DISPUTING RELIGION, EMPIRE, AND MODERNITY:
CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM POLEMICS IN THE OTTOMAN PRINT SPHERE, 1861-1915

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A DISSERTATION

in

History

Presented to the Faculties of the Central European University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Budapest, Hungary

2015

Supervisor of Dissertation: Tolga Esmer

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Abstract

This study is about religion and the politics of engagement between Muslim and Christian literati in the late Ottoman Empire. It uses archival sources and periodicals to examine the Christian and Muslim literary responses to the nineteenth and twentieth-century intellectual developments in Europe and the Middle East such as positivism and biblical criticism that challenged traditional religious discourses. This study ties in several historical fields, beginning with the highly limited historiography of Ottoman religious polemics, and moving to studies on religion in the modern era, Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, imperial governance in the age of New Imperialism (1870-1914), and the global Muslim print sphere that developed in response to these challenges facing the Muslim world. Furthermore, it examines these phenomena across the early modern and modern eras, noting the lines of continuity that are often ignored due to the periodization of Ottoman history that sharply segments its chronology.

This dissertation approaches the history of relations among Muslim literati, Protestant missionaries, and Ottoman Christian literati through the prism of religious polemics. These writers included journalists, ulema members, government administrators, American, British, and German missionaries, and religious converts. This dissertation builds on new studies in late Ottoman historiography that explore the zones of contact between Ottoman confessional groups in the economic, political, and legal arenas by historicizing religious debates in the broader context of the Ottoman literati's encounter with the intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment, but also the changing Muslim-

Christian power relations within and outside the Empire. It challenges the idea in Ottoman historiography that inter-religious relations irreversibly declined throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, culminating in the Empire's ruin.

This dissertation's focus is not on the spiritual dimensions or theological contents of these polemics, but on this genre as a means of expressing and engaging this period's social and intellectual challenges. It is the first to examine Ottoman religious polemics as more than manifestations of inter-religious tension – they had the purpose of stabilizing society by clearly defining the positions of each religion to the other. These disputes were more than the construction of difference. They made space for different groups within a multi-confessional empire.

Acknowledgements

I arrive at the finish line of this project in not too dissimilar of a state in which I completed my first (and, hopefully, only) half marathon: tired, disheveled, and fighting fatigue in the final stretch. Yet while both races were largely run alone, this one's preparation, duration, and completion would have been impossible without the support of many individuals. They even supported me in their absence. All of these individuals were there in my mental conference room during the writing of this thesis. I heard their immaterial selves make interjections – recommending changes here, deleting parts there, or calling a whole chapter's analysis into question. Needless to say, it was a lively bull session.

I would first like to thank my advisor Tolga Esmer. Almost no part of my doctoral education was left untouched by his influence and guidance, whether through historical methodology, approach to sources, accessing certain individuals in the archives, or the use of Ottoman Turkish itself. If this dissertation approaches in a small degree his ability to describe in accessible terms the overwhelming complexity of Ottoman society, it is due to his direction. Over and above his scholarly credentials is his kindness and generosity, for he made himself available in multiple stages during the doctoral project. This dissertation is much better for his input and efforts.

To Tijana Krstić, who has equal parts generosity and scholarly acumen. She offered a true model of intellectual engagement and professional advice over the years. She help develop these ideas on religious identity and imperial power in her coursework

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and many helpful conversations. Through her input this project reached a level that would have been impossible by my own efforts, particularly in linking the early modern and modern eras.

To Nadia al-Baghdadi, who has provided critical feedback during this project. She went above and beyond through chairing my conference panels at MESA, braving the possibility of a Denver snowstorm. I am also grateful to Hans-Lukas Kieser for his feedback on this project on the politics of missionary engagement to Ottoman Muslims and non-Muslims. His expansive knowledge on this topic helped frame many of the research questions within this study. I would also like to thank Ussama Makdisi for his insightful feedback in this project, particularly in the early stages during my qualification exams. His scholarship has done much to shape my thinking of late Ottoman sectarianism as a modern construct.

The colleagues, friends, and other professors at CEU made the early years of my program a truly pleasurable place to study. I thank the members of our cohort Adrian Grama, Liliana Iuga, Zsuzsa Sido, and Alexandr Voronovici for being great work friends,

My final thanks go to my family, who have followed my across the globe. Eleanor and Sophia were born during the project, and their growth was a reminder of how long this project has truly gone on. They make me smile more than anyone else and have also done more than anyone else to put the important things in life into perspective. Their 3 a.m. wake-up calls also kept me alert. To my mother, Maureen, and my father, Michael, while not following me across the globe, I consider myself blessed to have such wonderful parents, who instilled a work ethic in me to finish such a project, and a natural curiosity to find such an odd research field interesting.

Lastly, to my wife Melissa, who provided endless encouragement and support. I dedicate this project to her. Being married to a Ph.D. student is likely a far worse trial than actually finishing one. Not only do you hear of complaints about work life all day long, but you hear them from somebody who frames them in the overstuffed language of cultural theory, talking of "exploitation" and "otherization." Your confidence in me, patience, and ability to work jobs in three different countries while giving birth in two inspire me in ways that nobody else has.

I am the sole responsible party for any mistakes in this dissertation. Although after reading thousands of pages of religious polemics, it would be tempting to blame another person or group for my errors or troubles, since I see what a powerful and effective rhetorical weapon it is to pin one's problems on another.

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Note on Transliteration

To transcribe Arabic phrases I use the transliteration characters of the *International Journal of Middle East Studies.* To transcribe Ottoman Turkish I use modified modern Turkish, which only indicates the *'ayn*, the *hamza,* and long vowels of â, î, and û. For those unfamiliar with Turkish pronunciation, here is a short guide:

C,c   "j" as in "jelly"
Ç,ç   "ch" as in "cherry"
Ğ,ğ   a soft "g" that typically elongates the previous vowel
I, ı   a hard "i"
Ö,ö   same as the German "ö" or French "eu" as in "seul"
Ş,ş   "sh" as in "shore"
Ü,ü   same as the German "ü" or French "u" as in "lune"

The combination of Turkish and English sources used in this thesis and the inconsistent transcription of Turkish places and names employed by missionaries and other English speakers make a standard orthography and transliteration method difficult. I will use Turkish orthography for Turkish places and names (Hüsrev Pasha instead of Hushref Pasha), except in direct quotes from English-language sources, whose writers often attempted to transcribe their names. This is for the purposes of simplification, as Western missionaries did not employ consistent spelling of Turkish cities and villages (Vezirköprü could be spelled as Vezir Keopru, Vizier Kopru, or Vizier Keoproo). I will also use the Anglicized spelling for widely known Ottoman titles (pasha, vizier), but retain Turkish spelling for more specific titles (*kâymakâm, vâlî*) and land administrative units (*vilâyet, kazâ*).

For the two Armenian polemicists in this dissertation, Ohannes Kirkorian and Harutune Jenanyan, I spell their last names according to how they transliterated their own names into English.

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Map 1 – Ottoman provinces, c. 1900

From Halil İnalcik, et al, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume 2: 1600-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

Map 2 – The Ottoman Middle East, c. 1914

From Halil İnalcik, et al, *An Economic and Social History of the Ottoman Empire, Volume 2: 1600-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

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Introduction

In the Ottoman Empire's six centuries of existence, relations between Muslims and Christians oscillated between open collaboration and outright hostility. From its beginnings as a frontier principality on Byzantine borderlands until its dissolution in 1923 as a modern-era empire, inter-faith relations ebbed and flowed along this continuum. The relationship between state and subject also changed frequently in the course of this half-millennium. Tools of governance and the nature of political legitimacy in the fourteenth century bore nearly no resemblance to its twentieth-century counterpart. Nevertheless, the state always had to govern a complex, heterogeneous society with markedly mixed results.[1]

Keeping in mind the challenges of maintaining imperial rule among subjects with multiple religious identities, this dissertation examines issues of governance, inter-religious relations, and what it meant to be a Christian and Muslim in the late Ottoman Empire. These issues were all addressed in a global Muslim-Christian polemical debate

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[1] See Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Molly Greene, *A Shared World: Christians and Muslims in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Christine Philliou, "Communities on the Verge: Unraveling the Phanariot Ascendancy in Ottoman Governance," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51 (2009): 151–81; Marc David Baer, *Honored by the Glory of Islam: Conversion and Conquest in Ottoman Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Karen Barkey, *Empire of Difference: The Ottomans in Comparative Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999); Ussama Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Lebanon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Tolga Esmer, "Economies of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire Around 1800," *Past & Present* 224, No.1 (2014): 163-199; and Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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that embroiled missionaries, scholars, journalists, and statesmen from America to India but included significant participation from Ottoman figures. A rich body of Ottoman polemical sources accrued from the 1860s to World War I and beyond. These polemics expressed different perceptions of imperial religious politics and defined boundaries of acceptable Christian and Muslim belief. The debate took place on a trans-imperial stage because they were written and read in an international print sphere that made global propagation of these ideas possible. But they were the product of local Ottoman reform efforts in the intellectual, political, and cultural spheres. I examine these aspects of religious dynamics in the Ottoman Empire by using published and unpublished Ottoman polemics (*reddiye*), treatises (*risâle*), newspaper articles, missionary journals and reports, ambassadorial accounts, and reports from the foreign press.

Polemic derives from the Greek word *polemikós,* meaning "warlike, hostile." It designated an argumentative style aimed at defeating an opponent in front of an audience by establishing the truth of a specific understanding and the falsity of another. It contrasts with apologetics, which in antiquity designated a debate style utilized to justify or defend someone or something. When polemics are used in the religious sphere they take on a form of discourse in which theological controversy and confrontation are intended; this discourse suggests many aspects of power and cannot be understood merely as communication between the sender and receiver. The extra-linguistic context must be understood to comprehend the conversation. A polemic derives from the context of a conflict and is crafted to influence or win over its audience.[2]

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[2]   Theo L. Hettema and Arie van der Kooij, *Religious Polemics in Context: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (Lisor) held at*

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Polemics between Christianity and Islam existed since the seventh century, but in the nineteenth century they took an unprecedented step forward. Writers produced a larger number of them than any other time in history. The spread of communication and transportation technologies such as printing presses, telegraphs, postal systems, and steam ships allowed these works to reach a global audience after they were translated into local languages. The anti-Muslim polemic that garnered the most international attention in the 1860s was a work by Church Mission Society (CMS) member Karl Pfander, entitled *Mîzân u'l-hakk* (The Balance of Truth). It was written in German, published in 1829, and translated into Persian, Arabic, and Urdu in the 1830s-1840s, and Turkish in 1862. The polemic compared the early centuries of Christianity and Islam, contrasting the former's peaceful rise to the latter's violent establishment. The response to it arrived already in 1867, in the form of Indian intellectual Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî's Arabic polemic entitled *İzhâr u'l-hakk* (The Revelation of Truth). He used works of European historical criticism for the first time in the history of Muslim polemics. This work spread throughout the Muslim world and still influences anti-Christian polemics today.

Mîzân u'l-hakk, İzhâr u'l-hakk, and other polemical writings under consideration in this dissertation spread across the Ottoman Empire, but that is not to say that the polemicists themselves were representative of religious sentiments felt by all the Empire's Christians and Muslims. The Ottoman Empire, by its very nature as a empire, was multiethnic and multi-confessional, and at no time did all its subjects share a common

Leiden, 27-28 April, 2000 (Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 2004), xii-xiv. G.A. Wiegers, "Las obras de polemica religiosa escritas por los moriscos fuera de Espana," in *Los moriscos. La Expulsion y despues. Biblioteca de estudios moriscos 9,* eds. Mercedes Garcia-Arenal and Gerard Wiegers (Valencia: Publications de la Unversitat de Valencia, 2012), 391-413.

religious belief or ideology. Polemicists active in the Ottoman Empire were highly educated, elite members of the political or religious class (or both), frequently crossed imperial borders, and were multi-lingual. Quotes from European philosophers, which would have little sway among typical Ottoman subjects, fill both Christian and Muslim polemical works. In certain areas of their intellectual interests, these writers had more in common with each other than their alleged audiences and coreligionists. That is not to say that these works were insignificant or literary curiosities only suitable for an elite readership. The writers consciously crafted the polemics for easy reading in order to reach a wide audience. While author intention changed across time, many Christian polemicists tried to convert as many Ottoman Muslim subjects to Christianity as possible while Muslim polemicists wrote to protect those same readers from missionary efforts. Their fears of missionary efforts are understandable: Protestant missionaries built an enormous infrastructure in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, printing millions of Bibles, commissioning thousands of missionaries to the Middle East, and building hundreds of schools. When Christian and Muslim polemicists were not engaged in conversion efforts, these two groups wrote to educate the Ottoman public on religious history and inform them of the positive aspects of their respective religions.

This dissertation uses numerous sources in American, British, and Ottoman archives to examine the Ottoman Christian and Muslim literary response to the intellectual developments in Europe and the Middle East in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This work deals with the transformation of Christian-Muslim relations, especially those in Istanbul due to the concentration of Islamic scholars,

indigenous Christian scholars, European diplomats, and foreign missionaries, while

paying particular attention to the interplay between the Ottoman state, religious officials,

Protestant missionaries, and the intellectual network that connected the Middle East to

Europe. This study ties in several historical fields, beginning with the highly limited

historiography of Ottoman religious polemics and moving out to studies on religion in the

modern era, the global Muslim interpretive communities that developed a trans-regional

print response to these challenges facing the Muslim world,[3] and imperial governance in

the age of New Imperialism – the period of 1870-1914 in which large financial and

industrial monopolies colluded with imperial powers to project influence across much of

the globe.[4]

No research has been done on the contents of Ottoman Christian-Muslim

polemics in the nineteenth century within a global perspective or with an eye to the cross-

confessionally shared polemical idiom. Nor has research been done to show that polemics

had the goal of promoting social stability along with proving another religion to be false.

In historicizing religious debates in the broader context of the Ottoman literati's

encounter with the intellectual traditions of the Enlightenment during an age in which

changing Muslim-Christian power relations within and outside the Empire were skewed

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[3]   Roger Chartier, *Forms and Meanings: Texts, Performances, and Audiences from Codex to Computer* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995). Chartier describes interpretive communities as a relationship among writer, patron, and market in which the form in which a text is transmitted constrains the production of its meaning and defines its audience.
[4]   H.L. Wesseling, *The European Colonial Empires: 1815-1919* (London: Routledge, 2004); Jerome Satterthwaite ed., *Discourses of Education in the Age of New Imperialism* (London: Trentham Books, 2005); Bradley Deane, *Masculinity and the New Imperialism: Rewriting Manhood in British Popular Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Willie Thompson, *Global Expansion: Britain and its Empire, 1870-1914* (London: Pluto Press, 1999); Ilya Gerasimov, "In Search of a New Imperial History," *Ab Imperio* 1 (2005): 33-56.

against them, this dissertation builds on new studies in late Ottoman historiography that explore the zones of contact between Ottoman confessional groups in economic, political, and legal arenas. Recent scholarship has challenged mainstream Ottoman historiography that views the late nineteenth century as a succession of defined periods, all of which come with a set of predetermined characteristics: "liberalizing" Tanzimat reforms of 1839-1876 are followed by a ratcheting effect of "authoritarianism," a stress on Islamic identity, and "religious sectarianism" in the Hamidian era (1876-1908), which are in turn followed by "secularization," "positivism," and "Turkification" in the Young Turk era, lasting from 1908 until the collapse of the Empire.[5]

According to this periodization scheme, inter-religious relations amongst confessional groups in the Ottoman Empire progressively broke down throughout the long nineteenth century, and relations between the state and extra-territorial groups such as Protestant missionaries became politically contentious. I argue that while the state did use Islamic rhetoric in the pursuit of imperial legitimation, particularly in the Hamidian era, there also existed a religious dialectic between Muslim intellectuals and Protestant

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[5] The classical treatments of the late Ottoman period that established this paradigm are Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey* (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1964); and Roderic H. Davison, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire: 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 408. More recent studies that blur these lines in the modern period include Mehmet Genç, "Osmanlı Tarihinde Periyodlaştırma Meselesi," in *Osmanlı Geriledi Mi?*, ed. Mustafa Armağan (Istanbul: Etkileşen Yayınları, 2006); Uğur Ümit Üngör, *The Making of Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Other recent studies go back further and challenge the classical partition of Ottoman history into three periods: Expansion (1300-1550), Consolidation (1550-1718), and Transformation (1718-1923). These include Jane Hathaway, "Problems of Periodization in Ottoman History: The Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries," *Turkish Studies Association Bulletin* 20 (1996): 25-31; Linda T. Darling, "Another Look at Periodization in Ottoman History," *Turkish Studies Association Journal* 26 (2002): 19-28; Hakan Karateke, "The Challenge of Periodization: New Patterns in Nineteenth-Century Ottoman Historiography," in *Writing History at the Ottoman Court: Editing the Past, Fashioning the Future*, eds. H. Erdem Çipa and Emine Fetvacı (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2013), 129-154.

missionaries. While several anti-Christian religious polemics were produced in the late Ottoman period, ostensibly written as a product of increased religious tensions between confessional groups, Muslim authors quoted freely from Western European biblical scholars and employed an Enlightenment-inspired methodology of textual criticism. They used such authors as Alexander Geddes (d. 1802), Joseph Benson (d. 1824), Ernst Rosenmuller (d. 1835), Johann Scholz (d. 1852), and David Strauss (1874).

The Protestant missionaries believed in the superiority of Western civilization over Islam, but they also believed in a post-millennial eschatology that was shaped by theological progressivisim. They largely held to the Social Gospel movement, a modern social and theological movement that held the Second Coming of Christ would happen after humanity reformed the entire earth through issues of social justice by addressing poverty, economic inequality, and lack of access to education.[6] While there were unquestionably disagreements and even hostile sentiments between missionaries and Muslim intellectuals, the polemical genre demonstrates that devout Muslims and Christians in the Ottoman Empire struggled with the same questions of integrating their religious beliefs within conceptualizations of modernity that dominated inter-imperial intellectual discourse in the nineteenth century.

The periodization of this study encompasses critical decades for the Ottoman Empire's social, diplomatic and religious history. While such a claim could be made at any time in the Empire's 600-year history, in the years of 1861-1915 – the years that modern-era religious polemics filled Ottoman domains and distinguished themselves

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[6]   Malise Ruthven, "The Apocalyptic Social Imaginary," in *Modernism, Christianity and Apocalypse,* eds. Erik Tonning, Matthew Feldman, David Addyman (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 354-384.

