, Greece and Montenegro at their expense.[2]

It is therefore the height of the refugee crisis in Kosova and Northern Albania that new methods of integrating the population take form. Indeed, it is clear that on the eve of the Young Turk Revolution, even in sophisticated social circles of Istanbul, the permeating social mores of Hamidian "faith-

[1] ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia B. 25 F.3 "Protezione dei cattolici in Albania 1892-1913."

[2] ASMAE Ambasciata d'Italia in Turchia B. 223 F. 1 Copia di telegrama no. 27, dated 6 December 1912, Consulate in Valona to MAE.

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based initiatives" would dictate how people interacted with each other.[1] While the process deserves more attention, the central issue to note is that these relational dynamics shift over time. The Hamidian state was helpless in shaping its targeted population's loyalty through the institutions of the state alone. The presence of other powers, at that stage far too powerful to simply exclude from Albania, mitigated the capacity of state institutions to monopolize the spiritual activities of Muslims. But the contingencies surrounding regional shifts in power helped change the motivations of many living in the region. The social and economic condition of the destitute refugees from areas now occupied by Serbia, Montenegro and Greece created a new set of relations between those live-supporting institutions of the state. In many ways, the new agencies established by the Hamidian state to care for the Albanian refugees (again, Orthodox, Catholic, Sunni and Shiite) help forge a level of emotional and material dependency that could serve as the tool for indoctrination. Of course the Ottoman state could not replicate this throughout the empire, although it certainly had ambitions to. The issue was the scale and context, which was not uniform in other areas.

[1] On 14 January 1908, Ali Cevat Bey recounts in his memoirs how the attempted marriage of a Muslim woman to a Rum man led to riots in the Beşiktaş neighborhood and the eventual lynching of the unfortunate man. Clearly the sectarian barriers erected at this time were policed individually, the Hamidian state was no longer necessary. See Ali Cevat Bey, *II. Meşrutiyetin İlanı ve 31 Mart Hadisesi* (Ankara, 1985), 172.

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10

DIVERGENT LOYALTIES AND THEIR MEMORY: ALBANIAN SOLDIERS IN THE GREAT WAR

> Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date ... All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary.
>
> --Geroge Orwell, 1984

Introduction

World War I (the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913 are included in this timeframe) has been widely remembered through the social, institutional and economic transformations it engendered on those societies that participated in it. For a number of reasons only partially germane to this chapter, Albanian-speakers have generally been left out of this memory. Why this is so is largely representative of an academic fixation on the emergence of the nation-state, a process out of which Albanians emerged relatively late. As a consequence, histories of the region that include Albania, focus only on events that specifically lead to the formal declaration of independence on 28 November 1912, and leave out important events that do not immediately pertain to issues of Albanian nationhood.[1] Failure to conceptually move beyond the 1913 Albanian state has resulted in some telling omissions of the historical experiences of more than half the world's Albanian-speakers who were to find themselves outside "Albanian" frontiers in 1913.[2]

That we are dealing with a territorial and thus discursive fissure of this magnitude goes a long way in explaining why there is a need to expand our appreciation for how history of The War is written. In order to strategically "outflank" a historiography that actively "silences" Albanians or others deemed

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[1]For how the Ottoman state interpreted the independence declaration see BBA BEO İrade Harbiye 309255. Anything close to being called an Albanian "state," however, only materialized in 1920 when a national council was established. AQSH F. 246 D. 1 V. 1920 is the file located in Tirana that reveals the contested nature of this nation-building process.

[2]Kosova and Western Macedonia's Albanian-speakers are well known by now in these terms of territorial exclusion, but what is identified today as the Chameria issue is the central issue to those involved in Albanian politics today. The Albanian State Archives has recently attempted to address this by publishing documents pertaining to the Chameria issue along the Greek/Albanian border. Kaliopi Naska (Ed.), *Dokumente për Çamërinë, 1912-1939*. (Tirana, 1999).

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"outside" the confines of state institutions, I will suggest rethinking how we interpret the role of historical actors contemporary to the events themselves. Of the several ways that I can approach the issue of omission, as much as insertion, I believe the angle of the individual actor is both the least studied and the most fruitful to making my broader point. By inspecting the direct impute individuals have on how we remember their world, the historian is forced to be cognizant of the shifting pressures on memory and how they represent individual and collective identities years later.[1]

To demonstrate how this process takes place and how historians may interpret it, I look at three Albanian men who played significant roles in the events that have survived the screening process of history. We start with the most conspicuous figure of the period, Ahmed İzzet Pasha (1864-1937) of Korça (Gorice) in Southeast Albania, a respected Ottoman-era commander of first, the Ottoman Second Army and then the entire Caucasus force during the Great War. In Ahmet İzzet Pasha, we have someone who actively sought to dictate the terms of his role in the murky politics of the second constitutional period and World War I by imposing his interpretation of events on a national history that was still in the process of being composed in Turkey, the country he adopted as home. By looking at how İzzet Pasha both distorted his own role in certain key events and how we may best interpret such attempts, the role of people and the institutions they run, take on new meaning.

Following İzzet Pasha, we look at the infamous Isa Boletini (1864-1916) whose exploits as both imperial agent and rebel demonstrates the multifaceted place otherwise marginal individuals can commandeer in history. In Boletini, who was illiterate, we also have a good case of how individuals can intercede at moments of "history" to actually control their image, much as İzzet Pasha's memoirs sought to do after the events. What that means is Isa Boletini would part take in events in order to position himself at strategic moments to effect a place in history.

To finish, the case of the much maligned Esad Pasha Toptani (1863-1920) will demonstrate most distinctly the operational strategies of historical figures in creating their own place in a nation's present and the seemingly counter-intuitive "rationale" historical actors maintain in times of transition. Esad Pasha Toptani has been castigated as the villain in Albanian national historiography, at least in the post World War II period when Enver Hoxha's regime was busy rewriting the history of Albania and the Balkans. It must be remembered that Esad Pasha comes from the most powerful family of central

[1]Martin Rossenburg's work on Napoleon's efforts to control how history would remember him, namely through the commissioning, assembling and controlling of art and architecture, is pertinent to my argument. Martin Rosenberg, "Raphael's *Transfiguration* and Napoleon's Cultural Politics," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 19, no. 2 (1985-86): 180-205.

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Albania and his nephew became "King Zogu" during the 1920s and 1930s. Toptani's actions thus fuse a notion of subjectivity that all three men have but at the same time demonstrate how actors can approach their intervention into history in distinct ways. If we adopt a more critical eye to these processes, we can, I argue, ultimately avoid the external distortions being imposed by tyrannical regimes eager to erase or embellish moments of the past.

These three men would leave quite different and perhaps more importantly, unstable, marks on the history of Albania. Unstable because their roles as interpreted by the numerous and distinct Albanian communities in the world expose the often forgotten external dynamics which play into how societies understand their past. Beyond the issue of contemporaries actively engaging in making their own historical place, there is, therefore, the social and political context in which the post-War historiography has been written.[1] Political theorist Michael Shapiro has raised some important questions about the nature of writing a history of war, theorizing the role state institutions play in codifying collective identities through actively excluding others:

> "...the process of fixing stories of past violent encounters plays a role in shaping the spaces and events that constitute the basis for being a "people." Those histories that manage to attain a level of dominance and stability create the imaginary boundaries that contain a people; they exert an influence on the self-interpretations and modes of inclusion and exclusion of the people who embrace them."[2]

I would add to this that in the case of Albanians, the key dynamic to consider is the political realm of possibilities that influences the kinds of exclusions and inclusions taking place at the time of remembering. In other words, the actors involved in shaping and conceiving historical moments and the constitution of its memory prove to be active agents in the process of history-writing as well as reflections of the institutionalized and sociological limitations set before them. These actors' political, social and institutional affiliations must be brought into consideration, therefore, but in a manner that respects the fluidity of those affiliations.[3]

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[1] For an excellent, critical study of how memory operates in post-conflict settings, see Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past.* (Minneapolis, 1993).

[2] Michael Shapiro, *Violent Cartographies: Mapping Cultures of War.* (Minneapolis, 1997), 138.

[3] I have partially dealt with these issues elsewhere. Isa Blumi, "Outside the Foreseeable Future: The Tyranny of Ethnicity Politics in Kosova." *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 19/1 (2001): 109-127.

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Ahmet İzzet Pasha

In many ways Ahmet İzzet Pasha lived the classic Ottoman success story.[1] Of humble beginnings, the man's life was predicated on being a career officer in every sense of the word.[2] His own testimonials, either through interview or in his own pen emphasizes the development of his career. Another key aspect to understanding İzzet Pasha's history, however, is the period in which he attempts to "recollect" the events of the First World War. It is an interesting exercise to contemplate İzzet Pasha's position in the emerging Republican society that was rapidly leaving men like him behind through his memoirs. That he was composing much of his memoirs during the 1920s suggests there are angles to interpreting his autobiographic musings that reflect as much upon early Republican Turkey as the late Ottoman period about which he is writing. İzzet Pasha is for a reason stressing his reputation as a loyal soldier. His life must have been disrupted by the events taking place in the 1920s, and indeed, we may speculate from the amount of emphasis he puts onto this loyalty to state, that his position in Atatürk's Turkey may have been far more uncertain than his polished vitae would suggest.[3] In İzzet Pasha, I suggest we have a man who clearly sought to convince his reading public in post-imperial Turkey that he was a marginal player in the events that in the Republican era were deemed problematic. Were men like him being hunted down, either physically or in the media? Why was he so eager to deny a key role in events that were, yes, disastrous for a failed Empire, but of some "historical" value to a society eager to reshape itself?

İzzet Pasha played a central role in the Ottoman army during the war. Such a fact may have been an issue in post-imperial Turkey. İzzet Pasha was also Grand Vizier in 1918 and the Minister of War in 1921 of a post-war regime that would be the focus of Republican derision later on in the 1920s. While time did not permit me to expand this portion of my research, there is no doubt that İzzet Pasha made some very powerful enemies during these years and I read his memoirs as an attempt to counter attacks on him by preempting any accusations through his own story. In addition to this potentially dangerous past in regard to his service as a high ranking official in the pre-Republican state, I also suspect İzzet Pasha was eager to shed himself of his Albanian identity. It is clear throughout his memoirs that with the fall of the

[1]There are numerous sources on Ahmet İzzet Pasha, many of which are autobiographical. The following have been consulted: Ahmet İzzet Pasha, *Feryadim I, II*, (Istanbul, 1992, 1993); Metin Ayışığı, *Mareşal Ahmet İzzet Paşa (Askeri ve Siyasi Hayati)*. (Istanbul, 1997); and Karl Klinghard, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten des Marschalls des Ahmet İzzet Pascha* (Leipzig, 1927).

[2]A contemporary to the 1897 Greek war provides a most evocative description of İzzet Pasha's "heroism" during the war. See Süleyman Tevfik, *Devlet-i Aliyye-i Osmaniyye ve Yunan Muharebesi, 1314*. (Istanbul, 1315), 200-244.

[3]The key document out of which I analyze İzzet Paşa's recalcitrance is his 1928 serial autobiography published in a popular journal of the time. Ahmet İzzet Paşa, "Harb-i Umumi'nin Vuku ve Ziya'nda Mes'uller ve Mes'uliyetler," in: *Akşam*, Istanbul (1928).

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Ottoman Empire, he was not attached his homeland. This may be a reflection of realities in his life in the 1920s and not the realities of the war, where there is some evidence that he was very much identified as Albanian by those around him. As documents and even his memoirs suggest, İzzet Pasha was deeply involved in domestic Albanian politics after the period he returns from Yemen in early 1913, suggesting this detachment was not as deep as claimed in his writings.[1]

The apparent need to publish memoirs is always an interesting question to raise about those who take part in the self-promotional exercise. Certainly in İzzet Pasha's case, the early post-Ottoman era saw an explosion of the autobiographical genre of like-minded men eager to "set the story straight." In many ways, the exercise, therefore, may be read as an attempt to eliminate, erase or deflect past misdeeds, miscalculations or associations. In İzzet's case, in regard to Albania, I suggest he felt somewhat threatened by the fact that so many prominent Albanians were at the time actively imposing their own historical narrative of the war period. In fact, by the time he publishes his first memoirs in 1928, many of his contemporaries had either finished or were busy completing memoirs of their own. The "founder" of the modern Albanian state, Ismail Kemal Bey (1844-1919), for example, demonstrated his eagerness to shape his place in Albanian history; Ibrahim Temo (top CUP ideologue) and even prominent elements of the defunct Ottoman Military who served in Albania at the time of the war would also write memoirs.[2] İzzet Pasha must have felt he was in a race against time in order to solidify his reputation of a lifetime of service in face of a rapidly changing world around him. This political (and cultural) context is thus key to appreciating the dynamic of retrofitting an individual's historical place, whether at the time of the event, or, as in İzzet Pasha's case, a decade later.

Aside from the immediate motivations for changing the past, there is the question of what was it that İzzet Pasha was actually trying to disguise. I look specifically at his role in Albania during the key period of the transition from imperial rule to the chaotic and uncertain World War I period. What sparked my as of yet, unconfirmed suspicions of İzzet Pasha's hand in Albania, at least until 1914, are partially based on his vehement denials that he was interested in his homeland's politics.[3] I grew suspicious with his active efforts to dilute his importance (and interests) to events taking place in his homeland, in particular when I noticed just how often his name appeared in

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[1] İzzet Pasha recollects his period in Yemen in the May 1, May 12 and May 13 issues of *Akşam*, 1928.

[2] See for instance Sommerville Story, (Ed.), *The Memoirs of İsmail Kemal Bey*, (London, 1920); İbrahim Temo, *İttihad ve Terakki Anılar*. (Istanbul, 1987); Süleyman Külçe, *Osmanlı Tarihinde Arnavutluk*. (İzmir, 1944); and Adurrahman Nafiz, *Işkodra Müdafaası*. (Istanbul, 1933).

[3] *Akşam*, May 14, 1928.

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archival material. One of the larger contradictions one finds in the archives is that İzzet Pasha clearly maintained close ties with many of the military men who became leaders of the Ottoman Empire after 1910. The extent to which İzzet Pasha's links to an, at times, brutal military regime are not certain, but what is clear is that he was entrusted with any number of top-priority missions for the governments of the period. Among his more important missions are negotiating the Da'an treaty with Imam Yahya in Yemen in 1911 and taking part in the defense of Istanbul in January 1913.[1] Clearly the Young Turk regime trusted the man and as İzzet Pasha himself notes in his memoirs, due to this indisputable trust, there were many who believed that he was influential in Young Turk policies towards Albania.

What that entails in the beginning of 1914 was the attempt to violently overthrow the self-proclaimed government of Albania, led by former Ottoman politician, Ismail Kemal Bey.[2] What was at stake was Istanbul's continued role in the Balkans, which was all but eliminated with the defeats during the two Balkan wars. As far as Istanbul was concerned, Albania was the key to preserving itself a place in the Balkans. Therefore, aside from using weapons to wrest power and legitimacy from Ismail Kemal Bey's fledgling government, İzzet Pasha (or those who were his direct superiors) also actively lobbied Europe for a continued diplomatic role in Albania. At the time, some European powers, in search of stability in Albania, advocated appointing a member of European royalty to rule Albania, much as done with King Otto a century earlier in Greece. Istanbul, eager to maintain some influence in the region, circulated Ahmet İzzet Pasha's name around as a possible, Muslim alternative to Europe's Christian candidates.[3] Among the many newspapers circulating Ahmet İzzet Pasha's name was the official *Tasvir-i Efkar*, which even printed at one point, photographs of the two contenders for the crown.[4]

The idea was eventually dropped, largely because the Germans and Austrians backed the appointment of Prussian Prince, Wilhelm von Wied (2876-1945).[5] Ten years later, in his conversation with Karl Klinghard on the topic, İzzet Pasha claimed a complete disinterest in the idea at the time and suggested his expressed disinterest was the real reason for the idea being

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[1]Karl Klinghard, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten*, 226-227.

[2]On the uprising led by a Turkish officer named Bekir Grebene, see Ekrem Bey (Vlora), *Lebenserinnerungen (1885 bis 1925)*. Band II, (München, 1973), 47 and *Ikdam*, 7 Kanun-I sani (1329/1914).

[3]This question was troubling for the Italians and a number of locals, including their main informant Nabi Bey, who had their eyes set on someone else for the throne in Albania. See ASMAE Ambassacita e Constantiniopli B. 223 Telegram no 149 dated 8 January 1914.