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from their medieval antecedents by using contemporary European philosophical sourcing instead of references to holy books – it battled for political and military survival and engaged in numerous full-scale wars with its neighbors, even as it was drawn closer into the European diplomatic theater. Questions on inter-confessional relations with Ottoman non-Muslims that in previous centuries remained a local matter were now placed under firmer state central control with the directives of the 1856 Reform Edict and the 1878 Treaty of Berlin.[7] The Ottoman Empire succumbed to pressures from its Christian imperial rivals to declare more freedom of religious expression in its realm; however, the same European powers concomitantly demanded protection for Ottoman Armenians in the eastern provinces from massacres and looting by Kurdish and Circassian bands. Even small government decisions concerning non-Muslims now took on international political significance. An Armenian woman's decision to convert to Islam in the eighteenth century merely required a recitation of the *şahâda* in front of witnesses; in the late nineteenth century it required sign-offs from her village priest, family members, an imâm, and government officials. It was a prudent procedure to mediate a contentious affair to prove that her conversion did not take place under compulsion in order for the Ottoman state to prevent European consular involvement from "rescuing" a Christian apparently forced to abandon her religion.[8]

    Western missionary work was also fraught with new political meaning, as the

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[7]   Krstić writes in *Contested Conversions to Islam* that, pace Karen Barkey, the early Ottoman state did not make official policy regarding the safeguarding of syncretism or tolerance. Rather, inter-confessional relations were negotiated on the local, provincial, and imperial levels. See Chapter 6, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

[8]   Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

balance of power shifted from the Ottomans to their rivals. Protestant missionaries worked almost exclusively among Ottoman Christians in building schools, providing scientific and religious education in their own languages and established Protestant churches. From their perspective they labored only to elevate the spiritual and material station of impoverished persons. From the perspective of the state they threatened Ottoman sovereignty by empowering Ottoman Christians at a time when nationalist movements among Christian ethnic groups threatened to break apart the Empire, while at the same time the state used diplomatic interventions and consuls to their advantage to enhance their governance and sovereignty.[9]

I chose the period of 1861 to 1915 for this study because these years span the time frame in which modern-era Ottoman polemics appeared and were circulated. I avoid attaching my periodization to specific sultanic reigns because these polemics were not a top-down creation of the imperial bureaucracy but a negotiation between local and state figures that cut across diverse governmental periods, from the late Tanzimat and Hamidian eras to the Young Turk period. A study that encompasses a long periodization is problematic, as this half-century witnessed profound changes in the Empire's demographic composition, land holdings, trajectory of reform, and domestic and foreign politics. Yet these polemics continued to be produced in large numbers and addressed similar religious issues despite significant social change, suggesting a measure of continuity in this period over questions of religious belief. However, this continuity was

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[9]   Will Smiley notes that the Ottoman Empire could use foreign subjecthood under treaty law with Russia to its advantage. While treaties in the 18-19th centuries undermined Ottoman forced labor by requiring the return of Russian slaves, it also reinforced Russian serfdom and conscription by agreeing to return Russian fugitives. Will Smiley, "The Burdens of Subjecthood: The Ottoman State, Russian Fugitives, and Interimperial Law, 1774-1869," *IJMES* 46 (2014): 73-93.

not linear, as internal and external forces constantly re-directed it over the decades.

This project examines Ottoman religious intellectuals and literati from multiple backgrounds, the changing nature of religious belief, and the forces that altered religious belief. These included domestic and global issues, such as the inter-religious dialectic informed by the Islamic-Protestant missionary encounter; the emergence of Ottomanism and Islamism, two collective identities developed to solve the empire's social challenges by uniting subjects according to Ottoman subject status or religion; and the emergence of a Muslim global print sphere that allowed Muslims from India, Russia, Egypt, and Istanbul to share their concerns of maintaining spiritual and political independence in the face of asymmetrical power relations with Europe. Muslim polemical writers occupied themselves with political questions of European colonialism and theological question of engaging Western philosophical developments without falling into materialist scientism and positivism, which had spread among much of the Ottoman intelligentsia. Intellectuals also had to contend with the rhetoric of such ideological projects as Ottomanism in the Tanzimat period, Pan-Islamism in the Hamidian era, and the secularist-turned-Islamocentric – and even Pan-Turkist – experiments of the Young Turk era. Some of the Muslim polemicists were civil servants and even officials of the state, such as Ahmet Midhat and Giritli Sırrı Pasha. Therefore they had to choose where to place themselves on the continuum of support for or veiled opposition against these state projects.[10]

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[10] Kemal Karpat, *The politicization of Islam: reconstructing identity, state, faith, and community in the late Ottoman state* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 44-46. Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire,1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 211. As secular Ottomanism failed to live up to the expectations of Young Turks, and they had to rely on religion as a form of social cohesion and centralization, much like their predecessor Abülhamit II.

Christian-Muslim polemics date back to the earliest encounters between the two religions. Here it is worthwhile to explore a brief survey of this history. Features and tropes of religious polemics that formed in the medieval period re-emerged in the early modern and modern eras. The social and political conditions that typically produced polemics should be considered in order to determine if they emerged under specific historical circumstances. If so, it should also be determined if lines of historical continuity connected a medieval writing with a modern one, and if so, which ones. Yet even if lines of continuity did connect religious polemics across the centuries, they should be understood not as timeless writings but as products of the social contexts in which they were written.

Muslim polemics first appeared with the emergence of the Qur'an. It set the boundaries of Christian error, that God is one, Jesus is not the Son of God, and he was not crucified (4:157, 171). The Bible had been falsified, concealing the coming of Muhammed. These criticisms of the Bible hardened into the doctrine of *tahrîf* (corruption).[11] The Christian response came soon after. Umayyad civil servant John of Damascus (d. 749) was among the first Christians to criticize Islam in writing when he understood it was not a transient power but had been established to exist permanently. He wrote his "Heresy of the Ishmaelites" as one chapter in his "Fountain of Knowledge." As the title suggests, he considered Islam a Christian heresy rather than a distinct religion. The work includes answers to questions posed by Muslims on Scripture, the Incarnation,

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[11]   Daniel Norman, "Polemics: Christian-Muslim Polemics," *Encyclopedia of Religion* (London: Macmillan, 2005), 7242-7244.

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and the Trinity.[12]

Among the first Muslims to argue that Christians misunderstood rather than falsified scripture was al-Qāsim ibn Ibrāhīm (d. 860), a Zaydi Shi'ite from the Yemen. The ninth-century Nestorian convert ʿAlī ibn Sahl al-Ṭabarī wrote in his "Book of Religion and Empire" that the New Testament foretold the coming of Muhammed. Daniel Norman notes that Muslim critiques of Christianity increased in sophistication in the latter ninth century. Abū ʿĪsā al-Warrāq (d. 861-862) wrote "Refutation of the Three Sects of the Christians," a work of considerable complexity that described the Christological controversies of the early church age. Al-Ghazālī (d. 1111) is believed to have written the "Excellent Refutation of the Divinity of Jesus Christ," in which Christian scripture was used to criticize the Chalcedonian, non-Chalcedonian, and Nestorian churches. Ibn Taymīyah (d. 1328) contrasted the Qur'an and the Bible, expounding on the "errors" of the Trinity written by his Muslim polemical predecessors.[13]

Anti-Muslim Christian polemics of the Middle Ages varied in intensity based on the level of author proximity to Islamic society. Nestorians explained a Christology comprehensible to Muslims, particularly in the polemics of Catholicos Timotheos I with the caliph al-Mahdī in 781 and Ilyās of Nisibis in 1026 with vizier Abū al-Qāsim al-Maghribī, who served in various Muslim courts in the Middle East.[14] Byzantine writers took a sharper tone with Islam and the Prophet due to Byzantine military conflict with Islamic states. The ninth-century scholars George Hamartolus, Nicetas of Byzantium, and

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[12] Daniel Sahas, *John of Damascus on Islam: The "Heresy of the Ishmaelites"* (Leiden: Brill, 1972).

[13] Daniel Norman, "Polemics: Christian-Muslim Polemics."

[14] John C. Lameoreau, "Early Eastern Christian Responses to Islam," John Victor Tolan ed., *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam* (London: Routledge, 1996): 3-32.

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the pseudonymous author of the "Letter to the Emir of Damascus" (c. 920-940) all

attacked Muhammed. They credited an Arian advisor with providing him the heretical

information to create the doctrines of Islam. Muhammed is depicted as violent, self-

indulgent, and lacking any sense of holiness.[15]

Medieval Christian polemics in Europe constructed a clearer view of Islam

beginning in the twelfth century due to growing intellectual integration across the

continent and increasing contact with the Middle East and North Africa. Blanks and

Frassetto note two aspects of the Islam constructed by Western scholars. It was on the one

hand the image of a Saracen, Turk, or Moor that was wholly alien and evil. On the other

hand it was a photo-negative of the perception of an ideal Christian self-image as a brave,

virtuous believer in the one true God. By debasing their rivals, Western Christians

enhanced their own self image in the face of a more powerful and culturally sophisticated

enemy.[16] Christian polemics grew in number during this period. In the 1140s Peter the

Venerable (d. 1156) commissioned translations from Arabic the "Apology of al-Kindī," a

document that purports to be a dialogue between a Muslim and a Christian. It drew

attention to numerous so-called deficiencies in Islam. Dominican Ramón Martí (d. 1285)

demonstrated a knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence in his "Quadruplex Reprobatio,"

claiming Islamic law ran contrary to reason and the public good. The Majorcan

Franciscan Ramón Lull (d. 1315) wrote a number of works "proving" the Trinity by

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[15] S. Bashear. "Polemics and Images of the 'Other': Apocalyptic and other materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine wars: a review of Arabic sources," M. Bonner (ed.), *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times* (London: Ashgate Variorium, 2005): 181-215; Craig L. Hanson, "Manuel I Comnenos and the 'God of Muhammad': A Study in Byzantine Ecclesiastical Politics," *Medieval Christian Perceptions of Islam*: 55-84; Daniel Norman, "Polemics: Christian-Muslim Polemics."

[16] David R Blanks and Michael Frassetto, *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Perception of Other* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999).

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"compelling reasons." His works had little impact despite his missionary travels to North Africa.[17]

These early Christian and Muslim polemical works featured a number of tropes that came to define the genre. They persisted throughout the seventh to fifteenth centuries, with many lingering through the nineteenth century and even down to today. Tropes of Christian understanding of Islam coalesced into two axioms. Islam was, first, a false religion. Whether through ignorance or malice it distorted the teachings of Jesus, downgrading him from the Son of God to a prophet. Islamic scripture was a poor forgery of Christian scripture. Second, it was a carnal religion, obsessed with violence and sexuality. Nirenberg notes that already in 634 a Christian author presented Islam's conquest as a sign of its war-like nature and falsity.[18] Early Christian writers such as John of Damascus said Muslims were worshippers of Aphrodite and precursors of the antichrist. They were seduced by a false prophet who formed his own heresy. John of Damascus writes that Muhammed's motives were primarily sexual, thus his tolerance of polygamy and concubinage.[19] Nineteenth-century Christian missionaries Karl Pfander and Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle repeated these charges in their anti-Muslim polemics. As we will see in Chapters Two and Three, they possessed greater learning about Islamic theology than their medieval predecessors, but this did not soften their blows against

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[17] John Tolan, *Saracens: Islam in the European Imagination* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (Edinburg: University Press, 1960); Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974).

[18] David Nirenberg, *Neighboring Faiths: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism in the Middle Ages and Today* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

[19] Sydney Griffith, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

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Islam. Their understanding of Islamic history and theology only sharpened their polemical attacks.

Muslim polemical tropes against Christianity focused on the nature of Jesus, the authenticity of the scriptures, the relationship between Jesus and Muhammed, God's revelation of the Day of Judgement, and prophecy in the Bible that foretold Muhammed's coming. Christian religious practices such as the Eucharistic celebration and the veneration of icons was the sort of idolatry that Muhammad sough to remove from the Arabic peninsula during his prophetic career. These arguments appear, with few exceptions, in much of the Islamic literature focused on Christianity. The fourteenth-century Muslim scholar Ibn Taymīyah describes each of these philosophical and theological criticisms in his book *Al-jawāb al-ṣaḥīḥ li-man baddala dīn al-masīḥ* (The Correct Answer to Those Who Changed the Religion of Christ).[20] One of the oldest Muslim charges against Christians is that they overlooked prophecies of Muhammed's coming in their own Bible. These writers identify Muhammed with the Paraclete ("comforter"), whose coming Jesus announces in John's Gospel. This charge was first made by Ibn İshak (d. 767) and repeated by many others such as Ibn Taymīyah in the 14th century, Abdallāh b. Abdallāh al-Tarjumān in 1420, and most Muslim polemicists of the nineteenth century.[21]

Muslim polemical tropes included more than Christian doctrinal critiques. They

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[20] Ibn Taymiyah, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity*, ed. and trans. by Thomas Michel (Delmar N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1984); Charles A. Kimball, "Muslim-Christian Dialogue," *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[21] John Tolan, "Sparring with the pen: religious polemics and apologetics between Jews, Christians and Muslims (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries)," in *L'esplendor de la Mediterrània medieval (segles XIII-XV)*. (Barcelona: IMED, 2004): 243-259.

were a dispute over social harmony. Thirteenth-century Egyptian scholar Shihāb al-Dīn al-Qarāfī wrote the tract "Splendid Replies to Insolent Questions." He opens the treatise with scenes of Christian decadence. To him, the loss of true religion meant the collapse of society.[22] Nineteenth century Ottoman polemicists such as Ahmet Midhat, Fatma Aliye, and many others repeated these charges against Christianity six centuries later. They argued that European nations are riddled with adultery, fornication, divorce, crime, and alcoholism.

Secondary Literature

i. Religious Polemics

Researchers often approach religious polemics from one of two angles. The first is to treat them as a part of a literary genre and therefore something that is a literary phenomenon. They are ripped from their temporal or social context, with authorial intentions ignored. The second is to consider them a historical signifier of worsening inter-confessional relations, preceding cultural conflict. Their purpose is to disrupt harmonious inter-religious social intercourse, resulting in religious conversions or violence against religious minorities. A significant body of recent literature on Muslim-Christian polemics from the medieval and early modern period transcends this binary approach, which I will discuss later in this chapter, but it still largely applies to modern-era Ottoman religious polemics. Regarding the first approach, nineteenth and twentieth-century Turkish-language religious polemics, when they receive any attention at all, are ascribed a timeless character. The best-known work on this subject is Mehmet Aydın's

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[22]   Diego Sarrió Cucarella, *The Mirror of the Other: Shihab Al-Din Al-Qarafi's 'Splendid Replies'* (PhD diss., Georgetown University, 2014).

Müslümanların Hristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları, but his

brief survey of Turkish-language polemics does little more than quote the *Osmanlı*

Mü'ellifleri (Ottoman Authors, a 1914 three-volume literary compendium by Bursalı

Mehmet Tahir Bey) and summarize these polemics' theological contents.[23] Other studies

mention that Ottoman religious polemics emerged with the arrival of foreign missionaries

to the Empire in the seventeenth century and saw an upsurge with the growth of

Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century, but they approach the contents of these

polemics with a straight reading, analyzing them as works of pure theology. Questions of

how the polemics were used and how they fit into broader patterns of economic, military,

social and cultural relations among religions are often ignored.[24]

Regarding the second approach, studies on religious conflict depict religious

polemics as a prelude to massive violence against minority confessional groups. David

Nirenberg notes that historians prior to World War II ignored medieval European

Judaism, but this became impossible after the Holocaust, when Judaism's historical image

was irreparably altered. In the wake of the Holocaust and the wave of 1990s attacks on

Muslims in the former Yugoslavia or Jews and Muslims in Russia, these acts of violence

against religious minorities are seen as having their origin in medieval anti-Semitism.

Studies on religious minorities, the collective hatred against them, and polemics that

distilled these hatreds have transformed into a search for the roots of modern evils. It is

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[23]   Mehmet Aydın, *Müslümanların Hıristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1998).

[24]   Two studies that are illustrative of this approach are Fuat Aydın's "Osmanlı ve Cumhuriyet Dönemindeki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri ve Bu Faaliyetleriyle İlgili Çalışmalara Yönelik Bir Bibliyografya Denemesi," *Sakarya Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergis*i 7 (2003): 114-130; Sabri Koz, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nin Eserleri," *Kitaplık* 54 (July/August 2002): 160-173.

here that scholars say "Europe went wrong." These polemics are read less within their original historical contexts and more as a teleology leading to modern manifestations of religious intolerance.[25]

This dissertation is the first to build on recent studies on communal violence and persecution of religious minorities, which argue that polemics were as much about governing methods of social stability as precursors to violence, and apply them to religious polemics in the late Ottoman Empire. They are not merely a sign of social tolerance disintegrating but can actually help maintain equilibrium between various religious groups. I argue along the lines of David Nirenberg's *Communities of Violence*, Lucy Pick's research on *convivencia* ("the Coexistence") in medieval Spain in *Conflict and Coexistence*, and Tijana Krstić's *Contested Conversions to Islam* that these polemics had the purpose of stabilizing society by clearly defining the positions of each religion to the other. They set boundaries for less powerful religious groups, who had to reckon with the de facto greater power of other religious groups, and work within the framework of their social prejudices and laws. These disputes were more than the construction of difference. They made space for different groups within a multi-confessional empire. A fascinating aspect of religious polemics is evidence of Christian-Muslim mutual influence, suggesting that the two sides read each other's religious literature and borrowed each other's arguments.[26]

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[25] David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 3. Studies that psychoanalyze the collective unconsciousness of modern Europeans, looking for collective beliefs formed in the Middle Ages and transmitted to today include L. Rothkrug, "Peasant and Jew: Fears of Pollution and German Collective Perceptions," *Historical Reflections* 10 (1983): 59-77; Leon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalist Ideas in Europe* (New York, 1974); Carlo Ginzburg, *Ecstacies* (London, 1975).

[26] David Nirenberg, *Communities of Violence* ; Lucy Pick, *Conflict and Co-existence: Archbishop Rodrigo*

The purpose of religious polemics was not merely to delegitimize or convert members of the other religion. Their purpose was also to create internal boundaries of acceptable religious expression. Such goals bear some resemblance to Archbishop Rodrigo of Toledo (d. 1247) and his program of creating a primate-managed medieval Spain in the thirteenth century. He commissioned anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim polemics not to convert or suppress Jewish and Muslim subjects, but to clarify the inner differences of each community so that each had a stabilizing self-definition. Krstić notes in her analysis of Ottoman Christian neomartyrologies that these texts indicate that tolerance in the Ottoman Empire attained meaning in local contexts through the complex interplay of imperial, inter-communal, and international conditions. These narratives, produced between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries, warned Orthodox Christians against interactions with Muslims lest they convert to Islam and had to atone for their sin by renouncing Islam and facing martyrdom. Women in particular who marry Muslim men faced severe consequences for these actions. The purpose for these morality stories was for Orthodox authorities to identify miscegenation and interfaith marriage as a threat to the social cohesion of these Ottoman Christian communities. Pick argues that Rodrigo's *Dialogus libri vite,* written against the Jews, was actually written to promote the coexistence of Iberian Christians and Jews instead of converting the latter. He wanted to substantiate the truth of Christianity from Jewish post-biblical texts and sooth Christian

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*and the Muslims and Jews of Medieval Sp*ain (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004). Some scholars have considered the term *convivencia* to be an anachronism. See Simon Barton. "Traitors to the Faith? Christian Mercenaries in al-Andalus and the Maghreb, 1100-1300," in R. Collins and A. Goodman (eds.), *Medieval Spain: Culture, Conflict, and Coexistence* (Palgrave Macmillan: 2002), 23-45; Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change and Communal Politics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire*, 121-164.

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anxieties over its theology.[27]

Other researchers have broadened the scope of polemics beyond religious bigotry or a case of poor manners. Marcelo Dascal describes three polemical typologies: a discussion, a dispute, and a controversy. A discussion is a polemical exchange that covers a well-circumscribed field in which the two sides believe they can resolve the differences. The root of the problem is a mistake in understanding or conflicting nomenclature or semantics. Discussions allow for solutions and correcting the mistake. They spread rapidly within a vibrant print sphere, particularly when the print sphere spanned empires and evaded state censors, which I will elaborate on later in this chapter. Disputes also involve a divergence between the two parties. But the contenders do not seek to root out mistakes in understanding; there are no mutually accepted procedures for deciding the dispute, and it ends in argument. Controversy is a polemical exchange that occupies an intermediate position. Both sides disagree on extant methods of problem solving. The opposing points in question are not perceived as mistakes to be corrected, nor are they unsolvable conflicts of preference. Intra-faith polemics typically correspond with discussions, with inter-faith and extra-faith polemics corresponding with disputes. In both arguments the opponents reject each other's ultimate source of authority in manners of content as well as procedure. It should be noted that Dascal's typologies are ideal types and they do not correspond perfectly to the polemics I will consider in this study (nor were both sides of the argument always arguing within the same typology) but it is a

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[27] Anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim medieval religious polemics were, in a similar fashion, used as much for Christian expansion, self-definition, and representation as for converting those to Christianity. See Pick, 4-5.