[4]Much of this discussion may be found in among other sources, *Tasvir-i Efkar*, 30 Kanun-i evvel (1329/1914), 964; *Ikdam*, 8 Kanun-i sani, (1329/1914), 6062.

[5]For Austria's policy on the issue see HHStA PA XII/418.

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dropped by all parties involved.[1] That said, Austrian officials based in Istanbul at the time claimed that he was not stepping away from the proposal. On the contrary, he was sending out singles that he was willing to talk about a future role as Albania's king.[2] Elsewhere, İzzet Pasha somewhat further complicates his post-war claims by adding that Ismail Kemal "never asked" him to take the place of Albania's king, suggesting that there were even interactions between Istanbul's arch-nemesis Ismail Kemal and İzzet Pasha.[3]

Although there is reason to believe there is more to his story than he admits, as far as Albanian and Turkish historians are concerned, Ahmet İzzet Pasha WAS the quintessential Ottoman solider and they have exonerated him from any deeper role. In the end, therefore, İzzet Pasha successfully secured himself a place in history as someone who did not compromise his loyalty to what translated in the post-war era as Kemal Mustapha Atatürk's new Turkish state. Ahmet İzzet Pasha's act of self-preservation has successfully obscured the ambitions and strategies that had important consequences to the final resolution to the Albanian issue. It is noteworthy, however, that İzzet Pasha's intervention ultimately negates his own efforts to impose a reading on history from being of any use to those of us who seek to critically study the war period in the Balkans. These patterns of interacting with one's own role in history suggest that autobiographical sources are potentially counter-productive in our project to study the past, and should be handled with trepidation.

Isa Boletini

İzzet Pasha has been successful in shedding most of his perhaps damning past through the practice of actively writing memoirs to sway those who did not experience the events about which he was writing. Isa Boletini, on the other hand, proved successful in controlling how contemporaries would remember his contribution to Albanian history. Being illiterate himself, influencing these intermediaries proves key to his survival as an historical figure. Of the three men studied here, Isa Boletini is the most evocative and transcendent figure, in large part for his place is secured in a localized political context that by the First World War, had become marginal. While the historical record on Boletini's so-called resistance of Ottoman rule is far from clear cut, the real function of Boletini in Kosova today is that he represents a direct connection to the emotional traumas of Serbian colonialism in the post World War I period. Until Tito's loosening of restrictions of the use of

[1] See Karl Klinghard, *Die Denkwürdigkeiten*, 232.

[2] See HHStA PA XIV/66 Liasee 28-29, telegram number 1293 sent from Markgraf Pallavicini, Jenikoy to Vienna: 15 July 1914.

[3] See Mahmut Kemal İnal, *Osmanlı Devrinde Son Sadrazamlar*. (Istanbul, 1953), 1979.

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Albanian-language materials, Albanians in Kosova remembered Boletini exclusively through oral transmission. By the end of the 1960s, Belgrade-trained Albanian historians translated these oral myths onto a political setting that shared many parallels with the post-Ottoman Kosova, rendering Isa Boletini a paradigmatic figure for what Shapiro said was a "people's memoryscape" in which the boundaries of identity are forged. That Boletini has best symbolized Albanians' struggles in the face of both Ottoman (historical) and then Serb (actual) occupation specifically pinpoints the larger context through which each new generation reads and remembers history. From the assumed moral and spiritual superiority of Albanians vis-à-vis Serbs, to the treachery of the outside world, locals see Boletini's story as Kosova's story. What is key for this chapter, however, is what is selectively forgotten about Isa Boletini's past as much as remembered. It is clear that over time Boletini was actively covering over his past transgressions, which contradicted much of the claims he was making at any one point. While theorists have acknowledged this process, they have generally ignored the role the historical agent himself plays in initiating history in order to disguise past actions.

The Kosovar Albanian texts that remember Boletini offer but a crude, embryonic window into a society just beginning to find itself, a society that has still to find the conceptual and institutional possibilities to write more critical histories of the man and the period in which he lived. The selective use of sources is telling (namely British consular reports) as they reflect Boletini's own persistent efforts over his life to embellish past deeds with present, distorting statements. Such a persistent self-appreciation for his role in the region reflects an era that still created legends out of nothing. Without such personal intervention, Boletini could have very easily become but a footnote in the history of Kosova, nothing but a small-time power broker in the "ethnically-mixed" Mitrovica part of Kosova.

Fortune would have it that, after the Berlin Congress of 1878, his little corner of the world became the center of Great Power rivalries. Isa Boletini learned at an early age to make himself relevant to the powers engaged in this gamesmanship, ultimately earning himself a key place in the politics of the region, which often went far beyond the confines of northeast Kosova. His active role, for instance, in instigating, violent and bloody "moments of history" was the first indicator of Boletini's appreciation for how the larger world operated. One can read in the subsequent years, a long string of communications between Boletini and key European and Ottoman figures that reveal a shrewd regional player whose ambitions were to play the various interests off each other in order to enhance his prestige and influence. While space does not permit any detailed analysis of this evolving, well-documented persona, it is clear Boletini is not only playing one power off the other to

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strengthen his own power locally. Boletini is also consciously communicating to a *process* that would have far reaching consequences to his place in history. His many interviews with European journalists, his active role in instigating diplomatic crisis after crisis (and then asserting himself as the only person who could resolve them) exhibited a sophisticated understanding of his larger-than-life role in the post-1878 period and how his actions were being actively recorded for posterity.[1]

Boletini initially built his local power base by winning the loyalty, not of fellow Albanians, but of local Serbs.[2] The strategy immediately earned him a lucrative piece of the smuggling business (mainly guns and wheat) that emerged with the creation of international frontiers in the area in 1878. Later, he would use the human and material resources at his disposal to actively protect both local Christians and Muslims from unruly Ottoman troops who were sent to secure the frontiers.[3] His reputation as a defender of local rights extended to actively organizing opposition to Hamidian tax collectors and then, the bullying tactics of Serb nationalists seeking ways to instigate inter-communal violence in the Mitrovica area.[4] Far from the propagator of some chauvinistic conceptualization of Kosova as being for Albanians or Muslims, Boletini demonstrated that he operated within a local code of values that meant protecting kin and neighbors (Albanians and Serbs) from outsiders.

Again, in the context of Mitrovica's highly charged place in international politics, this translated into a number of opportunities. In time, these opportunities involved far greater possibilities of self-assertion, including Boletini's indirect responsibility for the murder of the Russian consul in Mitrovica in 1904. Already seen as a social force that could not be controlled, Russia and its allies demanded action from the Ottoman state, only enhancing Boletini's value as a local power broker to any number of powers, including Austria and the Ottomans themselves.[5] As a result of his subsequent "house arrest" in Istanbul, Isa Boletini maneuvered his way into becoming the key component to Abdülhamid's efforts to placate demands throughout Kosova and temper a region that had for many years been in a state of low-scale war

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[1]Indeed, by the time his patron, Sultan Abdülhamid II was ousted from power, he had realigned himself with local forces and initiated an uprising in Kosova that soon became a struggle for Albanian autonomy and with the Ottoman army closing in on him, his struggle changed once again. By late 1910, Boletini was in exile in Montenegro, under the protection of Prince Nicholas and he was again planning a new round of confrontation, this time on behalf of Cettinje. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 669 dated Cettigne, 19 June 1910 no. 351/108 consul in Montenegro to San Giuliano, MAE.

[2]For various documents on Austrian impressions of Boletini's relations with local Serbs at the time, see HHStA PA XXXVIII/398 folios 24r-54v.

[3]HHStA PA XII/449 Various documents on Serb and Albanian relations along the frontier zone.

[4]HHStA PA XXXVIII/387.

[5]On the incident and subsequent diplomatic scandal, see BBA YA.HUS 436/6 From Sublime Porte to Ministry of War, 1 *Cemazülevvel,* 1320.

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with Istanbul.[1] While Istanbul was actively seeking to quell local resistance by using its military power, Boletini engaged in negotiations on behalf of Istanbul. A particularly interesting case is that of the uprising in Ipek/Peja led by local leader Zeynal bey. The level of violence brought down on the key town in Western Kosova as a result of Ottoman efforts to capture and subdue Zeynal bey created a political crisis in the rest of Kosova, one in which many other local leaders, especially Riza bey Kryeziu of Yakova/Gjakova were eager to exploit. The role of men like Mufti Abdul Rahman bey and Isa Boletini to serve as intermediaries reflected the extent to which Boletini saw his fate tied to Istanbul's continued presence in Kosova.[2] Boletini actively boasts about this role to diplomats and European journalists, who are now actively seeking out the man responsible for instigating such diplomatic trouble.[3] This case is interesting to me because it is clear that Boletini himself is actively engaging in creating the rhetorical limits to how the world around him understands his place in the events which would lead to the Balkan and First World Wars.

What happens some ten years since he is promoting himself as Sultan Abdülhamid's intermediary represents another shift in the political environment that would displace Boletini from his center of power. The Young Turk regime's methods of rule completely disrupted what had been years of mutual understanding between prominent local power brokers like Boletini and Istanbul. Boletini's subsequent conversion into first, arch-enemy of the "infidel" Young Turk regime, then Albanian nationalist is another wonderful example of how changing external conditions impact local decisions and subsequent loyalties.[4]

Again, Boletini proved apt at self-promotion and asserting his role as the engine to events during the second constitutional period.[5] Unfortunately for him, he led local revolts that ultimately translated into the massive counter

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[1]Boletini was released and return to Mitroviza in February of 1906. The Italian consul responsible for monitoring events in Kosova reported that Boletini received a nice pension, and even his mother was getting a stipend of 15 lires a month. ASMAE SAP Pacco 667.

[2]As it concerns Boletini's intervention in Peja, he had only returned to Kosova from three years of house arrest in Istanbul a month earlier. That he was able to insert himself into Ottoman affairs on the ground speaks of his close ties to Istanbul, rather than his power in Kosova. Indeed, we can interpret his championing of the Sultan in Kosova as a reflection of his marginality in Kosova. He certainly did not secure the peace in 1906. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 667 dated Uskub, 23 March 1906 no. 83/34, consul to Rome.

[3]See Noel Malcolm, *Kosovo: A Short History* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1999), 245-259 and various reports from Austrian consuls Prochaska, von Pözel and Kohlruss based in the region from 1912-1914, HHStA PA XXXVIII/405.

[4]On a number of local alliances in the post-1908 period established by Isa Boletini, which clearly concerned authorities in Kosova, see BBA TFR.1.KV 151/15031 Kosova Vali to Interior Minister, 12 Kanun sani, 1322.

[5]In late April 1911, the Italian consul in Uskub informs Rome that Isa Boletini has aligned with other local rebels, (many of whom he had actually took up arms against three years earlier) and is leading the insurrection outside of Yakova/Gjakova. See ASMAE Ambassacita e Constantiniopli B 222, Telegram no. 1555 dated 28 April 1911.

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measures that led to the deaths of thousands of Kosova's men, the internment of hundreds of their most capable leaders and the exile of tens of thousands of more to far off regions such as Libya, Iraq and Yemen.[1] The consequences of Boletini's actions, largely ignored by Kosovar historians are that Kosovars and Albanians in general were no longer capable of defending themselves.[2] The results of this shift in the balance of power was evident in the swift capture of Kosova by Serbian and Montenegrin troops in 1912 and the brutal, final annexation of more than half of the Albanian lands to Slav states. It is this chain of events that ultimately led to Austrian's declaration of war on Serbia in 1914, the fall of the Ottoman Empire and, ironically, Boletini's own downfall.

While Boletini proved adept at promoting himself and shaping local events to substantiate his public assertions of being a key player of the time, the occupation of Kosova by Serbia created a new set of conditions that would ultimately drive Boletini out of Kosova all together. I suspect that by the end of 1913, with Serbia's claims on Kosova more or less solidified by Great Power diplomacy, Boletini was at the doorsteps of a different universe, one that provided opportunities to step beyond his parochial roll as regional "warlord" to something of international stature. Here the politics of present memory are especially clear. No longer able to work one state off the other along frontier zones, Boletini begins to try to sell himself as the diplomat, the man with whom reliability is an ethnic, let us say, global sensibility, rather than a regional one. In other words, Boletini was making an effort to impose his relevance to a larger diplomatic issue that took center stage around an independent Albania, and not a region of the Ottoman Empire. In many ways he succeeded and was a member of Ismail Kemal Bey's delegation that negotiated in London for the recognition of Albania's independence.[3] Unfortunately for Boletini and his entourage, that meant negotiating a distribution of future power with such shrewd politicians as Ismail Kemal Bey, who, in the end, demonstrated he would do everything he could to clip Boletini's wings. For those Southern Albanians based in Vlora preparing the grounds for an independent Albania dominated by Southern Tosks, Boletini was deemed the dangerous outsider whose potential strengths as military

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[1]The journalist for the Young Turk daily *Tanin*, Ahmet Şerif, provides an invaluable source on the extent of destruction this campaign levied on Albania. See for instance, Ahmet Şerif, "İpek'den Mitroviça'ya" in *Tanin*, number 650. 16 Cemaziyelahir 1328/23 June, 1910.

[2]Boletini himself was largely silenced, although never captured, by the brutal repression of Cevdid Pasha who chased after the numerous rebellious groups operating in Kosova after 1908. For one period, Boletini was trapped in Istenik, a series of villages in the hills between Ipek and Yakova. See report from Italian consul in Uskup, ASMAE SAP Pacco 668 date Uskub, 28 March 1909 no. 136/43 consul to Rome.

[3]He tried to do the same while in exile in Montenegro in April of 1911. He met with consuls in Cettinje and tried to convey to them that he is of utmost importance to resolving the raging insurrection taking place at the time in Kosova and Northern Albania. See ASMAE SAP Pacco 670, dated Cettigne, 13 April 1911, no. 200/71 to MAE.

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commander also made him a threat. While Boletini had plans to assert himself as a key political figure in this Albanian state building project, the Southern elite made certain that he would be reigned in to suite their military needs and not hijack a political process over which they wanted full control. A perfect example of this was when Ismail Kemal Bey hastily made the famous declaration of independence in late November of 1912, refusing to wait for Boletini and "the Kosovars" to reach Vlora.[1]

For Kosovar historians today, Ismail Kemal Bey's snub is conveniently forgotten and Isa Boletini has been preserved a seat as a founding father. Post World War II Albanian historians writing under the watchful eye of the Hoxha state, on the other hand, unrepentantly sought to exclude Boletini from claiming any historical significance. Isa Boletini's success/failure in remaining a founding father of the nation is not important for my purposes here, it is rather, that he was actively engaging the resources available at the time to mobilize perceptions of him. Why that was important at the time was his goal in distorting his own past as political alley with Serbia, the Ottoman Sultan and other "anti-Albanian" forces in order to assert him into new sociopolitical roles made possible by current events. This process of engaging in image control is clear if we follow Boletini until his murder in 1916.

After several less than successful attempts to assert himself in this new Albanian context, one which largely figured Kosova as a marginal, lost cause, Boletini found himself at the losing end of the diplomatic games in which he eagerly sought to engage. Once his value to allied forces were deemed superfluous and even counterproductive, his active attempts to assert his place in the new world order of Albanian nationalism were undermined by the activities taking place in central Albania with Esad Pasha Toptani and the outbreak of World War I. His ultimate murder on a bridge outside of Podgoriza Montenegro in 1916 speaks volumes about his (and Kosovars) diminished place in the region's political events by the end of the Balkan Wars. The French who were supposedly protecting him and the Montenegrin authorities who were to secure his safe passage out of Montenegro, actually joined forces to eliminate Boletini, who by that time was a fallen and isolated man. That his murder was a necessary act of betrayal signifies that there was symbolic capital to be made with his murder; the French and Montenegrin regime certainly felt Boletini was still potentially dangerous. Boletini's case, as no other figure can, demonstrates, therefore, the remarkable agency individuals mobilized during the war to intentionally shape how the outside world read them. That his legacy has been refitted to serve post war interests is only natural when considering that his notoriety while alive preceded him to the highest chambers of European power. On this account, therefore, Boletini proves the most successful of the three men considered here in engaging the process of securing a place for himself in the memory of the war.

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[1] HHStA PA XII/421 on Ismail Kemal's tactics to consolidate control of the government.