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useful framework in order to approach an author's argumentative strategy.[28]

Recent studies on modern era religious polemics in the Middle East link these writings to authors' aims and social anxieties. In Simon Wood's study on Syro-Egyptian Muslim reformist Sheikh Muhammad Rashid Rida (d. 1935) and the intellectual milieu of late nineteenth/early twentieth century Egypt, he describes the means by which Islamic scholars approached reformist discourse through these writings. Wood groups reformist discourse into three typologies: traditionalism, secularism, and modernism.[29] Traditionalists, best represented by the faculty of Al-'Azhar University, studied the medieval and early modern literary tradition with little heed to the modern era, preferring medieval authors who wrote in a time in which Islamic states did not suffer asymmetrical power relations with Europe. Secularists adopted Enlightenment philosophy and dreamed of Middle Eastern national political renewal, which would strengthen their domains against European colonial encroachment. Religious belief worked in cooperation, not in antagonism, with independent reasoning, scientific education, and the belief that human agency could direct the course of the future. Modernists such as scholar Muhammad 'Abduh (d. 1905) attempted a European-Islamic synthesis in an effort to mitigate Western rationalist developments that threatened traditionalist Islam, such as positivism and

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[28] See his "On The Use of Argumentative Reason in Religious Polemics" in Religious Polemics in Context: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (Lisor) held at Leiden, 27-28 April, 2000, eds. Theo Hettema and Arie van der Kooij (Lieden: Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 2004), 3-16.

[29] Aziz Al-Azmeh. *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso Books, 1993), 102. Much debate has occurred over the issue of Islamic "fundamentalists," of which prominent Egyptian anti-Christian polemicists such as Rashid Rida are considered prominent. However, I agree with such scholars as Simon Wood that "fundamentalist" is a misnomer for the Islamic intellectual tradition, as it is was specific term applied to Christians who rejected liberal Biblical textual and historical criticism. Nearly all Muslim scholars accepted the inerrancy and historical accuracy of the Qur'an, thus making the term "Muslim fundamentalist" too inclusive for significant utility.

Darwinism.[30]

Other historians of Muslim polemicists in the nineteenth century describe these writers as both scholars and activists, expressing frustration with Western incursion into Muslim societies. Christine Schirrmacher has written on the theological aspects of the Muslim-Christian dispute between Pfander and al-Kairânawî. While it was the first appearance of Muslim theologians using European critical methods to disprove Christian beliefs, the debate came as a response to the growth of British missionary activity and polemical publishing in northern India. Al-Kairânawî's 1854 debate with Pfander came from what Schirrmacher describes as a response to expanding Western power. His writings had similar far-reaching effects. The influence of Al-Kairânawî's 1867 *İzhâr u'l-hakk* transmitted across the Muslim world. By the early twentieth century its arguments reached all the way to Rashid Rida's Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsîr*). He used al-Kairânawî's argument that the apostle Paul is responsible for having introduced heathenism into Christianity. The *İzhâr u'l-hakk* continues to influence modern-day Muslim apologetics. Recent works on the truth of Islam still contain liberal use of Western sources in textual exegesis and science.[31]

Umar Ryad examines the polemical writings of the Rashid Rida in his popular journal *Al-Manâr* during the period 1898-1935. Rida dealt with relations between tradition and modernity much like other Muslim intellectuals of the time. But unlike European Christians dealing with the same issues, he dealt with them from the weakened

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[30] Simon Wood, *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida's Modernist Defense of Islam* (London: One World, 2008), 19-20.
[31] Christine Schirrmacher, "Muslim Apologetics and the Agra Debates of 1854: A Nineteenth Century Turning Point," Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies," 13, No. 1 (1994): 74-84.

position of the religious "other" – a position that Simon Wood says Rida was aware of, as he did not have the calm confidence of classical Islamic polemicists.[32] Despite his disadvantages, Rida was among the most vocal and scholarly polemical figures from the Ottoman Arab provinces in the global polemical debate of this era. He learned of works of European historical criticism from al-Kairânawî and Muhammed 'Abduh. He used such Western studies in his polemical writings to vindicate the authenticity of Muslim scriptures. He also learned of "The Gospel of Barnabas" through al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk*. Rida printed it in Egypt, where it gained much more attention throughout the Islamic world.[33]

ii. Missionaries

The study of foreign missions in the Ottoman Empire dates back to the final decades of the Empire itself. Protestant missionaries producing scholarship in Oriental studies and missiology for journals such as *The Moslem World*, which began publication in 1911. Following the collapse of the Empire, the study of missionaries branched off into either old-fashioned confessional missiologies or as a manifestation of nationalism. Paul Varg's 1954 research on motives in American Protestant missions of 1890-1917 links the movement's spirit of American evangelist D.L. Moody's revivalism to humanitarianism, faith in progress, social reform, and strong American nationalism of the twentieth century.[34] In later decades missionaries fell out of favor as a research topic and became thought of as unattractive for study. They were considered as history's "losers" of

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[32] Simon Wood, 17.

[33] Umar Ryad, *Islamic Reformism and Christianity: A Critical Reading of the Works of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā and His Associates (1898-1935)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[34] Paul Varg, "Motives in Protestant Missions, 1890-1917," *Church History* 23, No. 1 (March 1954): 68-82.

secularization. By the 1970s Stephen Neill, the doyen of the field, decided that mission

history was "a very dull subject."[35] In recent decades new lines of historical inquiry have

developed and missionaries are back in the focus of research. Questions that have

received considerable attention in recent years include the recruitment of women after

1860; the professionalization of the ministry vocation; the twentieth-century growth of

theological liberalism and increased emphasis on humanitarian work rather than religious

conversion; the interaction between missionaries and colonial, imperial, and religious

governments; and trans-regional missionary networks that were integrated into the

Atlantic system and the Mediterranean world. Missions laid the ground rules for cultural

contact before the arrival of foreign colonial apparatuses. As a field of inquiry,

missionary studies have expanded beyond religious history and now speak to

anthropologists and sociologists.[36]

Research on foreign missionaries in the Ottoman Empire must contend with the

lingering effects of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in Ottoman studies, particularly in

discussions of native agency, or the lack thereof in the case of Middle Easterners under

colonial oppression. Missionaries are thrown into this colonial matrix and considered

agents of empire, projecting power on their mission fields. Concepts of denominational

difference, political stance, and theological convictions among different mission agencies

and individual missionaries are obliterated. All foreign missionary groups are lumped

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[35] Antony Copley, review of *A History of Christianity in India: the beginnings to 1707, by Stephen Neill* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 17 (1988): 107.

[36] See Andrew Porter, "Church History, History of Christianity, Religious History: Some Reflections on British Missionary Enterprise Since the Late Eighteenth Century,' *Church History* 71, No. 3 (2002): 555-584; Chun Hsing, *Baptized in the fire of revolution: The American social gospel and the YMCA in China, 1919-1937* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1996).

together and assumed to hold a common agenda. Zeynep Türkyılmaz has noted the problems with such an approach. The Ottoman Empire was never colonized until its end, and most foreign missionaries in the Empire could not have been tools of imperialism since they were from the United States, which had little or no colonial ambitions for the Middle East in the nineteenth century. Protestant missionaries sought to convert Ottoman Muslims, Jews, and Christians to Protestantism for the purposes of their own project of the re-birth of Christianity in the Biblical Lands, sometimes acting against the interests of the European diplomatic corps. Furthermore, different missionary agencies such as the Congregationalist American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) or the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (RPCNA) approached Muslim groups according to their own agendas, ideologies, and desires.[37]

Selim Deringil examines foreign missionaries in *The Well-Protected Domains* with the same balanced approach that he brings to his analysis of Abdülhamid II's policies: analyzing them with an inter-imperial perspective that transcended the concerns of the elite in Istanbul. The Ottoman imperial center disliked Protestant missionaries not for being colonial proxies, but for two other reasons. First, they hurt the standing of Abdülhamit in the international court of public opinion by reporting on attacks against Ottoman Christians to the European and American media, particularly on the Armenian Massacres of 1894-1896. They did so at a time when he was desperately concerned with shoring up imperial legitimacy at home and abroad. The Ottoman imperial center also disliked Protestant missionaries for their independent initiatives at constructing a massive

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[37] Zeynep Türkyılmaz, "Anxieties of Conversion: Missionaries, State and Heterodox Communities in the Late Ottoman Empire" (Unpublished PhD Dissertation: UCLA, 2009), 1-19, 279.

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primary and secondary school network in the Empire. Hundreds of primary and secondary foreign missionary schools filled the Empire's Anatolian provinces by the end of the nineteenth century, prompting the Ottoman state to play catch up and build its own primary and secondary schools in the same provinces.[38]

Building on these more nuanced views of foreign missionaries, I will also show in this study that different mission agencies had different approaches to missions, and these differences must be taken into account to understand each agency's unique evangelization strategy, approach to religious polemics, and relationship with the Ottoman government. The American Board avoided anti-Muslim polemics or evangelism among Muslims, preferring to direct their efforts among Christians and Jews of the Empire. The Church Mission Society, in contrast, actively proselytized Muslims and printed numerous polemical works. Some Ottoman officials realized the good that missionary schools and hospitals brought to the Empire. Many scholars, however, still yield to Ottoman state discourse concerning missionary activities that lumps all groups together. This is a problem considering that government missives and Turkish newspapers confused Protestants with Jesuits, connecting vastly different Christian confessional groups together as if they were a common group with common goals.[39]

No historical consensus exists on the degree to which Protestant missionaries were culpable for increasing Ottoman domestic inter-confessional tensions, but many studies implicate them in intentionally or unintentionally antagonizing Muslims and

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[38] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 1999), 112-134.
[39] Türkyılmaz, 7-8.

Christians: They disdained Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy and their tactless

proselytism earned them scorn from priests, patriarchs, and laymen whom they tried to

convert. They also abused the religious freedoms granted in the state's nineteenth-century

reform edicts by directly evangelizing Muslims and assuming that freedom of religious

conscience meant the freedom to openly challenge the foundations of Islam.[40] According

to Deringil, they left behind an ideological "Cold War" between Christians and Muslims,

despite their repeated claims that they came to Anatolia only to offer an improved

education system.[41]

It is my contention that research on the late Ottoman encounter between Protestant

missionaries, Ottoman Christians, and the state has over-emphasized the acrimonious

relations between these groups. Oft referenced episodes include the Istanbul Armenian

Patriarch Matteos II excommunicating members of his millet who attended Armenian

Protestant fellowships, Hamidian state officials closing down Protestant schools in

provincial Anatolia, and American missionaries sullying Abdülhamid II's image in the

international press. Jeremy Salt and Salahi Sonyel argue that Protestant missionaries

tarnished the Ottoman Empire's image in the Western world through their missionary

publications and press correspondence. Rather than explain the complex political realities

of the multi-confessional Empire, they framed such events as the 1896 Armenian

massacres in Anatolia as Muslim persecution of Christians. They adopted descriptions of

Abdülhamid II as "The Red Sultan" at a time when he was seriously concerned about his

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[40] Jeremy Salt, "Trouble Wherever They Went: American Missionaries in Anatolia and Ottoman Syria in the Nineteenth Century," Muslim World 92, Nos. 3&4 (Fall 2002): 287-314.
[41] Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains*, 133.

domestic and international image.[42]

Few works have shifted the terms of the Ottoman Empire-missionary discussion as much as Ussama Makdisi's *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East*. Makdisi describes the robust internal debate amongst missionaries regarding their emphasis on social works versus missionary works. His research shows that missionaries in the Ottoman Empire struggled to balance two concurrent aims: the conversion of non-Christians through ministerial works such as Bible distribution, the training of native pastors, and preaching; and aiding their material well-being through social works such as educational, vocational and medical training and services. These aims were complicated by missionary late nineteenth-century generalized feelings of superiority in terms of race and civilization against Ottoman subjects. In the early and mid-nineteenth century most missionaries believed the second aim served the first. By the twentieth century the pendulum had swung in the other direction. Makdisi reframes this encounter as a transnational phenomenon that was part of the long history of American missionary work among American Indians. Above all, he moves beyond Ottoman state sourcing and uses accounts from missionaries, Muslims, and converts themselves, who thought of unique notions of religion in a period when the state pursued an inclusive approach to inter-religious harmony.[43]

iii. Sectarianism and Confessionalization

In addition to missionary studies, the issues of sectarianism and

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[42] Jeremy Salt, "A Precarious Symbiosis: Ottoman Christians and Foreign Missionaries in the 19th Century," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 3, No. 3 (1985-86), 60-62; Salahi Sonyel, *Minorities and the Destruction of the Ottoman Empire* (Ankara: Turkish Historical Society, 1993).

[43] Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

confessionalization have been taken up by revisionist social and cultural historians.

Ussama Makdisi describes modern sectarianism as, "the deployment of religious heritage

as a primary marker of modern political identity."[44] Earlier studies treated the early

centuries of the Ottoman Empire as existing in a timeless state of tolerance that the

Hamidian period disrupted with the politicization of Islam, ending in the Armenian

genocide. In its classical form the Ottoman Empire provided for the expression of

multiple cultural forms through the millet system. These studies emphasized that the

Ottoman state created a multi-cultural system that made room for religious difference at a

time of severe sectarian violence in medieval and early modern Europe.[45]

More recent studies have drawn attention to the ebb and flow of six centuries of

Ottoman history in inter-confessional dynamics that cannot be represented by a linear

progression vector. The complex nature of inter-religious co-existence was there at the

beginning of the Empire, with indistinct boundaries between religions. Cemal Kafadar

has described the state of mind of Ottoman rulers as a "metadoxy," being doxy-naive and

not doxy-minded, as well as the absence of a state that was interested in rigorously

defining and enforcing an orthodoxy.[46] It appears that the Ottoman government began to

enforce a Sunni orthodoxy in the time of Süleyman (1520-1566), consciously hardening

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[44] Makdisi, *The Culture of Sectarianism*, 7.
[45] Works that best articulate these views include Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey*;
  Osman Çetin*, Anadoluda İslamiyetin Yayılışı* (Istanbul: Marifet Yayınları, 1990); Stanford Shaw,
  History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976);
  Justin McCarthy, *Death and Exile: The Ethnic Cleansing of Ottoman Muslims, 1821-1922* (London:
  Darwin Press, 1996). For a discussion on the historical challenges of comparing the concepts of
  tolerance in the European and Ottoman contexts, see Aron Rodrigue, "Difference and Tolerance in the
  Ottoman Empire: An Interview with Aron Rodrigue." Interview by Nancy Reynolds. *Stanford
  Electronic Humanities Review* 5, No. 1. http://web.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-1/text/rodrigue.html.
[46] Cemal Kafadar, *Between Two Worlds: The Construction of the Ottoman State*, 76.

the lines between Sunni and Shi'a Muslim confessional groups, brought in large part —

but not exclusively — by the Ottoman-Safavid wars of the sixteenth century. During the

seventeenth century, the process of articulating and enforcing a Sunni orthodoxy entailed

multiple actors and went through different phases.[47] Efforts towards "Sunnitization"

entered another phase in the nineteenth century, with new attention to the issues of

confessional boundaries and social disciplining. The reform edicts of 1839 and 1856 gave

new political power to millet leaders, creating clearer political lines between Christians

and Muslims, but inter-confessional dynamics on the ground still escaped the simple

characterization of a nationalist historiography of an "Ottoman yoke" in which the state

ceaselessly oppressed non-Muslims in the nineteenth century.[48] A major goal of this

dissertation will be to show similarities between state confession-building projects in the

early modern and modern periods. I will discuss this history and the historiographical

problems in much greater detail in the next chapter.

   In recent years, studies on the connection between imperial and religious politics

in the Ottoman Empire have engaged with the concept of confessionalization. This term

was coined by Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling in the 1970s to describe the

intertwined roles of religion and politics in the development of early-modern Europe.

Following the medieval period of an interwoven church-state relationship, confessions

defined their differences in Europe's competitive political world. On the heels of the

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[47] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*; Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization: A Historiographical Discussion," *Turcica* 44 (2012-2013): 301-338.

[48] Rodrigue, "Difference and Tolerance in the Ottoman Empire"; Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th-20th cc.)," in *Altrusism and Imperialism: The Western Religious and Cultural Missionary Enterprise in the Middle East*. Paper presented at Middle East Institute Conference (Bellagio, Italy, 2000).

Reformation, Catholic and Protestant identities consolidated both as a set of doctrinal beliefs and as allegiance to a Catholic or Protestant ruler. Schilling refers to an alliance between religious and political authorities to socially discipline subjects. Reinhard focuses on the social level and the reification of doctrinal and ritual difference between Catholics and Protestants.[49]

Tijana Krstić and Derin Terzioğlu have made important contributions to this discussion by suggesting that the concept of confessionalization and the historiography it has generated in the context of early modern European history could help Ottomanists pose important research questions about early modern Ottoman religious politics. Krstić started this debate on Ottoman confessionalization with her 2009 article "Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," followed by her 2011 monograph "Contested Conversions to Islam."[50] Terzioğlu developed this issue within her research areas of early modern piety and state-building politics. She suggested the term "Sunnitization" as an alternative to confessionalization to describe Ottoman state efforts to institutionalize the ruling dynasty's form of Islamic belief, although she uses the latter term in her research as well.[51] Both have shown that state efforts towards Sunnitization during an "Age of Confessionalization" changed the notion of a Sunni Muslim

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[49] Heinz Schilling, "Confessionalization: Historical and Scholarly Perspectives of a Comparative and Interdisciplinary Paradigm," in John M. Headley, Hans J. Hillerbrand, Anthony J. Palapas, eds., *Confessionalization in Europe, 1555-1700: Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004), 21-36; Derin Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization," 305.

[50] Tijana Krstić, "Illuminated by the Light of Islam and the Glory of the Ottoman Sultanate: Self-Narratives of Conversion to Islam in the Age of Confessionalization," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 51, No. 1 (2009): 35-63; *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire.*

[51] Terzioğlu, "Where *'Ilm-i Hâl* Meets Catechism: Islamic Manuals of religious instruction in the Ottoman Empire in the Age of Confessionalization," *Past & Present* 220 (2013): 79-114; "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization."

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"orthodoxy" and affected relations between Ottoman Muslims and non-Muslims (as well as European Christians) from the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. Other agents of confessionalization contributed to this process, such as the mosque preachers who led the so-called Kadızadeli movement in the seventeenth century, calling for religious and moral reform in the Empire.[52] Religious sources from this period testify to increased interest in coercive policies of both Sunni and non-Sunni Muslims. This is seen in the genre of *'ilm-i hâl*, which were catechisms of religious instruction, the most widely disseminated texts in the early centuries of the Ottoman world. While these writings seem to have a timeless character, repeating the same points and religious strictures, they were also a discursive field touched by power relations that changed over the centuries. Manuals from the fourteenth century, written when many Balkan Christians converted to Islam, are concerned with the essentials of the faith and intended for a lay audience. Manuals from the seventeenth century are more concerned with divisions in Islam and a "return to piety" in the form of reinforcing *şeria't* and Hanafi law as a source of legitimacy in the Ottoman Empire. There is frequent talk of the impermissibility of "blameworthy innovations" (*bid'at*) such as coffee or coffee-houses and drawing out non-Sunni "heretics" such as Hurûfis that have infiltrated Islam.[53] The process of the state socially disciplining its subjects in a Foucauldian manner was not only a nineteenth-century phenomenon. Governments had these ambitions before their modern-era counterparts launched programs to design and operate society in accordance with scientific laws.[54]

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[52] Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization," 305.