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Esad Pasha Toptani

In direct contrast to İzzet Pasha's attempt to shed his legacy and to Isa Boletini whose place in, at least, Kosova's pantheon is secure, Esad Pasha Toptani's historical reputation has witnessed a dramatically different kind of progression. Toptani, first of all, came from a regional family whose land holdings in the middle of the nineteenth century translated into considerable power in Istanbul. Esad Pasha's formative years, therefore, are based on a substantial amount of privilege within Ottoman society that provided possibilities for action that were not available to the two other men dealt with in this chapter.[1] It is important to remember however, that while he was part of an elite element of Ottoman power circles, both in the Hamidian and the Young Turk periods, he nevertheless had to constantly intervene on his own behalf in order to secure that privilege.

The shifting dynamics of local power and how that local power translated in Istanbul has usually been ignored when historians discuss elite politics and the phenomenon of the "land holders" of Albanian historiography.[2] As Albania was concerned, such local power did not necessarily guarantee relevance in the country's political future. Indeed, the revolts of 1909, 1910 and 1911 as well as the declaration of independence at the end of 1912 forced local society into a new relational dynamic in which Italy, Austria and regional Balkan states like Montenegro/Serbia and Greece became the surrogate patrons of local power holders.

Esad Pasha Toptani's whole career, therefore, is one in which he actively engages in often contradictory projects in order to protect his status in a part of the world where control would change hands several times over a four year period. Toptani accomplished this by securing his access to imperial governing circles through the power he could exert using a loyal and well-armed local army that would serve under his command. In a region with little or no promise of stability, Esad Pasha was able to assure himself a key role as a local power broker through this military asset. How he accomplishes this is

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[1]In a revealing letter to the Austrian Consul in Marseille, a man named Kissey [?] wrote that he was with Esad Pasha in Janina between 1893 and 1896 where he was a commander of a gendarmerie force. The letter describes Esad Pasha as a man of great intelligence for his young age of 30, one who was at ease with other elites like the Vloras, Vrionis and Djelal Bey Klissure and his troops. He is described as a hard, religious man who was vehemently against Europeans and did not speak well of Catholics of Northern Albania. The profile is revealing in as much as it shows a man already firmly in control of his image and in command of a social identity that translated to his political rhetoric and deeds in the future. See HHStA PA XII/423 dated Marseille, 7 May 1913, documents 154-155v.

[2]Historian Jens Hanssen contradicts this trend and his fine work on Beiruti elites and their survival tactics during the tumultuous Hamidian period reflects the challenges that face most prominent families of the era. See for instance, Jens Hanssen, "Practices of Integration: Centre-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire," in *Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the late Ottoman Empire*, edited by Hanssen, T. Philipp and S. Weber (Beirut, 2002): 49-74.

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perhaps not possible to explain in the confines of this chapter, but being aware of his strategic planning, and appreciating his ability to keep all doors open is indicative of a sophisticated if not ruthless man that needs to be studied outside the accusatory tone most Albanian historians have adopted since 1945.

While we could characterize the previous two cases in a similar manner, Toptani's elite status and the circles in which he moved meant the nature of his power and the manner in which he had to assert his claims to the future were different according to the circumstances. This was made clear in reading material written by his contemporaries, who largely feared him and in the end condemned him for his ruthless survival tactics.

His surviving the transition from Hamidian rule to that of the Young Turks is testament enough of his political skills. Indeed, how he imposed himself onto the new regime demonstrates the need to be sensitive to the local factors at play during regime changes. Immediately after taking power, the CUP identified and solicited the assistance of prominent locals throughout the Empire, aware that it could not impose its "revolution" without the assistance of those who were basically "sitting on the fence." As suggested with the case of Isa Boletini, in Kosova and Northern Albania, the changes in 1908 were not popular among many Albanians. That said, Toptani accepted an invitation in September of 1908 to visit the CUP delegation gathering in Scutari as acting head of the local gendarmerie, a position he more or less created for himself in late 1907. As a result of this initial meeting, according to Italian and Austrian sources, Toptani then accompanied a local delegation to Salonika and secured the trust of the CUP central committee still based there. As a result, Toptani immediately positioned himself in the new regime and became a key component to the extension of state power in distant Albania.[1] The period, however, was fraught with challenges, one which demanded constant attention and a keen eye for the subtle changes taking place in the larger world, a skill Toptani repeatedly demonstrates over time.[2]

Esad Pasha Toptani was elected along with 25 other Albanian delegates to the Ottoman Parliament on 17 December 1908.[3] It appears that he was somewhat unspectacular in his role as parliamentarian. As a consequence his ambitions to establish a place in the decision-making apparatus of the Empire as a whole were blocked by more capable Albanian representatives from

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[1]See ASMAE SAP Pacco 668 dated Scutari, 11 September 1908, no. 452/187, consul to MAE.

[2]HHStA PA XII/423 Liasse XIV provides extensive intelligence on Esad Pasha Toptani's political efforts during the early Young Turk period.

[3]For a list of the Albanian deputies see *Leka*, IX (28 November 1937), 363. This newsletter, published periodically by the Jesuits in inter-war Albania is probably the best single source and forerunner of Albanian historiography.

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Southern Albania. To add to these impediments to his advancement in imperial politics was the talk of war and the specter of the Empire breaking apart throughout the Young Turk period. It is here that Toptani began to assert himself again locally, playing both a role of intermediary between locals and Istanbul, and capitalizing on the growing insurrection in Kosova.[1] One way in which Esad Pasha benefited from the insurrection was in the flow of money and weapons into the area. The Italians identified that the biggest smuggler of weapons into the central Albanian region was Esad Pasha himself, suggesting that he began to amass both considerable individual wealth, and as would become clear in 1913 and 1914, a small army of loyal followers.[2] Furthermore, when war loomed in his native Albania in 1912, Toptani calculated that his interests were better suited by leaving isolated Istanbul altogether and establishing himself inside Albania, making an early claim to the region's leadership at a time of crisis.[3] These early measures speak of a man consciously maneuvering to always keep ahead of events and provide himself the flexibility to remain relevant. Such relevance is clearly key to the survival of Ottoman leaders and their entourage, a relational dynamic equally important in times of transition and war.

Esad Toptani's days in Scutari (Işkodra/Shkodër) during its siege by Montenegrin and Serbian forces are dominated by his continued calculative behavior. Obviously, it begins with his shrewd move to place himself at the helm of military and political leadership in Northern Albania. By asserting himself and his well-groomed armed retinue in Scutari in late 1912, gave him the opportunity to not only negotiate a place in the inevitable changes taking place in the region but also actively shape events and create changes himself. This is important in many respects for the siege of Shkodër has been posited as a pivotal moment in the history of Northern Albania.[4] That Esad Pasha understood the significance of the first Balkan War against the Ottoman state and his place in the defense of Northern Albania all points to a man capable of

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[1] As an example of this dual role, it is reported in *İkdam* that Esad Pasha organized a commission and personally visited the areas in revolt in and around Iskodra in order to assuage local communities that Istanbul was doing its best. I would suggest these meetings had far more to do with his consolidating contacts than shoring up CUP loyalties in the Malesore. See *İkdam* (8 April 1911).

[2] On Esad Pasha's activities as the region's primary smuggler of weapons, see ASMAE Ambassacita e Constantiniopli B. 220 dated Scutari 23 June 1910, no. 489/27 consul in Durazzo to Italian Embassy in Constantinople, reporting on a vice-consul letter from Durazzo, dated 19 June 1910. For a report on how Esad Pasha's local power translated in his relations with Italian merchants as well as the diplomatic community in the area in late 1910, see ASMAE SAP Pacco 669, dated Durazzo 30 October 1910, no. 364/116, a letter of complaint to the Mutassarıf of Durazzo.

[3] Toptani's motivations behind this volunteering of his considerable force to defend Iskodra is ignored today, but a contemporary provides a good overview of the events that brought Esad Pasha to his position as self-proclaimed leader of autonomous Albania by 1913. See report by Sureia Bey Vlora in HHStA PA XII/423, dated Vienna, 6 May 1913, documents 136r-138v.

[4] An important source of information is taken from an extensive profile of Toptani by Italian officials in March of 1914, see ASMAE Archivio di Ganinetto Pacco 29.

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writing his own place into history. Toptani calculated that Shkodër, the largest and culturally most important Albanian city at the time would be the key to securing a political future in the region. His foresight is remarkable in that he not only proved capable of securing the city's defenses for months, but that he seemingly knew in advance that the key battles for regional power would be held in and around his base of strength.