[53] Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 31; Terzioğlu, "Where *'Ilm-i Hâl* Meets Catechism," 85.

[54] James C. Scott describes the "high modernist" schemes of governments as characterized by unwavering confidence in science and technology to reorder the natural and social world. See *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University

They may not have had the totalizing ambitions of the nineteenth century, but their aims were similar.

While state-led confession building initiatives informed much Ottoman domestic policy in the modern period, Terzioğlu and Krstić have shown that the state disciplining its subjects according to "correct" religious practice is not only a modern phenomenon. There are numerous similarities between the sixteenth-century confessionalization programs of warning subject populations against Shi'a Islam and nineteenth-century attempts to marginalize Bektashi and Alevi Muslims. The meaning of being "people of the Sunna" may have changed across the centuries and had different significations in different political, economic, military, and communicative situations from the classical Ottoman era to the modern era. Yet the goals of confessionalization remained the same.[55] The state desired to achieve greater politico-religious integration in the face of sixteenth-century Safavid threats, much as it desired to consolidate manpower in Eastern Anatolia against Russian and Iranian threats of the nineteenth century.

iv. The Public Sphere and the Global Print Sphere

Religious polemics between Christians and Muslims were often written in times of heightened inter-religious tensions, such as the Byzantine-Arab wars in the eight and ninth centuries or the Crusades of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries,[56] but it was the

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Press, 1999).

[55] Schilling, "Confessional Europe." Schilling describes confessionalization as "an alliance between religious/political authorities to produce more docile subjects through religious indoctrination and 'social disciplining."

[56] Suliman Bashear. "Polemics and Images of the 'Other': Apocalyptic and other materials on Early Muslim-Byzantine wars: a review of Arabic sources," in M. Bonner, ed, *Arab-Byzantine Relations in Early Islamic Times* (London: Ashgate Variorium, 2005):181-215; John Tolan, *Saracens* (New York:

development of a globally-connected Muslim print sphere in the nineteenth century that

led to their trans-imperial spread. The explosive growth of Ottoman religious polemics in

the mid-nineteenth century owes much to the growth of a print culture from the 1860s

onward. The center of Ottoman publishing activity was in Istanbul, the location of the

majority of Turkish-language printing presses. Following the inauguration of the 1839

Tanzimat Reforms (1839-1876), the need for far-reaching book production came about in

response to the growing number of primary and secondary schools in the Empire. Many

private printing presses opened in Istanbul during Abdülaziz's reign. The Istanbul print

culture continued to expand in the Hamidian era, in which a multi-lingual press

flourished due to the presence of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Greek, French, English,

Armeno-Turkish, and Karamanlı (Greco-Turkish) print houses.[57] Istanbul was also the

center of Islamic learning for Ottoman Turkish speakers, the social group out of which

many Muslim polemicists came.[58]

　　The effect of religious polemics in the nineteenth century must be understood in

the context of the global print sphere. Print culture and the Ottoman public sphere that

grew parallel to it cannot be separated from Ottoman religious polemics since they were

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Columbia University Press, 2002).

[57] Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa:* Une controverse islamo-chretienne dans la press d'Istanbul (1883)." In *Querelles privees et contestations publiques. Le role de la presse dans la formation de l'opinion publique au Proche Orient*, eds. Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika, and Michael Ursinus (Istanbul: Isis, 2003.) 55-98.

[58] The ability for these polemics to be distributed across the empire owed largely to the vigorous Turkish print culture that arose in the nineteenth century. Literary journals appeared in Egypt and Turkey in the 1790s through the mediation of the French. In Istanbul the French embassy installed a press in 1795, and in Egypt the French published *al-Tanbîh*, the first newspaper in Arabic, at the turn of the nineteenth century. See Elisabeth Kendall, "Between Politics and Literature: Journals in Alexandria and Istanbul at the End of the Nineteenth Century," in *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Fawaz, C.A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 331.

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key figures in the promulgation of these technologies and the textual communities that emerged with them. Many worked in imperial Ottoman printing office (*Matbaa-i Âmire*) or led state-sanctioned print shops. Here several problematic issues exist in the secondary literature. The modern era saw the spread of printing presses, newspapers, periodicals, and mass-market books from Europe into the Middle East. Much of the historiography of the printing revolution in Europe, in particular that of Elizabeth Eisenstein, names the printing press as the technological agent in the dissemination of ideas that challenged the traditional religious establishment in Europe and elsewhere.[59] This idea has been criticized by Chartier, and it would be a similar mistake to consider the development of print as a secular challenge to the established religious order of the Ottoman Empire.[60] Nile Green argues that such a view has influenced the historiography of Muslim printing to search for corresponding "modern" reactions to the impact of print on traditional religious forms and the rejection of social hierarchy.[61] I will further address these antiquated approaches of the Middle East print sphere in Chapters Two and Three.

Another antiquated narrative of the press's evolution in the Middle East argued that after the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, the French-established printing presses promulgated ideas of secularism, irrevocably leading to Mehmet Ali's Westernization of the state and bureaucracy, then Ottoman reform edicts of the Tanzimat, and, ultimately, the secular apotheosis of the Turkish Revolution. Print impacted traditional religious and

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[59] Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1979).
[60] Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987).
[61] For an overview of the traditional approach to the issue and cogent critique of it, see Nile Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen: Travel, Transculture, and Technology in the Origins of Muslim Printing," *IJMES* 41 (2009): 203-224.

epistemological forms by means of privatizing reading, rejecting traditional religious authority, and causing the emergence of individualizing religious trends.[62] This teleological approach is not largely operative among scholars, but after-effects linger in Ottoman studies. The ulema have been characterized as an obstacle to development or passive mouthpieces of imperial policy. This characterization ignores the trans-regional Muslims and evangelical Protestants that moved between empires and constructed a less familiar form of a modern print sphere.[63]

The issue of "public sphere" is closely interwoven with any discussion of the modern-era print sphere, and here again several problematic issues arise in the context of the Middle East. Jürgen Habermas' legacy still imbues this term with a particular meaning attached to a fixed moment in time and space. Habermas' definition of the term requires a democratic-bourgeois constitution in which a free civil society is demarcated from state control and private persons can influence public opinion via literary journalism. These discursive areas are outside of direct state control and allow the citizenry to debate public concerns. It involves a diverse population with various interests to form public opinion.[64] Much of these criteria are crafted for the particular conditions of eighteenth-century Europe, and under such a definition they ostensibly could not apply to the Hamidian-era Ottoman Empire due to its autocratic character and press censorship laws. Many critics have noticed the limits of this Habermasian definition and have modified it to

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[62] Juan R. I. Cole, "Printing and Urban Islam in the Mediterranean World, 1890-1920, in *Modernity & Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean*, ed. Leila Tarazi Fawaz and Christopher A. Bayly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[63] Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen," 210.

[64] Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger, Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989).

accommodate other political contexts. Pfeiffer and Bevilacqua write that turquerie, the

European interest in an emulation of Ottoman culture between 1650 and 1750, was a

response to an increase in the movement of Ottoman ideas and goods. Everything from

coffee, music, and manuscripts traveled from Ottoman to European lands.[65] In Peter Van

der Veer's description of the formation of political modernity in British colonial India and

England, secularism is not one of its defining features. The location of both religion and

secularity are related to the emergence of a public sphere that is relatively independent of

the state. In his model, intellectual, and political modernity is not coequal to the rise of

secularization at the expense of religion; these forms of modernity can be compatible

with religion.[66] José Casanova agrees, stating that political modernization does not

require the removal of religion from the public sphere. Instead, religion and secularity

can be proven complimentary, if the former can engage the public sphere by accepting

the inviolable right to privacy, freedom of conscience, and permission for its subjects to

engage in rational debate.[67] They do not exist in mutually exclusive spheres, nor can they,

since the ambition of the secular state is to regulate all aspects of individual life, thus

turning these three phenomena into political phenomena. To paraphrase Van Der Veer, the

modern phenomenon of nationalism does not mitigate religion but finds its rooting within

religious identifications transformed to accommodate the reality of the modern nation-

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[65] Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer, "Turquerie: Culture in Motion, 1650-1750," *Past & Present* 221 (November 2013): 75-118.

[66] Peter van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); *Religious Nationalism: Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

[67] José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 1994), 57.

state.[68]

Major figures in the Ottoman public sphere in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were part of a group of peripatetic writers and activists; as such, theirs was a print world that existed on the local, state, and trans-imperial levels. Ahmet Midhat worked as a newspaper editor in the *Vilâyet-i Tuna* (Vilayet of the Danube in modern-day Romania), Istanbul, and Baghdad. Abdülahad Davûd studied in Iran, England, France, Italy, and the Ottoman Empire. They took inspiration from Islamic ideologues such as Jamal al-din al-Afghani (d. 1897), who answered Western criticisms of Islam in European and Middle Eastern languages. Adeeb Khalid has described this nineteenth-century flow of ideas across borders as a global Islamic Republic of Letters. He analyzes this public sphere as a trans-imperial phenomenon, rather than one arbitrarily contained by state borders. The concurrent developments of an international press and attempts by Muslim intellectuals across the Islamic world to reconcile religious belief with discourses of intellectual modernity turned confessional identity into a trans-imperial issue.[69] This sphere reached its most articulated form through the expression of the collective identity of Pan-Islam. It was a specific historical phenomenon related to the Age of Empire (the half-century before World War I) and connected to contemporary concerns of various groups in different Muslim societies.[70]

Pan-Islam was a form of anti-colonial rhetoric whose exact nature has come under

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[68] Van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism.*
[69] The trans-imperial nature of the confessional debates already in the early modern period is signaled in Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, and E. Natalie Rothman, *Brokering Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2011).
[70] Adeeb Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in practice: The rhetoric of Muslim unity and its uses," in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, 203.

significant scholarly debate. Across the world, Muslim scholars and activists spread ideas

of religious solidarity and a united Muslim counter-attack against European domination.[71]

It was primarily an urban intellectual project than never coalesced into any serious

political project, but Muslim politicians believed its rhetoric could be harnessed to shore

up political support within their domains. In the late nineteenth century Sultan

Abdülhamit II tapped into this sentiment. He emphasized his role as the protector of

Mecca and Medina, which the Ottomans conquered in 1517, along with the custodianship

of the pilgrimage. He reinvigorated the language of the caliphate, speaking a language of

global Muslim political unity. He sought to legitimize his power in the face of European

colonial encroachment on Muslim lands, stretching from North Africa to Southeast

Asia.[72]

But whatever Ottoman state usages of Pan-Islamic discourse, it was a

heterogenous phenomenon comprised of different strains that must be taken into account

to understand its usage by the politicians and the polemicists that appear in this

dissertation. I build on recent work by Adeeb Khalid, James Meyer, Lale Can, and Nile

Green that challenge the thesis of Pan-Islam being a coherent state policy promoted by

intellectuals and used by all parties with the same meaning. Pan-Islam was first coined in

1870s Europe to describe anti-modernism rooted in the fanaticism of Muslims. Colonial

officials perceived Islamic renewal movements as a global threat. They became terrified

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[71] Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[72] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1998), 166. Deringil argues that this rhetoric was a reaction to a legitimacy crisis of the Empire in its troubled decades following the reign of Mahmud II, not calls for any serious political global unification of Muslims. It was a struggle to overcome the "legitimacy deficit" that accrued as the state permeated society on a larger scale in the modern period.

of its perceived dangers.[73] Muslim intellectuals criticized this meaning of the term. Halil

Hâlid, a Turkish polemicist whom I will give greater attention to in Chapter 5, wrote in

1907 in *The Crescent versus The Cross* that Pan-Islamism was a political discourse

created by Europe and projected onto the Islamic world to justify its political and

economic expansion into Asia and Africa.[74]

I approach Pan-Islam with Khalid's description of the term as a modern historical

phenomenon that emerged in the decades prior to World War I rather than as a historical

movement rooted in Islam. It was connected to the political and social concerns of groups

in Muslim societies around the world. New modalities of transportation and

communication forged new conceptions of space and time as Muslims learned to operate

in a global arena, which they dubbed the "Muslim world" (*al-'âlam al-islâmî*).

Steamships, railways, and industrial communication reshaped formulations of language,

history, and geography.[75] But far from being a unified political program, it was a complex

phenomenon whose parts need to be understood separately. Khalid identifies two distinct

strains of Pan-Islam: first, the state Pan-Islam of the Ottoman Empire that Abdülhamit II

used to articulate his basis of legitimacy as the leader of the sole remaining independent

Muslim state in the age of high colonialism; second, the public pan-Islam that has its

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[73] In Egypt, Lord Cromer banned pan-Islamist journals such as the Paris-published *al-'Urwa al-Wuthqa* (The Firmest Bond). Such propaganda also influenced Moroccan urban resistance to French colonialism in the early twentieth century. The British struggled with the Khilafat movement in India, which they perceived to be catalyzed by Pan-Islamist rhetoric. See Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jama ad-Din 'al-Afghani* (Berkeley, 1968); Malcolm Kerr, *Islamic Reform: The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad 'Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley, 1966); *Islam and the European Empires*, ed. David Motadel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 23-24.

[74] Halil Hâlid, *The Crescent vs. The Cross* (London: 1907), 72-76.

[75] Nile Green, "Spacetime and the Muslim Journey West: Industrial Communications in the Making of the "Muslim World," *American Historical Review* 118, No. 2 (April 2013): 401-429.

origins in "the creation of a trans-national public sphere in which Muslim publications and Muslim elites circulated in greater numbers than ever before." This Pan-Islamism was a constructed phenomena defined by an external threat.[76]

The polemicists in this dissertation used discourses of public Pan-Islam to address contemporary political concerns and connect to a print-based public that transcended political boundaries. Lale Can's 2012 dissertation follows these themes in her study on Pan-Islamic unity that emerged with the growth of the Ottoman-Central Asian pilgrimage network in the late nineteenth century. Print and transportation technologies brought Central Asians into closer contact with the Ottoman Empire. These forms of direct contact, coupled with the Ottoman state's promotion of its spiritual and temporal authority over the worldwide Islamic community, created Pan-Islamic ties between these Muslim groups. It was not due to a cohesive doctrine promulgated from Istanbul and transmitted in an unaltered form to Muslims outside the Ottoman Empire.[77] Similar to other collective identities of the time such as Pan-Turkism, the rhetoric of Pan-Islam is better understood as a means of employing religious identity to appeal to select audiences and readerships.[78]

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[76] Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in practice," 201-203.

[77] Lale Can, *Trans-Imperial Trajectories: Pilgrimage, Pan-Islam, and Ottoman-Central Asian Relations, 1865-1914* (PhD diss.: New York University, 2012).

[78] James Meyer, *Turks Across Empire: Marketing Muslim Identity in the Russian-Ottoman Borderlands, 1856-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 12-20. Meyer takes similar issue with scholarly understandings of Pan-Turkism, a similarly contested term. He challenges this ideology as the primary analytical framework for relations between Muslims of the Ottoman Empire and Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Famous Pan-Turkists activists Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and İsmail Gasprinski were a group of trans-imperial Muslims credited by older studies as fathers of Turkish nationalism prior to the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923. They were publishers and activists involved in organizing for the *İttifâk* movement, an "all-Russian Muslim" political organization they helped to found in 1905. But Meyer argues that they invoked pan-Turkist discourse as a means of employing national religious identity in order to accomplish practical tasks instead of a ethnic or religious program with trans-imperial political goals. They marketed a "pan-Turkic brand" to

The Ottoman public sphere was characteristic of an imperial power with a diverse

population, battling issues of inter-confessional and intra-confessional tension under the

watchful eye of state surveillance,[79] but it was still an empire with its own unique

features. As Johann Strauss has noted, the Ottoman public sphere was primarily

composed of Muslims on one side, who were polyglot, aware of the Islamic press in Iran,

India, and Egypt, and non-Turkish press in its capital; and missionaries on the other, who

were multilingual, highly educated, extensively traveled, and aware of Oriental

scholarship. The foreign missionaries also wrote for a global Protestant readership.

Therefore the Ottoman Empire must also be studied on his own terms in conjugation with

other regions. While research in the social sciences has noted the blurred lines between

writing and speech, and that literacy is practiced in different domains, I will show in the

next chapter that the Christian and Muslim readership of religious polemics was highly

educated and their interaction formed a unique historical product.[80]

v. Modernity

Connected with public sphere, confessionalization, and the nineteenth-century

missionary perspectives is the concept of modernity, the final issue that I will discuss in

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appeal to select audiences. Akçura, Ağaoğlu, and Gasprinski all edited and published newspapers during this period. Meyer argues that Pan-Turkism was more of a publishing strategy to draw in Muslim readers from the Ottoman Empire and Russia than any sort of serious program of state-building.

[79] See Nadir Ozbek's "Defining the Public Sphere during the Late Ottoman Empire: War, Mass Mobilization and the Young Turk Regime, (1908–18)," *Middle Eastern Studies* 43, No. 5 (Sept. 2007): 795 – 809; Ömer Çaha & M. Lutfullah Karaman, "Civil Society in the Ottoman Empire," *Journal of Economic and Social Research* 8, no 2 (2006): 53-81.

[80] Brian Street, *Literacy in Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); Niko Besnier, *Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009). Alan Mikhail and Christine M. Philliou, "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, No. 4 (2012): 725-732.

this section. This is a problematic term for contemporary scholars of the Ottoman Empire, and everywhere else, as it has broad, divergent meanings. For the purposes of this study I use three typologies of modernity to describe reform projects in the arenas of politics, intellectual movements, and religious movements. The first usage of modernity refers to a political program of reform traditionally described by historians as a Weberian teleological process in which Ottomans abandoned Islamic approaches to jurisprudence, law, and education in favor of secularization. Modernity was a space-and-time bound phenomenon that first evolved in Western Europe, then spread to other parts of the world through human and textual contacts. Power and prestige were no longer connected to discourses rooted in Islamic authoritative sources such as the Qur'an or *şeria't*. This is the conclusion of Bernard Lewis, who conceived of late Ottoman society as motivated to win the respect of Europe by conforming to Western cultural and organizational patterns.[81] He and Roderic Davidson faulted Ottoman reforms as a half-accomplished Europeanization program.[82] This simplistic trajectory has been challenged for its mitigation of religion in the role of Ottoman reform, or ignoring the possibility that Ottoman reformers could use modernity for their own goals, but many nineteenth-century European critics of the Ottoman Empire and some Ottoman state officials themselves used the term "modernity" with this meaning in mind.[83] Therefore, I will only use this archaic understanding of modernity when challenging its historiographical use or quoting original sources.

The second usage of modernity describes intellectual movements such as

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[81] Bernard Lewis, *The Emergence of Modern Turkey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961).

[82] Roderic Davidson, *Reform in the Ottoman Empire, 1856-1876* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[83] Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *American Historical Review* 107, No. 3 (June 2002): 768-796.