It was clear to Esad Pasha that the Empire's control over the region was evolving, and he, much like Isa Boletini, wanted to dictate the terms of these future, as of yet, unclear changes. North and Central Albania would be a base of his ambitions, a base from which Toptani's could mediate between the ascendant Slav powers, the fading Ottoman state and the rest of the European states. Interestingly, it is clear from documentary records that he was setting the stage for such a role before the actual siege of Shkodër began in late 1912. The Vali of the Iskodra, Hasan Riza Pasha, after consultations that took place in 1911 when Esad Pasha was serving as the head of his commission, expected Toptani to raise and organize northern Albanian contingents that could supplement Ottoman regulars who were badly outnumbered by their Slav adversaries. At the same time as he was securing the perimeter defenses of Iskodra, however, Toptani seemed to busy himself consolidating his power among those communities around the city, communities that he would rely on for support in manpower and supplies in the period that followed. Even more interesting, however, is the fact that he was apparently in contact with Montenegro's leaders well before the first Balkan War began.[1] Esad Pasha, in many ways, was both creating the conditions for war and defending against it. This, again, can be appreciated by remembering that he was the principle arms smuggler in the region, basically rearming the very Albanians who would end up fighting Ottoman and Montenegrin troops.[2]

At the beginning of the siege of Shkodër it was clear that years of revolt and repression had rendered the region fragmented. Serb, Russian and Montenegrin, Austrian and Ottoman money had been the primary glue that established temporary alliances, resulting in a confused and disorganized Ottoman defense and even more confusing array of rivalries. That the Toptani clan was keeping the flow of gold and weapons open to all parties and that Esad Pasha was actively engaging in discussions with Montenegro, Serbia and Russia drew great concern in Vienna and Istanbul.[3] Despite his early overtures

[1] HHStA PA XII/424, various folios point to Esad Pasha's early solicitation of Prince Nicholas' support, before the siege of Işkodra began.

[2] ASMAE SAP Pacco 670, dated Scutari, 25 February 1911, no. 190/71 consul to San Giuliano, MAE. Dai bey Toptani, a relative of Esad Pasha, is reportedly managing the distribution of the arms once they enter Albania.

[3] These fears are outlined in a telegram sent from Salonika in May of 1913, reminding Vienna that Esad Pasha was a manipulative and opportunistic character whose ties with Serbia and Russia were still not well understood. See HHStA PA XII/423 telegram no. 263 dated Salonik, 1 May 1913, documents 62-63.

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to Cettinje and Belgrade, it is clear Esad Pasha was also maintaining a close relationship with the Young Turk regime, enough so that they entrusted him with the securing of the region's frontiers.

Toptani's ambitions are possibly most clear in the contradictory actions taken during the siege of Scutari. While his men performed the most important tasks of keeping Slav forces at bay, Esad Pasha was also at odds with Hasan Riza Pasha who was in command. Ultimately, Esad Pasha is accused for the mysterious death of Hasan Riza Pasha in what many suggest was his grab for unrestrained control of forces in Scutari.[1]

After Hasan Riza Pasha's death, who was apparently trying to secure the evacuation of non-Albanian troops from the city at the time, Esad Pasha continued to defend the city, despite disease and starvation already causing deaths among the civilian and military population. The allegations, therefore, of his "treachery" to Albanians seem unfounded at this stage. That he ultimately did negotiate a surrender of the city, some three months after European powers were suggesting the city was lost, rather than proving disastrous for "Albanian history" may have saved Scutari from annexation. By holding out in Iskodra, Esad Pasha put pressure on European powers who were initially resigned to letting the city fall to the Slav armies surrounding it. By adopting dramatic measures such as incarcerating the Austrian and Italian consuls, refusing Russian "diplomatic" efforts to negotiate the evacuation of the city of Turkish and Arab troops, along with civilians, the lingering humanitarian catastrophe finally attracted Europe's full attention.[2]

Importantly, Esad Pasha, despite being in a city under siege, was also intimately engaged in events in central Albania, where a provisional government had been created (with he being the Minister of Interior) upon the declaration of Independence in late 1912. By April of 1913, with Esad Pasha having secured international administration in Iskodra, he returned to Tirana and openly challenged the weak, if not completely powerless government

[1]For the Austrian military attaché in Istanbul, Pomiankowski's view, see HHStA PA XII/423 dated Constantinople, 3 May 1913 no. 124 "Der Fall von Skutari," documents 223-230. The report clearly calls Esad Pasha an opportunist who took advantage of the chaotic situation in Scutari to secure control of the forces there.

[2]For details of the kinds of measures taken by Esad Pasha to assure European engagement in Scutari see ASMAE Ambassacita e Constantiniopli B. 223 Telegram no. 1826, 28 March 1913 in which it is reported that Austrian consul Pallavicini was placed under military guard by Esad Pasha and Telegram no. 1832, dated 28 March 1913 on how Esad Pasha secured from Prince Nicholas of Montenegro and Austria's Foreign Minister, Count Berchtold the necessary conditions to assure Scutari would remain under "international" protection after the laying of his troops' arms.

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headed by Ismail Kemal Bey.[1] As a result, Esad Pasha began to make open claims to be the ruler of "autonomous" Albania in the Ottoman Empire.[2] Indeed, within two weeks, Esad Pasha had a functioning government put together, staffed by ministers and even state letterhead.[3]

Toptani's place in regional politics, much like his primary adversary, Ismail Kemal Bey, depended as much on outside support as on his ability to generate local legitimacy.[4] Esad Pasha sought to consolidate his local claims by maintaining his essential "stabilizing" role in the region. This in many ways answers questions as to why he was eagerly creating such controversy with his parallel claims to a government while at the same time, claiming to operate under Istanbul's sanction.[5] In the end, Esad Pasha wanted outside powers to rely on his ability to bring stability back in order to assure his place in any future discussions about the region.[6]

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[1]Ismail Kemal Bey proved utterly incapable of securing the territories under his short-lived administration between December of 1912 and April of 1913. The invading Greek military had besieged Vlora/Valona and other southern Albanian cities for weeks, leaving little or no power for Ismail Kemal Bey to resist Esad Pasha's moves in April 1913 to claim Albania was not being defended. See ASMAE Ambassacita e Constantiniopli B. 223, Telgram no. 4669, dated 6 December 1912 on a report from Durazzo of Greek forces bombing Valona and the population throughout the region in a state of panic. Such an experience would produce a great deal of animosity towards the Ismail Kemal's claims to leadership in the immediate period that followed.

[2]In light of his claimed allegiance to the Ottoman state, the Sublime Porte passed on a message to the Italians meant to be communicated to Esad Pasha, namely that the Sublime Porte expected Esad Pasha, as a loyal servant of the state, to take his men (numbering over 20,000) and board ships waiting in port to take them to Beirut, as negotiated between the warring parties. Of course Esad Pasha Toptani was not part of those negotiations and it is indicative of just how far things have gone in terms of the relationship between Istanbul and Esad Pasha that the Porte needed the Italians to pass on a message to him. See HHStA PA XII/423 telegram no. 1088 dated Rome, 4 May 1913, von Merey to Vienna, documents 97-98.

[3]See letter written to Austrian and Italian officials requesting recognition of the state declared by Esad Pasha Toptani. Members of his council, including the Minister of War, Mehmed Rushdi and the President of the council, Vehbi, outline the claims of this early state. HHStA PA XII/423 dated Valona, 29 April 1913 no. 26, document 16. Within two weeks of this correspondence, it is reported that Montenegro had supported Esad Pasha's claim to the throne of Albania. The Austrian consul in Scutari, von Zambaur said that there is little that could be done if Esad Pasha wanted to make such a claim as he did have control of almost all of central Albania with 15 battalions at his disposal and another five based in Scutari despite the ceasefire. See HHStA PA XII/423, telegram no. 1669 dated Scutari, 6 May 1913, von Zambaur to Vienna, document 120.

[4]While historians today in Albania claim Esad Pasha was always hated, it is just not the case according to a number of reports on the ground. Indeed, it is reported from as far away as Athens the Esad Pasha has developed a "mythical" status which may have been treated with hostility in Greece, but nevertheless speaks of something far more complicated than that which is asserted by historians today. See HHStA PA XII/423 telegram no. 1557 dated Athens, 6 May 1913, Baron Braun to Vienna, document 121.