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rationalism and positivism in which autonomous human agency could shape the future. This usage appears frequently in Christian and Muslim polemics to criticize the other side as being ignorant or traditionalist for rejecting such an outlook. It also appears in polemicists' references to human rights, education, liberal democracy, and religious freedoms; whether Fatma Aliye deliberating as to whether polygamy is a modern or retrograde institution for women, or German missionary S.W. Koelle lauding Britain for its humane, modern treatment of non-Christians in its colonies. I will use this meaning frequently when discussing these authors' approaches to social and religious reform. Recent studies have argued for a connection between Islam of this era and liberal values of the West. Cemal Aydin challenges the idea that the anti-Westernism of the Ottoman Empire and the Muslim world prior to World War One was a religious or political reaction against the democratic and liberal values of the West. Rather, the intellectual anti-Western discourse was a reaction to the legitimacy crisis of a Eurocentric global polity in the age of high imperialism. While Muslim intellectuals did react against European colonialism in this period, I argue that religion provided a vocabulary for Ottoman reforms to take place on their own terms rather than only reactionary sentiments against European-inspired social and political reform.[84]

Modernity's third meaning applies to reforms in the study of Christian and Muslim scripture. "Modern biblical studies" refers to European scholars reconstructing biblical texts and meanings of Christian Scripture; modern Islamic scholarship refers to Muslim scholars attempting to reconcile Islamic theology with the aforementioned

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[84] Cemal Aydin*, The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 63-64.

intellectual movements. Muslim polemicists such as Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî used

modern biblical studies to argue the weak textual integrity of the Bible. This third

meaning is not used by the authors themselves, as they saw no serious rupture between

their modern-era beliefs and those of their medieval and early modern predecessors, but I

use it to describe religious scholarship particular to the late nineteenth and early twentieth

centuries. At this time critical studies of the Bible took an increasingly secular approach

toward questions of the origin and composition of the Bible, which challenged traditional

approaches to the scripture as inerrant.[85]

Regardless of its problematic nature, modernity is a term that must be dealt with

as many Ottoman intellectuals of the late Empire internalized various discourses of

modernity, which shall be explained later in this chapter. I define these typologies of

modernity within a broad framework so as to avoid a narrow understanding that

implicitly conflates the term with Westernization, which would frame Islamic reform in

terms of passive reception of European intellectual diffusion. A significant literature on

modernity has argued that it is not reducible to cultural norms or economic development.

Modernity is described as a phenomenon that understands the future as mutable,

transforms tradition, and selectively chooses cultural forms from the past in order to

produce new cultural forms. This description of modernity opposes the classical

modernization theory of the 1960s that saw the process as marching victoriously against

all traditional forms.[86]

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[85] Willian Yarchin, ed, *History of Biblical Interpretation: A Reader* (Grand Rapids, Baker Academic, 2011).

[86] Timothy Mitchell, "The Stages of Modernity," in Timothy Mitchell, ed., *Questions of Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000); Arif Dirlik, "Is There History after Eurocentrism? Globalism, Postcolonialism, and the Disavowal of History," in Arif Dirlik, Vinay Bahl, and Peter Gran,

Understanding the experience of modernity outside the West is to understand how reform-minded Ottoman intellectuals approached issues of "Westernization," "civilization," and "rationalism" and applied them to their particular social milieus without shedding their own cultural identity. Keith Watenpaugh addresses similar problems in his discussion of the production of cultural modernity in twentieth-century Syria in *Being Modern in the Middle East*. Behind the reproduction of the trappings of European fashions and manners, it was a home-grown phenomenon that did not depend on an intellectual transfer from the West or the goal of reaching material and institutional equivalence with Europe. Accounts of modernization that privilege a linear narrative of "Westernization" characterized Ottoman and Middle East reform efforts purely as a reaction to the West.[87] To transcend this narrative, I argue along the lines of Watenpaugh that modernity should be understood as a lived historical experience that drew and redrew concepts of religion, individualism, liberty, gender, and piety. The Christian and Muslim polemicists under consideration in this dissertation asserted their modernity by incorporating into their religious ideas what they believed to be the cultural, ideological, and social praxis of contemporary metropolitan culture. They considered themselves distinct from religious reactionaries that rejected ideas about rationality, individuality, equality, and human rights. But these polemicists also rejected atheists or agnostics without a theistic matrix to structure these modern ideas.

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eds. *History After the Three Worlds: Post Eurocentric Historiographies* (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 25; S.M. Eisenstadt, "Multiple Modernities," *Daedalus* 129, No. 1 (Winter 2000), 3. Eisenstadt describes modernity as a multiplicity of cultural programs that have in common a belief that society can be transformed by conscious human activity and a "conception of the future characterized by a number of possibilities realizable through autonomous human agency."

[87] Keith David Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 11-13.

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Ottoman modernity in the nineteenth century was a localized occurrence but one that also existed in a trans-imperial Eurasian intellectual network. The Ottoman experience was a complex historical process dependent on local factors that created a unique historical experience of modernity. It was more than the consequence of economic and social integration with global capitalism. The experience of modernity for those outside of the West transcended colonial and postcolonial acts of imitation. But within this localized experienced authors consciously negotiated for themselves the issues of capitalism, urban life, religious reform, education, and liberalism with an eye toward Western Europe, the United States, and even East Asia. My study addresses the challenge that Timothy Mitchell and Watenpaugh pose, to "find a way to theorize the question of modernity that relocates it within a global context, and at the same time, enables that context to complicate, rather than simply reverse, the narrative logic of modernization."[88] While Europe takes a crucial position in the discussion of modernization, framing the Ottoman Empire as existing as an immature geography, waiting to be awakened by the West, is no more useful. This formulation echoes the anthropological problem that Johannes Fabian has called, in his famous phrase, the denial of coevalness, "a persistent and systematic tendency to place the referent(s) of anthropology in a time other than the present of the producer of anthropological discourse."[89]

Fabian addresses the problems of European imperialist readings of non-Western lands, but his analysis is lacking in describing the encounter between Ottoman Muslims

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[88] Timothy Mitchell, "The Stage of Modernity," 7, Watenpaugh, 11.

[89] Johannes Fabian, *Time and Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983). Fabian means by "coevalness" a sharing of time that is "not given but must be accomplished [and can be denied]." Thus Europeans see its colonized others as inhabiting cultural gardens or ethnic ghettos that are anachronistic and discontinuous.

and Protestant missionaries. While Western missionaries, travelers, and pilgrims perceived a stagnant Islamic empire relegated to a timeless past, waiting to be redeemed through Christian modernization, they had more than one sense of time. Makdisi notes that the struggle between Protestant missionaries and Ottoman residents in nineteenth-century Syria was a struggle between sacred and secular time. Missionaries fused sacred and secular temporalities. The sacred temporality was an evangelical sense of time defined by a desire for unilateral revival of the past to achieve a Christian present. They were convinced they would harness nineteenth-century Western political and economic expansion for the purposes of evangelism. Missionaries also inhabited a secular temporality by appreciating the usefulness of modern medicine, print technology, and scientific education to attract potential converts and grow their missionary enterprise.[90]

If Muslims, missionaries, and Western imperial agents conceived of different forms of modernity, then what is modernity at its most fundamental level? First, it is a transformation from within, not without. The analysis of Christian and Muslim polemicists in the Ottoman Empire and the unique approach to religion that sprang up from this debate shows that a measure of local adaptation exists regarding modernity. It is what Marshall G.S. Hodgson calls "a cultural transformation *sui generis*.[91] But it must have an element of transnational intelligibility to be recognized as modern. It is a color with different shades; an architectural style adorned with local ornamentation.

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[90] Ussama Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity," *American Historical Review* 102, No. 3 (June 1997): 680-713.

[91] Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* vol. 2, *The Expansion of Islam in the Middle Period* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 375. Hodgson notes that modernity is crucially distinctive not for being the emancipation from custom or the unfolding of progress toward a Western bent but its transformative nature in parts of the world far from its origin. It is a distinct cultural transformation.

The most fundamental level of modernity, as demonstrated by the polemical writers discussed in this dissertation, is questioning and disregarding forms of the past – whether a medieval exegesis of scripture or the exclusive use of holy books in religious polemics – and incorporating a specific but mutable corpus of practices and ideas. These ideas had to be observable and reproducible, through the means of venues that Watenpaugh lists as newspapers, Western consumer goods, and schools to perform one's modernity.[92] To this list I add rational philosophy and historical critical methods of analysis. Both Christian and Muslim writers embraced ideas that could have caused fear or outrage among their contemporaries or intellectual predecessors. Both Karl Pfander and Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî embraced notions of moral and material progress, even if they disagreed as to which religion best expressed these progressive values.

In the course of this dissertation, while examining the polemical writings themselves, I will use a more narrow definition of modernity. For the sake of clarity, I shall define the term as the polemicists did. The term they use to express the set of concepts that include manners, moral conduct, industrialization, liberalism, cosmopolitanism, rationalist epistemology, meritocracy, and individualism is "civilized" (*medenî*) or "civilization" (*medenîyet*). Christian and Muslim polemicists both used this term to express an embrace of progress and independent inquiry to question forms of the past. They claimed that their religion alone supported technological, scientific, and moral progress. Civilization was the leitmotif of their arguments and the standard by which religious truths were judged as useful or harmful. They accepted the innovations of

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[92]   Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East*, 16.

modernization and expressed a commitment to modernity. But it was a mutable concept, as writers used it to accommodate the particular features of their religion as it existed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. S.W. Koelle considered Christianity's civilizational superiority in terms of imperial power, in which he claimed it stood "highest in the scale of nations," while Muslims in Arabia were stuck in the same "semi-barbarous" level as they were in the seventh century. Modern civilization, he wrote, was an axial barrier defined by the West. Muslim writers such as Ahmet Midhat and Fatma Aliye resisted the political and cultural hegemony of Europe and decoupled progress from Westernization or Christianization. They did not equate civilization with warships, railroad lines, or telegraph networks.

The influence of Ottoman forms of modernity in this period can be seen in the new approaches to Islamic law. With the challenge to traditional religious structures in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, the state responded with regulation and control. Selim Deringil describes this process through his research on conversion to Islam and apostasy from Islam. In previous centuries, conversion to Islam was a means by which individuals and communities could secure their political or material interests by demonstrating their loyalty to the Ottoman Empire. As the nineteenth century went on, conversion was no longer sufficient to guarantee one's subjecthood or property rights. Tied in with conversion to Islam were questions of loyalty to the state. Apostasy, likewise, was no longer merely a violation of Islamic law punishable by death. It represented a deleterious insult to Ottoman solidarity due to the increasing fusion of

ethnic and religious identity in the late Empire.[93] But as I will show in Chapter 2, European diplomatic pressure on the Ottoman government prevented officially sanctioned executions for apostasy from taking place. As a result, the state increasingly approached instances of Muslim conversion to Christianity in an ad hoc manner, mixing the rhetoric of classical Islamic law with emerging discourses of human rights and individual liberty.

While Ottoman Muslim polemicists acknowledged that the Ottoman Empire imitated Europe in scientific and literary innovations, they argued that the West lacked civilization's moral component. Christian Europe was riddled with prostitution and fornication, harming women who had no legal recourse to separate from their husbands, as opposed to Islam, which offered more flexible divorce laws or at least allowed them to retain their position as wives through polygamy. Fatma Aliye and Mahmud Es'ad explored these issues in detail in the Turkish press during the Hamidian era. They noted Europe's hypocrisy of trumpeting the values of liberty, equality, and human rights but denying these same values to Muslims in their colonies, such as in the 1842 massacre of Kabul in the Anglo-Afghan War. Civilization to these Muslim authors was a moral outlook that embraced Enlightenment values of freedom, reason, and religious tolerance but was fully compatible with Islam.

Sources Used and Outline of Dissertation

This dissertation explores many themes and offers multiple avenues for research. I will describe here which avenues I have chosen to explore and, more importantly, which I

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[93] Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

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avoided. Due to the extensive historiography on Ottoman state imperial legitimation in the nineteenth century, I have chosen not to review this historiography in my work.[94] With the exception of Chapter One, which includes the historical background of Protestant missionary involvement in the Ottoman Empire and the development of their missionary strategy in the Middle East over the long nineteenth century, I am more concerned with the Ottoman polemics themselves, newspaper articles that reviewed these sources, personal writings from the polemicists, and state archives that provide insight into official views of these literary activities.

The primary sources for this dissertation are the polemical works of foreign missionaries and Ottoman Christians and Muslims. They include Karl Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk* (The Balance of Truth, 1829, 1862); al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, (The Revelation of Truth, 1867); Harputî İshak's *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* (The Light of Truth, 1862) and *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* (The Light of Hearts, 1880); Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle's "Food For Reflection" (1865); Ahmet Midhat's *Müdâfa'a* (The Defense, 1883) and *Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele ve Mükâbele'ye Müdâfa'a* (A Reply to the Defense and a Defense of the Reply, 1883); Sırrı Pasha's *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ Li Men İstehdâ* (Light of God for Those Seeking Guidance, 1871); Halil Hâlid's *The Crescent vs. the Cross?* (1907); Abdülahad Davûd's *İncîl ve Salîb* (The New Testament and the Cross, 1913); Ohannes Kirkorian's *Üç Mü Bir Mi? Yahut Hristyianların Salûs-ı Şerîfi,* (Three or One? or The Christians' Noble Trinity, 1913); and Hasan Sabri's *İkazu'l Mü'minin fi Reddi's-Salibin* (A Warning to Believers in

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94 Some of these studies include Kemal Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of the Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains;* and Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review* 107, No. 3 (June 2002): 768-796.

Repudiating the Cross, 1915). These works were obtained in Istanbul from the Süleymaniye and Millet Kütüphanesi research library manuscript collections, along with the general collection of the Center for Islamic Studies (İSAM).

The Turkish polemics of the late Ottoman period have been almost completely ignored by Ottomanists as a historical source, with the exception of Mehmet Aydın in his *Müslümanların Hıristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları*.[95] One Ottoman polemicist who has been the focus of many historical studies is Ahmed Midhat due to his impact on Turkish literature. However, the importance of his polemics *Müdâfa'a* and *Müdâfa'a'ya Mükâbele ve Mükâbele'ye Müdâfa'a*, which were a sensation in the Ottoman Empire and other Muslim lands for decades, has been mostly neglected by scholars, with the exception of Johann Strauss. Ahmet Midhat himself has been not taken seriously by many Turkish historians until recently due to the view that he was merely a surrogate for Abdülhamit II and obsequious defender of his "conservative" policies.[96]

Turkish-language polemics of the early modern era have received more attention in recent years. Krstić has shown in her research on Ottoman self-narratives of conversion to Islam, which began to appear during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520-

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[95] Mehmet Aydın, *Müslümanların Hristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları* (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1998).

[96] Abdulhamit Kirmizi, "Authoritarianism and Constitutionalism Combined: Ahmed Midhat Efendi Between the Sultan and the *Kanun-i Esasi*," in *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy,* eds. *Christoph* Herzog and Malek Sharif (Würzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2010), 61. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was the director of the Matbaa-i Amire and sent by Abdulhamit II to international events in Stockholm and Paris. He was an autocratic loyalist who believed in "legal autocracy" in which the government problems spread from corrupt bureaucrats who obstructed ruler's true intentions. Although he was the most popular Ottoman novelist and encyclopedist of the nineteenth century, this support of Hamidian policy has made Ahmet Midhat Efendi a figure of disinterest in the Turkish historiography, particularly before the 1980s, the heyday of Kemalist-influenced Ottoman historiography.

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1566), that converts used anti-Christian polemics to define boundaries and membership of their religious communities and articulate Ottoman imperial identity. One such author was a Hungarian convert to Islam Murad b. Abdullah, who penned a treatise in Ottoman Turkish and later in Latin, which he wrote for a Western Christian readership in order to convert them to Islam.[97] I will survey more research on early modern Ottoman polemics in the next chapter and connect this research to the late Ottoman period. I will also argue that lines of continuity between early-modern and modern religious polemics are stronger than most scholars acknowledge.

I will supplement the polemical works mentioned above with Ottoman Turkish print journals such as *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat, Tasvîr-i Efkâr, Ma'lumât, İbret* and *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*. Many Muslim polemicists premiered their writings in these journals or used the same journals to denounce their interlocutors. These press organs also had important influence on the Ottoman Turkish language. As I discuss in more detail in Chapters Two and Three, these papers were written in a simplified Ottoman in contrast to the more literary polemical monographs or state correspondence in order to reach a larger Muslim audience. They were often the mouthpieces of specific political and intellectual movements, and analyzing these papers is useful for understanding the diversity of ideological factions in Istanbul and their motivations for opposing foreign missionaries. *İbret* was the mouthpiece of the Young Ottomans in the 1870s and called on government reform filtered through Islamic legal and social considerations. *Sebîlü'r-reşad* was the

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[97] Tijana Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 99-102. Murad b. Abdullah's self-narrative took on the particular contours of early modern humanist scholarship, when authors of various Christian and Islamic confessional identities argued for the truth of their religion in light of original sources and scriptural languages.

mouthpiece of late Ottoman Islamism. I obtained these papers from collections in İSAM and the Hakkı Tarık Us Collection, currently kept at the Beyazit State Library in Istanbul and digitized by a joint project between the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and the Beyazit State Library.

Administrative correspondence from the Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (The Ottoman Archives of the Prime Minister's Office) in Istanbul contains crucial sources for examining state attitudes toward religious conflict and coexistence in the Empire. They report on violence and disorder due to the spread of Christian religious polemics in Istanbul and the provinces, as well as on biographical information concerning Muslim polemicists who were state employees. Furthermore, these sources reveal official attitudes toward Christian polemicists, the manner in which foreign diplomats forced the Ottoman government to allow them to continue supporting missionary activity, and the manner in which the government patronized some Muslim polemicists. Many of the documents come from the *Dahiliye Nezareti* (Ministry of Internal Affairs), the *Ma'arif Nezareti* (Ministry of Education) and the *Hariciye Nezareti* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) collections of the archives. The *Hariciye Nezareti* collection in particular contains correspondence between consular officials and the foreign ministry about international controversies concerning Pfander and Koelle.

With regards to missionary sources, I make use of the Church Mission Society (CMS) archives at the University of Birmingham. This archive includes station reports, Christian apologetics, and correspondence between the CMS missionaries and directors at the headquarters in London. These records include all correspondence between Pfander

and his superiors from 1858 to 1865, and Koelle's correspondence from 1862 to 1880. In addition to describing the missionaries' impetus for writing religious polemics, these records also describe relations between Muslim scholars and other foreign missionary groups, along with the methods by which they distributed their polemics in Istanbul and the nearby provinces. The archive also includes domestic and foreign press accounts of Ottoman polemical controversies, with extracts from publications such as *The Levant Herald*, *The Record*, and *The Daily Telegraph.*

I also make use of ABCFM missionary sources, which came from three research libraries, two of which are still in operation. They include the Archives of the American Board in Istanbul (which ceased operation in 2010), the ABCFM microfilm collection at Bilkent University, and the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT). The Archives of the American Board held a rich holding of nineteenth-century travel accounts, Christian aid agency annual bulletins, and missionary autobiographies. Bilkent University's ABCFM microfilm collection includes hundreds of thousands of pages of internal correspondence of the American Board, tabular views of the field, and letters to the ABCFM headquarters from Christian polemicists such as Henry O. Dwight. ARIT's holdings include copies of missionary publications such as the American Board's *Missionary Herald*, the CMS's *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, and Ottoman Protestant publications such as the Armeno-Turkish newspaper *Avedaper*. These sources describe differences in British, American, and Continental European missionary agencies, and how they interacted with Ottoman society. The British CMS had the explicit goal of converting Muslims to Christianity, while the American ABCFM and French Jesuit

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missions concentrated primarily on Christian groups in the Ottoman Empire.

In order to orient the reader to the main themes in this dissertation, Chapter 1 provides a broad historical outline of Christian-Muslim religious polemical encounters, the Christian missionary establishment in the Ottoman Empire, the development of Ottoman confessionalization, and Muslim-Christian intellectual and literary transfers from the early modern period through the nineteenth century. The purpose of this chapter is to provide historical context to the main themes of this dissertation and challenge assumptions of periodization in Ottoman historiography. Arbitrary divisions between the early modern and modern eras in Ottoman studies typically separate the two eras at 1798 with the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt, blurring lines of continuity further with the 1839 and 1856 reform edicts.[98] As a result, studies treat long-standing social and intellectual developments that found their origin in the sixteenth or seventeenth century as "new" when they re-emerge in the nineteenth. Anti-Bektashi polemics of the 1870s, for example, were written in the context of confessional conflict during Sultan Abdülaziz's reign, but this context shares many features of the sixteenth-century confessional conflict during the Ottoman-Safavid wars, another epoch that produced anti-Bektashi literature. Intellectual commonalities and specificities did not only stretch across the centuries in the Ottoman Empire, but also stretched across the early modern Mediterranean world, connecting England to the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth century, crossing political and cultural boundaries. Andrews and Kalpaklı note these commonalties were found in such

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[98]   Dror Ze'evi, "Back to Napoleon? Thoughts on the Beginning of the Modern Era in the Middle East." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, No. 1 (2004): 73-94.

unexpected places as a shared sociology and spirituality of love.[99]

Chapter 2 explores the conditions that led to the release of *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, the first internationally-renowned Ottoman Muslim polemic of the modern era, and the reasons it became such an instant phenomenon. It also explores contemporary Protestant anti-Islamic books and tracts, Muslim reactions to these missionary works, and state attempts to maintain its image as the defender of Islam while pacifying increasingly loud demands from European diplomats for increased religious freedoms to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the Crimean War. I will contextualize these polemics in light of inclusive state policies of the Tanzimat in which the state bureaucracy crafted a supranational, trans-confessional Ottomanist ideology yet commissioned religious polemics against the beliefs of its own subjects at this time. In particular the chapter notes the integrated understanding between the defense of Islam and the defense of the Ottoman state.

Chapter 3 explores the next stage of this debate in the 1870s, including an analysis of Koelle's "Food for Reflection," Hacı Abdi Bey's 1871 *Îzâhu'l-Merâm fî keşfi'z-zalâm* (The Desire for Elucidation in the Revealing of Darkness), Harputî İshak's 1876 *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* (The Light of Hearts) and other works produced in the wake of al-Kairanawi's *İzhâr u'l-hakk* (The Revelation of Truth). It examines how the content of these debates shifted with the development of the Ottoman print sphere, a contested space in which political imaginaries of the writers revealed themselves. This is particularly clear in the case of Muslim polemicists who wrote against both Christianity and Bektashism or

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[99] Walter Andrews & Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

Alevisim. They saw themselves as defending the religion of the Empire against outside threats, whether it was Protestant missionaries or Alevis with "questionable" loyalty to the state.

Chapter 4 examines the famed debate between Ahmed Midhat and Henry O. Dwight at the dawn of the Hamidian period through the publication of Ahmet Midhat's *Müdâfa'a* and *Müdâfa'a'ya Mükâbele ve Mükâbele'ye Müdâfa'a*. This debate is analyzed as a product of the Ottoman public sphere that was influenced by domestic social issues yet also the result of the intersection between the Pan Islamic public sphere and modern-era evangelical theology. I will demonstrate how this debate had important influence on Ottoman Muslim theology, particularly its approach to non-Muslim holy books, while also devaluing traditional authoritative Islamic sources. Ahmet Midhat preferred to quote European scholars and major nineteenth-century works of philosophy and history, not Qur'anic commentaries or classical Muslim intellectual works, an approach that continued into the twentieth century.

Chapter 5 examines the Hamidian-era polemics of Halil Hâlid, Harutune Jenanyan, Sırrı Pasha, and Fatma Aliye. At this time the imperial center promulgated an official discourse of Sunnitization, but porous boundaries of identity still existed between confessional groups. I will show that to some Christian religious leaders, the line between true belief and heresy was drawn according to the levels of education, not Protestantism versus other religions, and they could find common cause with other confessions through the mutual uplifting of scientific and modern theological education. To other writers, such as Fatma Aliye and Halil Hâlid, education divided the enlightened from the ignorant, and

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the ignorant misunderstood Islam to such an egregious degree that they were almost practitioners of a false religion. The Muslim authors perceived international relations as a Muslim-Christian clash and sought to create alternative discourses of modernity and seek global Muslim unity to protect themselves against the threat of Western imperialism.

Chapter 6 looks at the Young Turk-era writings of Abdülahad Davûd, Ohannes Kirkorian, Mahmud Es'ad Seydişehri, and Hasan Sabri, along with the 1908-1911 Plovdiv debates among Edhem Ruhi, a local mouthpiece for the CUP who had Ottoman irredentist goals for Bulgaria, and Muslim converts to Christianity Johannes Avetaranian, Mehmed Nesîmî and Ahmed Keşşaf. During this time religious rhetoric transformed into increasingly nationalist discourse. The transformation resulted from the political realities of the Ottoman Empire's defeat in the Balkan Wars and shifted the Committee of Union and Progress's rhetoric of secularism and religious inclusivism into an increasingly Islamic or Turkist discourse. These polemics reflect the twilight period of Ottoman ecumenical religious hopes and the transition into a more homogenous Islamic identity. It was the final flowering of Christian-Muslim polemical debate largely framed by beliefs in progress, universal collective identities, and the enduring status of the Ottoman Empire among native Christians and Muslims. But with the political and imperial anxieties of the period, such as the 1912-1913 Balkan wars, irredentism, and the onset of World War I, Muslim writers largely embraced the increasingly Islamist ideology of the CUP, which contained elements of European-inspired positivism, social darwinism, and racial nationalism.

The encounter between foreign missionaries and Ottoman Muslim literati still

figures negatively into much of the collective imagination of Turkey to this day. Ottoman-era missionary activity is viewed in Turkish historiography as an imperialist effort to dismantle the Empire by converting those of weak character to act as a proxy for European colonial powers. Nationalists make similar arguments against modern-day Western missionaries.[100] This negative memory, however, ignores the complexity of the time period and negates the manner in which all sides were influenced by the encounter and expressed their religious beliefs with a similar conception of religious truth. It was not a static environment where intractable ideologies inevitably clashed. I hope that this dissertation research will help contribute to an understanding of this encounter as a dynamic exchange that, while punctuated at times by hostility, also marked the creation of a sphere in which religious ideas could be compared, contested, and discussed.

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[100] Such historical and popular works include: Musa Çakır, *Anadolumuz Asla Hıristiyan Olmayacak: Misyonerler Memleketinize Dönünüz* (Istanbul: Başaran Matbaası, 1968) and Adnan Odabaş, *Dikkat Misyoner Geliyor* (Istanbul: Üsküdar Gazetesi Yayınları: 2005).

Chapter One:

Horizontal and Vertical Lines of Continuity: Ottoman Polemics at the Juncture of Pre-Modern/Modern and Europe/Middle East

The sheer vastness of the Ottoman Empire's history has led to historians breaking up its past into a set of periods with pre-defined characteristics. These include the Classical period, the Reform period, and the Young Turk period, among many others. While this method has the advantage of detaching the full scope of Ottoman history from a single moment in its history and allowing researchers to understand an age on its own terms, it also comes with drawbacks. Mikhail and Philliou wrote in 2012 of the dangers of slicing up the Empire's history into a set of temporal chunks that do not connect to each other in a clear way. These floating moments of history make sense within a well-written study, but they do not connect well to the preceding or following ages. The division is strongest between historians of the early modern period and the nineteenth century, largely a remnant of periodizations that accept European colonial encounters and increased Western influence in the diplomatic, legal, economic, social, and cultural life of the Ottoman Empire as the turning points in Ottoman history. Terms that scholars use to generalize and segment the chronology allow us to talk about eras using certain characteristics as shorthand, but it eventually becomes difficult to move outside these supposedly discrete periods of Ottoman history, no matter how artificial they are. Consequently there is a rift in Ottoman historiography between scholars of the early modern and modern "eras" that cuts lines of continuity and obscures the early modern

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origins of supposedly exclusively modern social and cultural phenomena.[1]

Traditional Ottoman historiography has the tendency to frame Ottoman contacts with Western Europe before the nineteenth century as minor, at least outside of military or ambassadorial spheres, due to Ottoman military successes in the classical age (approximately from 1300 to 1600) and the lack of a "need" to copy European social and political forms.[2] Only through the modern era's social and political transformations did intellectual and cultural co-mingling begin to occur, sometimes with disastrous results.[3] Critics of this approach such as Jane Hathaway note that the Ottoman Empire, along with other states in the Mediterranean world such as France, Spain, Venice, and Morocco are conceptualized as experiencing major upheaval in the early modern period followed by state centralization and transformation followed by the final product of the nation-state.[4] Prior to this time the Ottoman state apparatus was depicted as being bifurcated into the religious and the ruling echelons, in which the ulema and viziers vied for power, the former exploiting the latter and leading into ruinous decline. Dror Ze'evi writes that the problem of periodization still hangs over studies on the beginning of the modern period in

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[1]   Alan Mikhail and Christine M. Philliou. "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 54, No. 4 (2012): 725-732.
[2]   See Halil İnalcik, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age: 1300-1600* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), Metin Kunt and Christine Woodhead (eds.), *Süleyman the Magnificent and his Age: The Ottoman Empire in the Early Modern World* (London: Longman, 1995), Halil İnalcik and Cemal Kafadar (eds.) Süleyman the Second and his Tıme (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1993).
[3]   Fatma Müge Göçek deals with the question of how and why the Ottoman Empire declined by privileging the West and bourgeoisie as the catalyst. With the spread of Western goods and adoption of Western forms in aesthetics in the eighteenth century came the disruption of the classical model of the sultan's household as the basic organizational unit of society, followed by subdivisions of artisans, merchants, peasants, nomads, slaves, and other groups. Fatma Müge Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire – Ottoman Westernization and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).
[4]   Jane Hathaway, "Rewriting Eighteenth-Century Ottoman History," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, No. 1 (2004): 1-29.

the Middle East. The Orientalist approach argues that the modern period came with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, emblematic of the "impact of the West."[5]

In this chapter I will present an overview of Ottoman-European religious and intellectual relations by charting this history from the sixteenth to the nineteenth century. The goal is to explore the entangled history of Europe and the Ottoman Empire, the mediators and media of this exchange such as missionaries and polemical writings, as well as the various ways that European states and the Ottoman Empire adapted to changing geopolitical and military challenges. I will do so by looking at the following issues that straddled both eras: the history of Ottoman sectarianism/confessionalization, the historical origins of an intellectual concept of modernity, the Christian-Muslim Mediterranean print sphere, and concepts of imperial governance. The purpose is to challenge existing approaches to these topics as either originating in the modern era or existing in an alien form in the eighteenth century and before. These lines of continuity are stronger than European and Middle Eastern historiographies of the early modern era would have us think. (Much synthetic research remains to be done on phenomena that spanned these two eras, making assured statements on their differences all the more dubious). Christian and Muslim scholars influenced one another and likely read each other's religious literature.

The second goal is to explore the histories of religious polemics and Christian missions to the Ottoman Empire, putting forward new ways to consider them as capable

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[5]   Dror Ze'evi argues a third way, that modernity itself is a set of historical phenomena and dialectical process created by the colonial encounter. "Back to Napoleon? Thoughts on the Beginning of the Modern Era in the Middle East." *Mediterranean Historical Review* 19, No. 1 (2004): 73-94.

of adapting to changing circumstances. The two categories of religious polemics and

Christian missionary history suffer different problems than those listed above.

Researchers consider them as fixed, often detached from their historical context. Foreign

missionaries are thought of as agents of empire and conspicuous examples of the nexus

between religion and politics in colonial settings and the primary agents of informal

imperialism that "ushered people into the modern world" through the process of

conversion.[6] Religious polemics, similarly, are seen as a marker of deterioration of inter-

religious relations, whether as an active agent or a reflection. This would have surprised

seventeenth-century Catholic missionaries to the Middle East, who practiced the policy of

accommodation and considered their Muslim interlocutors to be well-educated and

civilized.[7] They also would have not thought of themselves as colonial agents, as early

modern France was in little position to project military power into the Levant or battle the

powerful Ottoman navy. Pre-modern Christian polemicists wrote from a standpoint of

discussion, believing Muslims to be their interlocutors equal in stature. At the same time

European Enlightenment thinkers were influenced by the logical argumentation of

antitrinitarian Muslim polemics. This discourse is markedly different from nineteenth-

century Christian polemics, whose theological and scriptural arguments are connected to

themes of Western civilizational superiority over the East.

  Furthermore, the Ottoman Empire held the upper hand in power relations between

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[6] William Roger Louis, Ronald Edward Robinson, and John Gallagher. *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy: Modern Scholarship on European History* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976); John and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

[7] Bernard Heyberger, "Polemical Dialogues between Christians and Muslims in the Seventeenth Century." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 495-516.

itself and Europe in the period up to and including the early eighteenth century. The terms of discussion and the production of knowledge about the East were different than in the nineteenth century. Between 1650 and 1750 Europe expressed increased demand for Ottoman goods, importing everything from coffee and costumes to music and manuscripts, using these goods to assimilate their understanding of Ottoman culture.[8] English drama portrayed the "Turk" in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as more than an object of "otherness." Ottomans and Islam were a discursive site of self-conceptualization for the English, which at the time was marginal in power to China, India, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire. They used this discursive site to elaborate concepts of Englishness, masculinity, Christianity, femininity, and nobility.[9] English theatre used the encounter with Islamic cultures to form an emergent identity of an English nation that lacked the imperial might of its Eastern competitors but was in the preliminary stages of its own colonizing effort.[10]

I. Lines of Continuity

i. Sectarianism/Confessionalism

The Ottoman Empire originated in the Anatolian frontier in the fourteenth century, warring with the Byzantine Empire and other Turkic emirates and confederacies. It grew steadily over the next two centuries and defined itself as an Islamic polity. Starting in the

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[8]   Alexander Bevilacqua and Helen Pfeifer, "Turquerie: Culture in Motion, 1650-1750," *Past & Present* 221, No. 1 (2013): 75-118.

[9]   Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama*, 1579-1624 (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005).

[10] Daniel Viktus, *Turning Turk: English Theater and the Multicultural Mediterranean* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

fifteenth century, the state began to more fully reflect upon and articulate its Sunni

identity due to the growth in power of its own religious class and the arrival of scholars

from lands with a more well-established Islamic heritage.[11] This came with the beginning

of numerous wars with the Shi'ite Safavid dynasty, founded in 1501 by the charismatic

Shah Ismail (d. 1524). He was an heir to a long line of Sufi sheys of the Safavid order

who threatened to attract Turkmen on the eastern Ottoman borders. For the next two

centuries, both imperial administrations increasingly defined themselves along

confessional lines in the ensuing military conflicts. Sultan Selim I (r. 1512-1520) led a

bloody campaign against Safavid sympathizers following the pro-Safavid revolt of Shah

Kulı in 1511. Discrimination against Kızılbaş, Bektashi, and some Twelver Shiites

continued for the next century. After the Ottoman re-capture of Baghdad in the 1630s,

persecution diminished against non-Sunnis. Even after the Safavid front quieted down,

the process of Sunnitization still continued, with Ottoman agents looking "inwardly."

Following this period came a fundamentalist political coalescence in the form of the

Kadızadelis, a preacher-led movement of scholars from the margins of the establishment.

They mobilized the population against Sufi sheiks for their supposed lax application of

the *şeria't*.[12] These agents attempted to instill in the public a proper knowledge of Sunni

[11] Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization," 308-309. Terzioğlu marks this period as the early spread of a sound knowledge of Sunni Islam due to growth in power of the ulema and increased contact between the lands of Rum and more established parts of Islamdom, increasing the number of those who were well acquainted with normative sources of their faith. They translated religious and ethical works from Arabic and Persian into Turkish. She notes, "what I am suggesting, in other words, is that the emerging "Sunni orthodoxy" of the early 16th century was not merely an "invention" of statesmen to aggrandize Ottoman state power and bolster its legitimacy in the face of the Safavid ideological challenge. It was also, at least in part, the result of a more gradual process of ulema empowerment and the spread of what one might term "Islamic literacy" in the Ottoman lands."

[12] Ibid., 312; Colin Imber, "The Persecution of Ottoman Shi'ites according to the Mühimme Defterleri, 1565-1585," *Der Islam* 56, No. 2 (1979): 245-273; Hülya Canbakal, "Some Questions on the Legal Identity of Neighborhoods in the Ottoman Empire," *Anatolia Moderna* 10 (2004): 131-138; Saim

Islam, whether they were learned preachers at Istanbul's major mosques, nearly all of whom were madrasa graduates, or the *dersi'âm*, a public lecturer who gave lessons on Islamic learning to a lay audience.[13] When the state could not entice these subjects to convert, it essentially purchased loyalty by granting privileges, such as giving the Kızılbaş *seyyid* status in order to more effectively monitor them.[14]

Early modern religious debates on the norms and practices of Sunni Islam found expression in a number of literary genres. One such genre of books was *'ilm-i hâl*s, or catechisms of religious instruction that were mentioned in the previous chapter. In some of these works Ottoman authors blamed the social and political uncertainties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on a perceived moral decline. They offered religious advice to address these problems. *'İlm-i hâl*s of the nineteenth century performed a similar function during the Tanzimat era, a period with its own set of social and political challenges.[15] The second genre is self-narratives of conversion. Krstić has argued that in the Ottoman context this genre, which resembled the autobiographical narratives of conversion that spread across Reformation-era Europe and were used in inter-confessional polemical wars, appeared as a consequence of increasing politicization of confessional identity, as it also did in contemporary Europe. Catholics, Protestants, Sunni, and Shi'a confessional literature all addressed issues relating to spiritual and temporal authority, "correct" rituals, and the authenticity of scriptural traditions. Competition

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Savaş, *XVI. Asırda Anadolu'da Alevîlik* (Ankara: Vadi (coll. Tarih dizisi 2), 2002), 122-125.

[13] Terzioğlu, 316; Baki Tezcan, *The Second Ottoman Empire: Political and Social Transformation in the Early Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[14] Hülya Canbakal, "An Exercise in Denominational Geography in Serach of Ottoman Alevis," *Turkish Studies* 6, No. 2 (2005): 253-271.