[5]In regards to those claims, the Ottoman state, while trying to maintain some contact with Esad Pasha, were at the same time distancing themselves from him vis-à-vis the international community. Istanbul clearly felt they had been out maneuvered by Esad Pasha. In a "note verbale" written from the Ottoman embassy in Vienna, the Sublime Porte declared that Esad Pasha "...n'a été chargé d'aucune mission politique par le Gouvernement Impérial. Les assertions de certains journaux et de quelques milieux intéressés à cet égard, sont des suppositions malveillantes ou de pures inventions." HHStA PA XII/423 dated Vienna, 2 May 1913, document 51r-51v.

[6]The Austrians, for one, clearly appreciated Esad Pasha's local power, reporting that he was both extremely intelligent and very popular in the country. That did not mean, however, that they trusted him, especially as they were busy trying to secure their own candidate for King of Albania. See HHStA PA XII/423 dated Durazzo, 6 May 1913, no. 148, von Rudnay to Berchtold, documents 125r-125v.

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This forces the historian to consider the context under which Toptani was operating. The conditions of the day did not expect unmitigated loyalty to a state, or even individual leaders. The key was the perception of success, often expressed by one's capacity to generate money and weapons to placate those allies who would fight and die for faction leaders such as Boletini, Toptani or the Ottoman State. Here was where Toptani's active role in asserting his own place in the region's recent memory and future possibilities are most clear. The period of the extended war in which Serb and Greek forces occupied for long periods of time most of the Albanian inhabited territories, reflects the highly contentious and fluid channels through which communities and individuals passed during moments of great uncertainty. Amid the chaos, the old regional dynamic between Tosk Albanians and Ghegs like Toptani would loom large.[1] Esad Pasha was much at odds with the southern-based Albanian Ottoman elite such as Ismail Kemal Bey for political and economic reasons.[2] That he was able to secure funds, the assistance from the Italians, and the loyalty of a significant force by the middle of 1913 gave him the capacity to assert some form of local control over the region without the support of a southern Albanian elite whose loyalties and allegiances gravitated towards Greece and had the support of the English and French.[3]

While Esad Pasha is generally condemned for his dealings with Serbia and Montenegro, it must be remembered that the power vacuum created by the departure of the Ottoman army and the challenges in the international system at the time meant Esad Pasha had little or no recourse but deal with either Slav or Greek powers.[4] From his negotiations with the besieging generals in Iskodra to the point in which Serb forces were compelled to evacuate Northern and Central Albania, Toptani understood that power in the region rested much

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[1]In fact, many of the documents found in the Austrian archives refer to Esad Pasha as "Präsident der Ghegheria" a reflection of regional factors that clearly affected how European consuls interpreted events on the ground. See for instance, HHStA PA XII/423 telegram no. 321 dated Durazzo, 17 May 1913, von Rudnay to Vienna, documents 307r-307v.

[2]By June of 1913, it appears Esad Pasha was increasingly seeking ways to draw in the fragmented elements of central Albania. It is reported in a telegram sent from the French vice-consul in Vlora/Valona that Ismail Kemal Bey received a note from Abdi Bey that a number of leaders in Dibra, Mati, Durazzo and elsewhere were calling for a reconvening of the "national council" which declared independence in late November 1912. According to Ismail Kemal Bey, this was not to be trusted as Esad Pasha was trying to draw Ismail Kemal out in order to destroy him. Ismail Kemal reminded the French (and Austrian) consuls that he had still considerable support in Berat and other southern regions and was in no hurry to cave in to Esad Pasha. See HHStA XII/423 telegram no. 649, dated Valona, 4 June 1913 Lejhanec to Durazzo consulate, documents 472-473.

[3]The Austrians believed that Esad Pasha had at least 20,000 men at his immediate disposal in Central Albania with another 6000 who were on various duties throughout the rest of the country. This represented a significant force that had to be taken seriously. See HHStA PA XII/423 telegram no. 747 dated Durazzo, 2 May 1913 from von Rudnay to Vienna, document 62.

[4]For an illuminating report on a conversation an unidentified official had with Esad Pasha Toptani in late April of 1913, and his rationale behind forming alliances with the Serbs and Montenegrins, which included large sums of money, see HHStA PA XII/423 dated Vienna, 6 May 1913 [author unknown] documents 133r-133v.

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more in the hands of Belgrade and its allies, the British and French, than the fading Ottoman state.[1]

While most historians would assume that Albanians at this time were universally struggling for independence, I would suggest an independent Albania was not necessarily the most obvious option available to people on the ground. It is clear that Toptani was not taking chances in a world in confusion and the apparent offers from Montenegro, Rome, Istanbul and Belgrade, in one shape or another, to permit Esad Pasha Toptani to rule over Central Albania in return for the stability he could promise suggests his appreciation of the world at the time is far more accurate than our interpretations of that world more than seventy-five years later. I am suggesting a strong and sizable portion of the elite in the Ottoman Empire, like Imam Yahya in Yemen, were not willing to entrust their futures on the creation of "nation-states." The same held true to Albania, I believe. The waters of independence, knowing full well the dangers that lurked beyond, looked threatening to many of those key components to the functioning of Albanian society. Esad Pasha was clearly of the mind that independence would only lead to partition, therefore he supported autonomy claims, within the context of an Ottoman Empire that was not yet parceled out by the Great Powers and accepted the support from Montenegro, Italy and Serbia in the hope of staving off military occupation.[2]

Of course, with the commencement of the First World War, this would change and we see Esad Pasha's continued activities in the region shift from claims of loyalty to a loosely defined Ottoman project, to one more in line with that which Austria, an occupying power after 1915, had envisioned for the region. At this stage, Esad Pasha's were limited again to survival and the records of his correspondence with potential supporters in Vienna suggest what I believe is a defense of his role in response to the tempest of the times. In these documents, found in the War Archives in Vienna, we have Toptani actively securing his place with the Austrians, who had soundly defeated Serbia's army in the Balkans in early 1915. His formal relationship with the

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[1] While ultimately seeing Esad Pasha as an adversary, Austrian officials nevertheless seem to have understood Esad Pasha's rationale behind his alliances with his relatively powerful Serb and Montenegrin neighbors, for which Austria was concerned. An indication, perhaps, that Esad Pasha Toptani understood the realities on the ground far better than Enver Hoxha's historians. See HHStA PA XII/432 dated Constantinople, 3 May 1913, no. 24 Pallavicini to Berchtold in Vienna. Documents 69-72.

[2] In much the same way Isa Boletini sought the Western journalist to assure his place in local politics was secure, Esad Pasha actively reached out to the Italians through their "special correspondents" who paid a visit to the "uomo di eccezionale energia." Unfortunately for Esad Pasha, his ability to control what was written about him was limited. See a page length interview with Esad Pasha in a Milano based paper, Secolo on 18 May 1913. Luciano Magrini, "Un lungo colloquio con Essad Pascia a Tirana."

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Ottoman Empire, with the Serbs and his immediate past were completely severed.[1]

Conclusion

We have briefly explored what I see as a possible alternative to appreciating types of war memories. The three men studied here demonstrate how divergent an individual's paths may take. Much of how they would become primary actors in the events of the war suggest their very complex divergence throughout their lives require that we expand on our appreciation of how historical actors interact with the world around them. Rather than simply relying on general categories to situate them into grand sociological schemes, a more useful way of appreciating memory and the events that shape them is to recognize the direct impute individuals have into how we remember their world. While these three men all came from "Albanian" families, the very paths that they took, as well as how they actively sought to engage themselves in the events around them, requires a far more detailed and less general study of the war. The biographies of three men demonstrates that no matter how much we try to encompass in composite narrative form historical events, such forms inevitably prove inadequate to illuminate the contingencies and deeply personal impact such events have on human beings.

This study also initiated a method of appreciating those individual contingencies that returned direct cognition to the actors involved. These three men, and the people around them actively intervened in history. In addition, they took part in the composing of the facts, figures and events that would be remembered today. Most importantly however, was that they actively engaged in the writing of that memory, if not with their own hand, at least with a conscious effort to influence how we are to remember them, a level of agency social scientists and historians rarely concede to their subjects.

[1] Austrian War Archives, NFA MGG 920, document 23. Ironically, it is the religious elite in Istanbul, on paper, allied with Austrian troops in the war, who issued a fatwa against Esad Pasha for finally declaring his and Albania's break from the Ottoman Empire as well as the murder of Haxhi Qemali who was seen as a key component to Istanbul's effort to maintain influence in Albania. ASMAE Ambassacita e Constantiniopli B. 223, dated Roma, 25 January 1915.

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CONCLUSION[1]

I ended this collection with a brief study of three men and the position they understood themselves to be in vis-à-vis the world at large. Clearly these men were engaging their world, adapting and partaking in the process of shaping it. As actors, agents or players, they each asserted their status of a conscious human being seeking ways to articulate a sense of value and even need to exist. Their conscious efforts to be a part of history spoke loudly to me as I thought about them and the documentary legacy they left behind; I felt compelled to recount their stories as if we could observe their cognitive acts of self-assertion. While I could not avoid engaging them, in my own idiosyncratic way, I have to ask, what price did I pay, ethically or "scientifically," by doing it the way I did?

I begin this conclusion by exploring the reason behind starting my work, one that is only partially reflected in these essays. As may be apparent to any reader who has made it this far, I wrote these essays separately of one another, only linking them at the last moment in order to produce this book. That said, they seemed to me bounded by an underlying concern I have with being an historian that I think warrants consideration.

I am terrified by the power I have, or more accurately, the potential power I have. Representing these agents of change, of a life that no longer exists and therefore can no longer speak or act for itself, means that in many ways, men like Esad Pasha Toptani, Imam Yahya and countless others are at my mercy. Their memory lays at the tips of my fingers which type sixty words a minute on a good day. Do my fingers caress the right combination of letters to illuminate a "positive" role in the past or do they second guess the mind on some subsequent editing binge and obliterate what was but a fleeting moment of existence for the agent of history? How can I even accept this audacious role of constituting a memory of these people? How can I assume the role of chronicler of those who have deceased, leaving but slight remnants of their existence in dusty piles of paper.

I suspect, to my shame, that what I have done here in this collection fails those who have existed. I have failed largely because I have been toiling with a style yet to be refined, a style that requires years of recollection, recreation and alas, and this is what terrifies me so much about being an

[1] ...but not finished.

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historian, distortion and erasure. How many distortions lay in my representation of particular, and far more sweeping and abstract than I would like, moments in time? Indeed, what have I forgotten, erased, ignored, overlooked so far and how much more of this must I do before I have obtained my style, my signature, my place?

I think this role I have put upon myself, to arrogantly presume I can resurrect (I sometimes like to convince myself that I am even rescuing) people of precarious anonymity is a sorry reflection of me and the world around me. I think of the presumptions I have taken with me to actually bother spending eight, ten years of my life scouring documents which, as I have made clear in these chapters, are not to be trusted, reflects a relationship with the world around me that is largely irresponsible, presumptuous of privilege and isolationist. Trust, truth, saving history are all projects of the eternal skeptic, reflective of a mid-life crisis, in mid-sentence, of someone who has far more than 80% of the people sharing this planet with me today will ever have. Blessed with such relative comfort, health and security, I have done little other with these essays but to use them in order to criticize the methods of many of my peers, especially those who are well-received in the profession. The presumed ambition of telling a story already told differently seems, with hindsight, inconsequential and perhaps served as a front for this different agenda of criticizing others.

What importance this book has to my idealized project clearly lays in my irreverence towards some professional historians and social scientists. Perhaps my critique will further alienate those who already suspect I am up to no good. I have been warmed already that I should not "take on" my superiors in such a way. And yet I do. But why do I persist in such open challenges to how we understand the past and more importantly, how some people write about it? Do I not know that I am but at the beginning of my career and cannot challenge those who are more senior than me? Should I not respect the hierarchy that lay before me? Indeed, I sense this shortcoming in my approach overshadows the very stories I want to tell about certain groups of people at particular conjunctures of time and space. But maybe I am just looking for confrontation, not the awesome responsibility of representing human beings, their dignity, their suffering, their dashed aspirations and failures. Perhaps somewhere subconsciously I want to be blacklisted, exiled and dismissed, as I have been warned may occur if I do not stop. Perhaps my oblivion is something I need to justify abandoning this ethically slippery road I have taken: the recreation of the past. I despise this dangerous assumption historians have and the task they take upon themselves. As I have tried to suggest in this collection, I sense too many historians and social scientists have been careless and disrespectful of the responsibility playing with humanity entails. I do not want to be one of them.

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The human beings who have affected a presence in the pages of this book existed in a far too complex and fluid set of circumstances to ever reproduce on paper. Indeed, representing what "happened" is not what the historian is doing because he/she cannot recreate a moment in time for that entails materializing, in a parallel world, time and space of a forgotten moment. Rather, historians are really only pinpointing moments of a particular set of contingencies, meeting in a way the historian identifies at the point in time he/she is reading a document or writing the narrative that pretends to represent that point. That these reproductions are more products of the lives the authors live than the "evidence" gathered is obvious to me and therefore, a major source of my anxiety with this whole claim of the historian. Of course theorists far more accomplished and articulate than me have debated these issues to great effect and I will spare the reader my own ponderings. What I am doing with this "conclusion" is simply reiterating that I am aware of my limitations and the impossibility of my assertions to reproduce the past. I wanted to point out that my "superiors" are also in this situation, only many still believe that by evoking certain combinations of abstract concepts, they can adequately reproduce a world for his/her audience to grasp and debate. By specifically calling into question some of the categories that help historians give texture and depth to their narrative, I wanted to turn the filter through which we look at human beings towards a different angle. I am not suggesting I am directly inspecting those who are doing the recreations, but by recognizing the consequences of my or my colleagues' work, I believe (or hope) there will be some momentary value to my ten chapters that could cause us to keep in mind what it is we are actually doing with the past.

As I send this off for publication, I acknowledge that I am not yet important enough and as a result, this collection may not be read by many people. Indeed, by the time the few owners of this book have read past a few pages, I have no doubt that most will abandon the book altogether. But this is exactly what I am getting at in this conclusion...perhaps I am writing this for no one ever to read. That I will have accomplished nothing by spending hours upon hours organizing this appeals to me in the end. If no one reads this, I will not have distracted anyone's concentration, I will not have caused any anger or controversy and this book will be forgotten before it is even remembered. What have I accomplished will be mute and I can feel less responsibility for the numerous distortions, erasures and misinterpretations I have committed.

In many ways, therefore, the thought of nobody reading this can give me some comfort, as the damage I may have caused to what happened a hundred years ago may be minimal. I may have even gotten the best of both worlds by attempting to expunge this curse of a conscience and criticize those who are not particularly careful about who or what they write. But then again,

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any solace I have gained from this project can only be temporary. I cannot stop worrying for there are still those destructive fingers out there that type words and evoke moments of the past that shape the past, the present and all those people who make the future.

It seems I have gone full circle in this conclusion, again reminding myself why I think I have a responsibility to "write what I do." I will most probably go on with this anonymous existence as an "historian," writing about people and places that keep resurfacing on the television screens from time to time, the subject of particular kinds of resurrection I find so objectionable. I will continue doing this because I feel I cannot stop for while my words of wisdom will be unheard here, those who write about the "tribes and Muslims" of the past not only bastardize, desecrate and destroy the tensions around our inability to write about those people located within the rubric of tribe and Muslim, but they continuously step over a line I want so desperately to draw for myself. I suppose I want to somehow reach those who are misrepresenting humanity. But this desire to effect good in the world is an old one and I am not that naïve to think I am going to change anything.

Of course there are other motivations that play a role in my likely decision to continue on living in moral confusion. I live a good life doing what I do. I am living in cities throughout the world, eat wonderful food, have made wonderful friends and worthy enemies while writing unimportant and unread books like this. I have discovered love and tragedy while putting these essays together and have felt both alive because of my moral dilemma and hopeful that I can perhaps change something or someone by what I do. That said, in the end, much like Imam Yahya, Esad Pasha Toptani, or one of those unnamed bystanders who was murdered in her village as troops loyal to either of these men passed by, I too am vulnerable to the world around me. Like I said, I have fallen in love and in hate while researching in Europe's archives, fighting its political battles in Kosova and I have requested funding for another year of doing the same. Even in this seeming isolation, this world does effect me, no matter how hopelessly isolated I am working as an historian of little repute. I suppose this book ultimately reflects an effort to take control of the events that affect my life. I have tried to shape this world in someway that I feel is right. But what is not giving me comfort as I punch the save button on my computer is that I sense I am at the mercy of something bigger than me and I am terrified by it.

Prishtina
2.4.03

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