[15] Terzioğlu, 317. Hatice Arpaguş, "Bir Telif Türü Olarak İlmihal Tarihî Geçmişi ve Fonksiyonu," *Marmara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 22, No. 1 (2002): 25-56.

between the Hapsburgs, Ottomans, and Safavids led to tighter ties between a convert, his religion, and loyalty to the state.[16]

A fascinating aspect of these genres is evidence of Christian-Muslim mutual influence, suggesting that the two sides read each other's religious literature. Intellectual and social historians of the nineteenth century note the profound influence of European philosophy on Ottoman Muslim intelligentsia, but they neglect to note similar early modern dialogues in the sphere of religious discourse. While fewer participated in these inter-religious discussions in the early modern period, these dialogues nevertheless had an impact on textual strategies in which authors framed "true" belief. Terzioğlu notes the seventeenth-century Balkan mystic Nushî el-Nâsıhî wrote "Discourse on Faith" in 1633 and recommended neighborhood moral surveillance as a juridico-administrative practice, where *imâm*s and *mü'ezzin*s of neighborhood mosques were semi-official public officials who represented the people and also performed administrative functions for the state. This mirrors exactly religious surveillance by parish priests and ministers in Catholic and Protestant Europe. He also suggests requiring a religious examination at the beginning of the "New Year," an unimportant day in the Islamic lunar calendar but a day of critical importance for Catholic confessions, which took on a new disciplinary form in Tridentine Catholicism. It is possible that this Muslim author was aware of recently instituted European methods of moral surveillance and was inspired by them.[17] I will address European-Ottoman textual transmission in the early modern period in more detail below, but suffice it to say here that there were many intermediaries such as dragomans,

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[16]   Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 98-120.
[17]   Terzioğlu, '*İlm-i Hâl*, 102-104.

diplomats, and merchants that mediated cross-cultural encounters and channels of communication between the Ottoman Empire and Christian Europe.

The confessional and sectarian differentiation of the early modern and modern periods have no clear cleaving but should be thought of as a continuous processes that changed according to social and political challenges over the centuries. The Ottoman state abandoned anti-Sufi policies after the 1680s but briefly revived them under the tenure of *şeyh ü'l-islâm* Feyzullah Efendi (d. 1703). His initiatives were discarded in the more inclusive eighteenth century.[18] However, calls for confessional conformity increased with military and economic crises in the last decades of the century. New rounds of social and moral surveillance came during the reigns of Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839), and particularly Abdülhamit II, whose technological and bureaucratic tools made surveillance more effective and far-reaching than ever before. As Terzioğlu argues, one could make the case that Ottoman Sunnitization/Confessionalization continued with "ups and downs and ebbs and flows, and in different forms, until the very end of the Empire."[19]

Modern-era Christian and Muslim polemicists also considered confessional difference to be a problematic issue that could threaten social conflict. To them, Ottoman religious diversity was not a positive feature of imperial rule but a potentially dangerous prospect that could lead to violence and massive death. They understood this difference as the 1860 Druze-Maronite conflict in Lebanon, massacres against Anatolian Armenians in 1893-1896, or millions of Muslim refugees fleeing the Balkans and the Caucuses after the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish Wars. Yet Christian and Muslim polemicists also

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[18] Terzioğlu, "How to Conceptualize Ottoman Sunnitization," 323-324.
[19] Ibid.

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understood that religious difference was a fact of Ottoman imperial life. Muslim-Christian coexistence was an inbuilt feature of the Ottoman state and could not be ignored. These polemicists had to deal with these differences using respectful language for other religious groups, even for those groups whose beliefs they labeled heresy, lest their interlocutors accuse them of inflammatory language. Writers from both faiths, with few exceptions, advocated congenial relations between religious groups, rather than needlessly attacking the faith of their opponents. They advocated their own religion while supporting an imperial model that protected all subjects regardless of creed.[20]

The most common charge polemicists leveled against their interlocutors were that their writings damaged the internal stability of the Empire. Early twentieth-century polemics by Muslim convert Abdülahad Dâvud and Armenian Protestant Ohannes Kirkorian blamed the opposite religion for the violence of the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars by provoking discord between religions. Contemporary Muslim polemicists leveled a similar charge against Protestant missionaries that their writings not only denigrated Islam but represented an insult to the Ottoman state, which had allowed them to operate unmolested in the Empire. The same line of argument was used by Protestant missionaries against Muslim polemicists, blaming them for inciting violence against their religious brethren.[21]

Arguments concerning *intra-confessional* religious difference, in contrast, were expressed in the nineteenth century with no apologies for their sharp tone. Much like the

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[20] In an 1883 print debate between Armenian Protestant Avedis Constantian and Ahmet Midhat in the pages of *Tercümân-i Hakîkat*, Constantinian criticizes his interlocutor as spending his time attacking the religion of the Messiah instead of defending his own religion. *Müdâfa'aya Mukabele ve Mukabeleye Müdâfa'a: Mösyo Dwight'in Müdafaa'ya Mukabelesi'ne karşı Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nn Müdafaa'sı.* (Istanbul: Tercüman-ı Hakîkat, 1884), 362-363.

[21] Mu'allim Ohannes Kirkorian, *İzâh-ı Hakîkat: İncîl ve Salîb Nâm Esere Cevap* (Istanbul: Keşişyan Matba'ası, 1330/1914).

early modern period, Sunni Islamic scholars were concerned with articulating their confessional belief against non-Sunni groups such as Shi'as or Bektashis. The language used by Sunni authors in the nineteenth century is remarkably similar to authors of anti-Shi'a polemical literature of the sixteenth century. Muslim scholars with close ties to the imperial court produced anti-Christian polemics on an ever-increasing level in the 1870s, but in a parallel development they also wrote anti-Bektashi polemics. A notable example is Harputî İshak's 1873 *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiû'l-Eşrâr* (The Revealing of Mysteries and the Repelling of Wickedness), a religious tract that attacked Bektashism due to its Hurûfi teachings. It was written due to the growing Sunni identity among the state bureaucracy and the sultan's court prior to the ascension of Sultan Abdülhamit II in 1876 and as a means to counter the voices of non-Muslim and "heterodox" millet leaders, who on the heels of the 1856 reform edict had more formalized political roles.[22] Such anti-Bektashi works were an opening salvo against what was perceived to be a spread of Sufi-influenced Islam and literature in the Ottoman Empire. *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr*'s purpose was to discredit Bektashi belief, and more specifically Hurûfism, as theologically heterodox and derived from myth. The thesis of *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr* is that Bektashism had begun under Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî as a legitimate religious movement but was later corrupted by Hurûfism and its followers. Interestingly, Harputî İshak was also the author of two anti-Christian polemics and used similar arguments against his opponents. It is instructive to see how a theologian of such high standing within Istanbul's Islamic education system uses similar arguments against "heterodox" Islamic theological belief as he did with Protestant

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[22] Hans-Lukas Kieser. *Iskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilayetleri'nde Misyonerlik, Etnik Kimlik ve Devlet 1839-1938*, translated by Atila Dirim. (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005).

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Christianity.[23]

ii. **The Public Sphere**

As discussed in the previous chapter, the phenomena of a global Muslim print sphere arose in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, linking Muslim intellectuals across the Islamic world. Newspapers, books, and periodicals in Middle Eastern and European languages became increasingly common. Literati from India, Russia, the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, and Europe exchanged ideas via print journalism. These media gave a forum for them to discuss methods in which to reconcile Islam with discourses of modernity. It also gave intellectuals a forum to discuss the challenges of colonial rule. These three issues often merged together. Authors called upon their Muslim societies to embrace Islamic models of reform in order to counter the external threat of European colonial encroachment.

Yet a trans-national community of Muslim writers did not see its genesis only in the nineteenth century. Textual transmission and the dissemination of conceptual frameworks of religion across imperial lines existed well back into the early modern period. This can be seen in the case of the Gospel of Barnabas, a forged text and so-called long-lost "authentic" version of the gospel, which likely had Morisco origins in the seventeenth century and blended accounts of Jesus's life with prophecies of Muhammed's coming. It seems to have been written in Istanbul, by either a convert to Islam or a Morisco, before spreading within Morisco networks in North Africa. It was later used among free thinkers and Radical Enlightenment figures such as John Toland in the early

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[23] Harputî İshak, *Şems ü'l-hakîkat* (Istanbul: Takvimhane-i Âmire, 1861), *Kâşifu'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiu'l-Eşrâr* (Istanbul, 1873), *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* (Istanbul, 1876).

eighteenth century.[24] This text was re-popularized in the nineteenth century when Muslim polemicists Rashid Rida, al-Kairânawî, and El-Hac Abdi Bey featured it in anti-Christian arguments. An intellectual matrix existed around the Mediterranean world that connected North Africa, the Levant, and Europe in which texts and ideas were transferred, and, according to the theory of cultural transfer, often reconstructed in a completely different way in their new social and political context.

An even earlier example from the early modern Mediterranean intellectual network is the fifteenth-century religious polemic *Tuḥfat al-Adīb fī al-radd ʿalā ahl al-ṣalīb* (Gift of the Lettered One for the Refutation of the People of the Cross). The North African convert to Islam Abdallāh b. Abdallāh al-Tarjumān (formerly Anselm Turmeda, a Franciscan) wrote his narrative of conversion in Arabic in 1420, but it became a sensation in the Ottoman Empire following its seventeenth-century translation to Turkish. In 1604 a Tunisian Sufi sheik commissioned the Turkish translation of the *Tuhfa* and dedicated it to Ottoman Sultan Ahmet I following his 1603 ascension to the throne. There it stayed in Istanbul a few decades before passing into the hands of the Dutch diplomat and Orientalist Levinus Warner, who acquired it during his residence in the Ottoman capital in the 1640s and 50s. This was one of thousands of manuscripts he collected. His collection was assembled partly due to his diligence, but mostly to a network of

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[24] Wiegers notes the Morisco colorings of the gospel, notably its depiction of Muhammed as the Messiah. This idea was already found in Morisco writings in Morocco in 1611 that argued that Muhammed is the savior promised in the Jewish and Christian scriptures. The idea of Muhammed as the Messiah (as opposed to Jesus who is referred to in the Qur'an as *mesih*) was confined only to a small group of Morisco writings and the Gospel of Barnabas. G.A. Wiegers, "Las obras de polemica religiosa escritas por los moriscos fuera de Espana."; Wiegers, "Muhammed as the Messiah: A Comparison of the Polemical World of Juan Alfonso with Gospel of Barnabas," *Bibliotheca Orientalis* 52, No. 3/4 (1995): 245-291.

European, Ottoman, and North African intellectuals of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish faith, along with various intermediaries who facilitated the exchanges of translations, manuscripts, and information in this period. Before Warner got his hands on a copy, it spread among Istanbul's literati. Its narrative approach likely influenced a seventeenth-century Turkish conversion account by Mehmed b. Abdullah, who embraces a similar autobiographical approach to narrating his conversion as al-Tarjumān (Abdullah Tercüman in Turkish). These and other accounts feature elements that were common in the early-modern Muslim and Christian Mediterranean world: a focus on the triangular relationship among the convert, the sovereign, and God, which reflects the simultaneous processes of imperial and confessional identity building.[25]

The curious history of the *Tuhfa* and its circuitous travel pattern in the nineteenth century illustrates the entangled history of the Mediterranean public sphere. The Ottoman Turkish text remained popular in the eighteenth century until it apparently fell into disuse. A new Turkish translation re-appeared in 1874, but it was not based on the 1604 version. Rather, it was a translation from an Arabic version published in London in 1873 by "Murad Istanli," most likely Henry Edward John Stanley, an English convert to Islam. A French translation by J. Spiro then appeared in 1886. I will discuss these translations more in Chapter Three, but it is fascinating to consider that the two Turkish translators, Emiroğlu Mehmed Said (d. 1918) and Mehmed Hacı Zihni, professors at the *Mekteb-i Mülkiyye* (The Imperial Civil School), used an Arabic import rather than the existing

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[25] Krstić, "Reading Abdallāh b. Abdallāh al-Tarjumān's *Tuḥfa* (1420) in the Ottoman Empire: Muslim-Christian Polemics and Intertextuality in the Age of "Confessionalization," *Al-Qantara* (forthcoming) 10; *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 12-16.

Ottoman Turkish translation. As Krstić notes, the patterns of textual transmission do not remain "intra-cultural" or vertical but can stretch in lateral and cross-confessional directions. This was not a new phenomenon in the nineteenth century but rather a centuries-long legacy that should not be neglected in any discussion of the long-existing textual and intellectual ties between Europe and the Middle East, and all communities surrounding the Mediterranean.[26]

Putting these Muslim texts aside, any discussion of trans-regional textual exchange must include Protestant missionaries. By the early nineteenth century, foreign missionaries established a publishing infrastructure in the Ottoman Empire that produced thousands of books a year in multiple languages. The ABCFM first established its printing operations in Malta in 1822. The Mediterranean island was chosen as the center of their printing operations for their Middle East mission to Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Greece, and Turkey due to the belief that printing could not be done safely, if at all, at Izmir or Beirut.[27] The Malta operation consisted of three presses, with font types in English, Italian, Greek, Greco-Turkish, Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, and Arabic. The first major publication of the ABCFM was the 1831 New Testament in Armeno-Turkish, i.e Turkish written in the Armenian alphabet.[28] The same year 78,000 copies of 14 works,

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[26] Ibid., 32.

[27] ABCFM historian Rufus Anderson notes that "Its operations were begun "under the impression of amore extended taste for reading and reflection in the several communities of the Levant, that really existed; and it is doubtful whether the larger part of the earlier publications were well suited to the apprehension of the Oriental mind." Rufus Anderson, *History of the Missions of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, to the Oriental Churches* (Boston: Congregational Publishing Society, 1872), 73.

[28] Approximately 2,000 books were printed in Armeno-Turkish from the early eighteenth century until around 1950. Armenian authors preserved Turkish words, syntax, and grammatical structures in this language, gradually adopting Arabic and Persian words as the language evolved. They wrote school books, grammars, dictionaries, translations of European literature, hymnals, and scientific treatises. Publishing sites were located in Istanbul, Egypt, Venice, Vienna, Boston, New York, and dozens of

totaling five million pages, were printed in modern Greek. The total printing output in

Malta from 1822 to 1833 was 350,000 volumes.[29]

Missionaries were among a small number of publishers in the Ottoman Empire

that had a disproportionate influence on the development of its print culture. The

development of an active print sphere in the Ottoman Empire was not the result of a

widespread social transformation and the mitigation of the ulema; rather, it existed on a

micro-historical scale in which large trends are attributed to small groups. In the early

nineteenth century, perhaps only a few dozen figures had access to the technology that

controlled Arabic-script printing. Those that had access to this technology often

embedded it in a Christian framework, as Catholic and Protestant missionary societies

were the pioneers of Arabic-script print. Muslim rulers interested in expanding their

states' printing capacity were aware of this. Mehmet Ali dispatched his Christian subject

al-Masbiki to Italy to learn the printing trade. He tapped into the Maronite community of

Rome and the Catholic church, which had been printing books in Arabic for centuries.

Similarly, the Ottoman scholar and journalist Faris al-Shidyâq's began his career as a

printer under the guidance of Lebanon-based missionaries affiliated with the Church

Mission Society (CMS).[30] Lord Stanhope's development of a freestanding and portable

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other cities in the Mediterranean and North Atlantic world. Bedross Der Matossian, "The Phenomenon of the Armeno-Turkish Literature in 19th Century Ottoman Empire" [paper presented at St. Nersess Armenian Seminary, New Rochelle, New York, September 27, 2005].

[29] Anderson, 74-75.

[30] Ibid., 211-216. The Church Mission Society was born out of eighteenth-century evangelical revivals as part of the Great Awakening in England and North America. It was a non-denominational organization that agreed to be loyal to the leadership of English bishops and follow the Anglican liturgy, but it was not dominated by the clergy and was primarily staffed by laymen and women, and later mainland Europeans, primarily of German Lutheran background. Over the course of the nineteenth century it sent thousands of missionaries to Africa, East Asia, India, various Mediterranean islands, numerous provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the West Indies, and to the territories of North America to evangelize American Indians. See Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Mission Society: Its Environment, Its*

iron hand press in 1800 enabled printing units to be sent in one portable piece and did not require re-assembling upon arrival to its destination, enabling faster technological spread. The Muslim development of printing came from the successes of portable presses, as they did not need to be joined to a larger industrial infrastructure; thus, Egypt and Istanbul did not need to "catch up" to Europe in order to produce a productive print sphere. But they did have to contend with evangelical Protestant organizations, which were the global leaders in the field of Arabic-script printing in the nineteenth century. At this time "modernity" was not considered a secular ideology, at least in the print sphere, considering the massive influence of Christianity over its development. Muslim printers did not passively absorb "modernism" from these Western missionaries nor did they go on to challenge their own traditional religious establishment as roadblocks to progress. Nile Green notes that even Jean-Joseph Marcel (d. 1854), who was the printer for Napoleon's "modernizing" disruption of Egyptian history, was best known in Paris for his version of the Lord's Prayer in Arabic.[31] This was due to the technological nature of print being in the hands of a few individuals from missionary agencies such as the CMS and the ABCFM; it was not a massive undertaking involving thousands of individuals who represented a cross-sampling of secularizing intellectual developments in Western Europe.[32]

These printing technologies spread to Istanbul and the Ottoman provinces. Following the 1864 Vilâyet reform law, which created a defined hierarchical

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Men, and Its Work (London: Church Mission Society, 1899), 2; "A Brief History of the CMS" http://www.cms-uk.org/default.aspx?Tabid=181 (retrieved October 4, 2013) .

[31] Green, "Journeymen, Middlemen," 219.

[32] Ibid.

administrative structure and endowed governors (*vâlî*s) with significant power, Turkish printing presses were established in the provinces. The most commonly printed works were the Province Gazette (*vilâyet gazetesi*) and Ottoman government yearbooks (*sal-nâme*s), which government officials used to promulgate official state news to the provinces. Publishers also used these presses to print private books. The Ottoman bureaucrat Sırrı Pasha (1844-1895), who served as governor of Ankara, Sivas, Trabzon, and Baghdad printed his own books in the Provincial Press (*Vilâyet Matba'âsı)*. It is through this press that he published his polemic *Nûru'l-Hüdâ* in 1893, in which he engaged in a religious dialogue with the Chaldean Archbishop of Diyarbakir Abdu' Yesu.[33]

In the 1860s came the imperial printing office *Matbaa-i Âmire* and the semi-official Ottoman Printhouse *(Matba'a-ı Osmanîye)*. Osman Zeki Bey (d. 1888), the calligrapher and chamberlain (*başmabeynci*) of Abdülhamit II, directed the *Matba'a-ı Osmanîye* in Istanbul's Çemberlitaş district. He was the first to receive imperial permission to print the Qur'an, which as Kuran-Burçoğlu notes had been denied to other imperial figures such as İbrahim Müteferrika and Said Bey since 1727.[34] Typographers from Germany worked in the office, running 18 presses powered by steam engines. Nine were used for lithographies and nine for typographies. The *Matba'a-ı Osmanîye* produced religious texts, public documents, border protocols, international agreements, directories,

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[33] Johann Strauss, "'Kütüb ve Resail-i Mevkute': Printing and publishing in a multi-ethnic society," in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy,* ed. Elizabeth Özdalga (London: Routledge, 2005), 228.

[34] Nedret Kuran-Burçoğlu. "Osman Zeki Bey and His Printing Office the Matbaa-i Osmaniye." in *History of Printing and Publishing in the Languages and Countries of the Middle East: Journal of Semitic Studies, Supplement 15*, eds. Philip Sadgrove and Colin Paul Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). 35-58

educational books, dictionaries, and works by Gazâli, Namık Kemal, Halid Ziya

Uşaklıgıl and Cevdet Pasha.[35]

Ottoman literati sought to create a mass readership for this mass book production.

Writers such as İbrahim Şinasi and Fatma Aliye wrote in simplified Turkish in order to

make their writings accessible to non-scholars. This vibrant reading culture held major

influence due to its social criticism, instruction, commentary, editorials, and reporting of

foreign news. Rising rates of literacy in the 1890s brought about Hamidian educational

efforts that expanded the reading landscape outside of elite circles. It brought about what

Benjamin Fortna considers a transformation of society and the formation of a distinctly

Turkish modernity by the 1920s. This vibrant public sphere made the modernization and

nationalization efforts of the Turkish Republic possible by increasing both literacy rates

and access to books.[36]

iii. Modernity

Discussions of the global Muslim print sphere are often connected to discussions

of modernity. The two topics share many themes but also conceptual limitations in

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[35] Johann Strauss, "Alexandre Pacha Carathéodory (tr): Traité du quadrilatère attribute Nassiruddin-el Toussy (Kitab shakl al-qatta')" in *The Beginnings of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians, and Muslims*, ed. Klaus Kreiser, Staatsbibliothek Bamberg, Universität Bamberg. Lehrstuhl für Türkische Sprache (Harrassowitz, 2001), 78; Kuran-Burçoğlu, 39. The *Matbaa-i Osmaniye* published numerous works from 1881 to 1927. Following its initial print run of thousands of Qur'ans, the first secular publication of the office was the *Sefâretname-i Mehmet Efendi*, an eighteenth-century travelogue by Ottoman Ambassador Yirmisekiz Mehmet Çelebi. According to the holdings of the Turkish National Library, 996 items were printed until its closing. It maintained a steady output across the decades with the exception of 1907, the year before the proclamation of the Second Constitution. Kuran-Burçoğlu's categorization of the library's holdings indicates that half of its output was dedicated to official publications related to state affairs (420); then scientific and technical manuals (115); educational publications (100); rhetoric, language, and literature (90); religious texts (85); histories (55); military publications (25); medical publications (20); dictionaries (10); and calligraphy (5).

[36] Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 21-22.

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Ottoman studies. They suffer from artificial periodizations in the literature or are explained with Europe as the reference point. While Ottoman intellectuals read European philosophy and history, the intellectual exchange between Europe and the Middle cannot be understood in unidirectional terms. Centuries earlier European freethinkers benefited from Islamic scholarship. Books came to them due to the vibrant textual exchange across the Mediterranean. Late nineteenth-century Ottomans did not "discover" the West. The two sides had already been engaging in a centuries-long intellectual dialogue.[37]

Yet there are important points of difference. Vertical lines of continuity between the Ottoman medieval tradition and its modern tradition were different than Europe's lines of continuity between its medieval tradition and its modern tradition. The intellectual heritage of the Ottoman Empire is not situated within the same analytical categories of the European tradition in which Renaissance humanism led to the post-French Revolution Enlightenment. Although the Enlightenment did affect the Ottoman Empire, particularly by the late nineteenth century, the anti-Christian polemical tradition from this era displays strong continuity with its prequel. Indeed, insistence on a sharp distinction between an Ottoman modern intellectual tradition and an Ottoman medieval/early modern tradition would be misleading because it would imply that the

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[37] Bernard Lewis argues that Islam's division between the House of Islam and the House of War (i.e., Europe), hindered Ottoman intellectual and social access to the West, along with Islamic prohibitions on innovation. Sabri Ülgener says the internal dynamics of Islam explains Ottoman social stagnation in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, stemming from the emergence of heterodox Islam and its emphasis on a static life based on patience and resignation. Şerif Mardin describes how Ottoman reformists eventually defeated the conservatives and replaced religion with reason as the solution to imperial social tension. See Lewis, "Ottoman Observers of Ottoman Decline," *Islamic Studies* 1 (1962): 71-87; Sabri Ülgener, *Dünü ve Bugünü ile Zihniyet ve Din: İslam, Tasavvuf, ve Çözülme Devri İktisat Ahlakı* (Istanbul: Der Yayınları), 82-83, 101-109; Şerif Mardin, *The Genesis of Young Ottoman Thought* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); Göçek, *Rise of the Bourgeoisie*, 13.

same paradigmatic reform shifts affected the Ottoman Empire as did Europe.[38]

That is not to say that an immutable tradition is under discussion; rather, its changing articulations corresponded to the peculiar circumstances informing historical change in the Ottoman context. For example, events in the nineteenth century are difficult to separate into categories of reform and tradition. As Christoph Neumann notes the codification of Hanafite Islamic law occurred in 1867 but along Western lines of a civil law based on Islamic principles. While it was reform in the sense that it contributed to the state centralization process and uniformity of the law, it was traditional in the sense that it was initiated to counter the adoption of the French civil code.[39]

Ottoman modernity should be understood as a localized occurrence that also existed in a trans-imperial Eurasian network. I mentioned in the previous chapter that the nineteenth-century manifestation of Ottoman modernity was more than the result of the Empire's social and economic integration with global capitalism or Europe exporting culture to passive colonies, even if many Muslim intellectuals kept an eye toward Europe. Even ostensibly clear forms of Western transfers of culture into the Ottoman Empire – such as missionary schools using English pedagogies in order to challenge local forms of knowledge transmission and structures of social authority – were received, appropriated, and even resisted by local actors.[40] Furthermore, the nineteenth century was not the

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[38] Scientific materialism and positivism in particular influenced Ottoman recipients of a Western-style education. See M. Şükrü Hanioğlu's *A Brief History of the Late Ottoman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008).

[39] Christoph Neumann, "Bad Times and Better Self: Definitions of Identity and Strategies for Development in Late Ottoman Historiography (1850-1900)," in *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography*, eds. Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi (Lieden: Brill, 2002), 58.

[40] Paul Sedra describes this phenomena in Egypt in a recent study. The CMS established a number of schools among Egypt's Coptic community in the nineteenth century with the intention of waging an "assault" on the oral culture that was prevalent with the Coptic community at the time. Sedra notes they

beginning of East-West mutual intellectual influence, nor the beginning of cross-confessional textual transmission between Europe and the Ottoman Empire. As I mentioned in the discussion on the early-modern public sphere, this network already existed centuries earlier, when culture, goods, and ideas flowed between the Ottoman Empire and Europe.[41] Whatever influence Voltaire and other Enlightenment thinkers may have had on Ottoman Muslim polemicists in the nineteenth century, radical Enlightenment and antitrinitarian literati were in turn heavily influenced by early modern Muslim polemicists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[42]

Antitrinitarianism appeared in Europe in the mid-sixteenth century and was a key connection point between Islam and Christianity. Antrinitarian thinkers in the sixteenth and early seventeenth century rejected the Trinity as being constructed of three persons because it defied logic and was not supported by scripture or biblical evidence. They called for a radical revision of Christian orthodoxy on the basis of logic, empiricism, and reason, not tradition, authority, or other dogmas. Antitrinitarianism spread to Christian denominations through figures like Henry Stubbe in the seventeenth century before transforming to Unitarianism and liberal Christian theology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mulsow notes there was a cultural transfer in which Islamic apologetics and polemics came to Europe and became "heresy" as Islamic concepts of the unity of God transformed into European Unitarianism. Freethinkers studied and

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introduced new practices of moralization and knowledge transmission and new structures of religious and social authority, grounded in literacy. These interventions were appropriated and reworked by the local culture. See Paul Sedra, *From Mission to Modernity: Evangelicals, Reformers and Education in Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011).

[41] Bevilacqua and Pfeifer, "Turquerie: Culture in Motion."

[42] Martin Mulsow, "Socinianism, Islam and the Radical Uses of Arabic Scholarship," *Al-Qantara* 31 (July-December 2010): 549-586.

translated Spanish polemics such as the Gospel of Barnabas or Muhammad Alguazir's *Apologia contra la ley Cristiana.* They based a text's value on its authority in a public debate, and these Muslim-origin books counterintuitively gave them an advantage. At that time citing an Islamic theologian or a Muslim anti-Christian polemic added credibility and significance to their arguments. This was a common trope in this period – using a foreign commentary to expose the faults of one's own society and introducing a different perspective to their audience as a neutral arbiter.[43] This rationalist approach to the Bible connects antitrinitiarians in the eighteenth century to Enlightenment figures such as John Locke, Jean Le Clerc, and Philipp van Limborch, who rejected everything that appeared illogical in doctrine and reduced the teachings of Jesus to a moral philosophy. The transfer of Muslim polemics to antitrinitarianism to Enlightenment thought existed in a matrix in which Islamic polemics could be absorbed, and Islam was presented as an uncorrupted monotheism.[44]

In sum, European Enlightenment thought may have heavily influenced nineteenth-century Ottoman polemicists, but Enlightenment thinkers themselves benefited from the already-vibrant Muslim-Christian lines of textual transmission that emerged centuries earlier. Thus, the pre-World War I European influence on Muslim writers should not be thought of as the Eastern "discovery" of the West and the beginnings of trans-imperial intellectual dialectics. Rather it was the next step in a long-term mutual process.

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[43] Justin Champion, "I remember a Mahometan Story of Ahmed Ben Edris": Freethinking Uses of Islam," *Al-Qantara* 31 (July-December 2010), 445.

[44] Mulsow, "Socinianism," 550-554.

iv. **Inter-Imperial Politics and Empire**

Modernity did not only exist in the abstract world of trans-national textual transmission; it was a key feature of governance. Notions of modernity were a critical component of the late-Ottoman imperial preoccupation of negotiating religious difference because it was a diverse state with a heterogeneous population. Its imperial policies represented the inherent tension of any empire that attempted to reconcile universalistic and culturally motivated politics with a diverse subject population.[45] Negotiating this contradiction was symptomatic of a state that managed multi-religious subjects, and in this regard the Ottoman Empire shared this dilemma of rule with other global empires in the pre-World War I era such as Russia, Britain, and France. These states aspired to build trans-continental empires that ruled over multiple religions and ethnic groups, speaking a variety of languages. Yet the financial demands for a modern military and state infrastructure to afford such a government machine required a polity to raise taxes and conscript soldiers. In the nineteenth century the discourse of legitimacy for such a polity increasingly involved an ethno-linguistic state. Yet it was a discontinuous process full of legal grey zones that conferred benefits on European and American subjects, such as extraterritorial status. Missionaries were able to exploit these grey zones for their own benefit.[46]

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[45] Sviatoslav Kaspe provides a definition of empire that is fundamental to this contradiction of rule: "Imperial political systems represent a method of resolving conflict-ridden tensions arising from the collision of universalistic, culturally motivated political orientation with the de facto variety and diversity of political cultures represented within a particular political space." Kaspe, *Imperial Political Culture*, 456.

[46] Dominic Lieven, *Empire: the Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Have: Yale University Press, 2001); Mustafa Tuna, *Imperial Russia's Muslims: Inroads of Modernity* (Princeton: Phd Dissertation, 2009), 33; Alan Mikhail and Christine Phillou, "The Ottoman Empire and the Imperial Turn," *Contemporary Studies in Society and History*, 54 no. 4 (September 2012), 733.

In the last 30 years historians have challenged long-held paradigms of inter-confessional life in the Ottoman Empire. Chief among them is the "mosaic" model of the Ottoman millet system, proposed by H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen,[47] which posits that the ethno-religious communities of the Ottoman Empire were compartmentalized and autonomous but under an Islamic superstructure. This model was first questioned by Benjamin Braude in 1982. He demonstrated that the historical myth of 1453 in which Sultan Mehmed II granted Christians and Jews in Constantinople an independent legal structure was an invented tradition that only came into institutional existence in the nineteenth century.[48] Other studies have demonstrated that Ottoman inter-religious encounters were quite common in the political, economic, and judicial spheres. From the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, Christians made frequent use of *şeria't* courts to settle claims against each other and even against Muslims.[49] Armenian trade networks served as major economic intermediaries between the Ottoman Empire, European states, and the Middle East, connecting Istanbul, Izmir, and Aleppo to merchant colonies in Italy, France, Baghdad, and other locations.[50] Christians and Muslims even cooperated to form networks of banditry and violence that played a role in imperial governance in Ottoman Rumelia in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, demonstrating that inter-

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[47] H.A.R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society in the West: Study of the Impact of Western Civilization on Moslem Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967).

[48] Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, eds. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York: Homes & Meier, 1982), 69-88.

[49] Najwa Al-Qattan. "Dhimmis in the Muslim Court: Legal Autonomy and Religious Discrimination," *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (Aug., 1999): 429-444; Ronald Jennings, "Kadi, Court, and Legal Procedure in 17th c. Ottoman Kayseri," *Studia Islamica* 48 (1978): 133-172; R. Gradeva, "Orthodox Christians in the Kadi Courts: The Practice of the Sofia Sheriat Court, Seventeenth Century," *Islamic Law and Society* 4, No. 1 (1997): 37-69.

[50] Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 182.

confessional relations cannot be separated from their social, economic, cultural, and power contexts.[51]

The multilateral, discontinuous nature of inter-confessional relations in the Ottoman Empire held a legal benefit for foreign missionaries. The seeds of Western colonialism were planted in the Middle East in the seventeenth century, growing into the nineteenth century conduits of labor and capital.[52] During this haphazard process of European officials building an imperial administrative and judicial infrastructure in the Middle East, nineteenth-century missionaries were able to inhabit a grey legal zone. They were American or British subjects often under British consular protection. This gave them an extraterritorial status and recourse to foreign consulates when their education, proselytization, or conversion activities ran afoul with Ottoman authorities. They lived in what Ziad Fahmy calls a "jurisdictional borderland," a "significant contact zone where there are multiple, often competing legal authorities and where some level of jurisdictional ambiguity exists. These privileges exempted them from local laws and taxes. Jurisdictional borderlanders had their own unique and independent agenda that often conflicts with many of the competing "national" or imperial positions."[53]

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[51] Tolga U. Esmer, "Economies of Violence, Banditry and Governance in the Ottoman Empire Around 1800," *Past & Present* 224, No. 1 (August 2014): 163-199.

[52] "AHR Conversation: On Transnational History," *The American Historical Review* 111, No. 5 (December 2006), 1441-1464. A notable example is Elias of Babylon, who left Ottoman Baghdad in 1668 and by the time of his death had traveled across Europe to the Spanish colonies of Latin America, was more interested in his travel writings of confessional change among Christian communities in the Ottoman Empire than he was global connections of the world. His adventures were that of a Catholic convert and member of a patriarchal family during the post-Reformational struggle for hearts and minds of Eastern Christians. See John-Paul A. Ghobrail, "The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Global Microhistory," *Past & Present* 222, No. 1 (2014): 51-93. For other studies on early modern global history, see Timothy Brook, *Vermeer's Hat: The Seventeenth Century and the Dawn of the Global World* (London: 2008); Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes toward a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia," *Modern Asian Studies* 31, No. 3 (1997).

[53] Ziad Fahmy, "Jurisdictional Borderlands: Extraterritoriality and 'Legal Chameleons' in Precolonial

These legal grey zones were spaces in which the state held limited power. Outside of concentrated areas of imperial control, what Lauren Benton describes as legal corridors, there existed irregular zones and enclaves that were contested by multiple actors. These include settlers, travelers, merchants, lawyers, subjects, and foreigners, all seeking to establish, define, and challenge this sovereignty. These actors shaped a legal regime whose contours did not always fit well within past or present accounts of international law. Maps of empires that show a uniform color shading, suggesting its land holdings were under uniform control, obscures the many variations of imperial territories. This space was not evenly covered but full of holes and haphazardly stitched together. It is to this list of actors and Benton's dynamic that I would also like to introduce foreign missionaries.[54]

Foreign missionaries made use of their extra-legal status to interpret the 1856 Reform Edict in more lenient ways than most Ottoman subjects. CMS missionaries Karl Pfander and S.W. Koelle understood them to guarantee freedom of religious expression, including the freedom to impress upon others their own religion. When Ottoman government officials confiscated their polemical literature at the customs house or shut down their meeting rooms, they complained in their private correspondence and missionary journals that the Ottoman government was not living up to its own reform edicts by denying them these measures. No such contradiction existed according to Ottoman officials: Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşid Pasha prompted the 1856 edict in order to

Alexandria, 1840-1870," *CSSH* 55, No. 2 (2013): 305-329.

[54] Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

reform conscription and the state's revenue collection structure, not to provide greater

legal latitude to foreign missionaries.[55]

The existence of the reform edicts themselves signaled a period of increased

foreign intervention in Ottoman state politics. The Ottoman Empire gained membership

into the Concert of Europe following the Crimean War, which was fought and won by the

British and French. These foreign powers therefore, held considerable political leverage

over the Ottoman state and pushed the implementation of the 1856 *Islâhat Fermânı*

(Reform Edict). They were resolved to accommodate foreign missionaries, even

defending them in cases in which they had allegedly insulted Islam. Due to this pressure

the Ottoman Empire was obligated to allow them considerable leverage in their

missionary enterprise, such as permitting an unlimited number of foreign schools to open

in its domains.[56]

Another matter to consider in light of imperial control is the notion of imperial

violence, which depended on the states's coercive authority. It could punish the

perpetrators themselves or announce the legitimacy of violence by proxies. Benton uses

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[55] Bernard Lewis and Stanford Shaw considered the 1839 edict as a Western-inspired shift away from centuries of a *şeria't*-based legal status quo in which one's religion determined his or her legal rights, but others argue the 1839 Gülhane edict emphasized the state and community instead of rights and liberties by calling for a return to just government, a concept also rooted in *şeria't*. Whatever its origins, the reform edict is ambiguous in this matters, as it makes no specific reference to securing religious equality. The Gülhane edict's new form of legal procedure was based on public legal judgment "as the divine law requires" (*kavânîn-i şer'iye iktizasinca*), the "divine law" meaning *Hanefî fikh*. Therefore, European discourses of reform as understood by the missionaries clashed with Ottoman government officials' views that combined its Western-inspired reforms with Islamic discourse embedded within the reform edict's terminology. J.C. Hurewitz's *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record* (Princeton: D. Van Nostrand, 1956), 114-115. For more recent studies on the Tanzimat-şeriat connection see Butrus Abu-Manneh's "The Islamic Roots of the Gulhane Rescript." *Die Welt Des Islams* 34, No. 2 (November 1994): 173-203, and Frederick Anscombe's "Islam and the Age of Ottoman Reform." *Past & Present* 208, No. 1 (August 1, 2010): 159-189.

[56] Selçuk Akşin Somel, *"The Religious Community Schools and Foreign Missionary Schools,"* In *Ottoman Civilization*, eds. Halil Inalcik and Günsel Renda (Istanbul: Ministry of Culture of the Turkish Republic: 2003), 388.

the example of slaveholders punishing their slaves. I expand her definition of "violence" to the symbolic punishing of rhetoric harmful to the state. Using this concept in application to Muslim religious polemics, the state may have claimed a monopoly of coercive power, but it delegated "punishments" against those who insulted the state's Islamic character, namely foreign missionaries, by allowing Muslim polemicists to criticize them openly. This does not suggest the absence of the rule of law, but the extension of the law beyond the center and the endowing of specific actors with greater powers.[57]

II. Discontinuities

In the previous section I considered print culture, intellectual modernism, and imperial sovereignty in terms of long-term historical structures and continuities rather than a set of causal factors in a limited time frame. That is not to say that there was no change from the early modern era to the modern era. Increased political and economic integration between Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century caused some of these phenomena to transform beyond the point of recognition from their early-modern prequel. In the case of missionary activity and religious polemical writings, their purposes and receptions altered considerably over the centuries. I will turn to historical discontinuities in this section to examine the historical phenomena that should be understood in different terms in the modern era. Lines of continuities certainly exist for these phenomena across the centuries, but they manifested themselves so differently in the nineteenth century that a deeper analysis of the social and political changes is

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[57]   Benton, 292.

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warranted. Christian missionary activity in the Ottoman Empire is a good category to begin this section. Missions ostensibly have a timeless purpose, to seek the conversion of their subjects to Christianity. As I will describe, missionary relations with the Ottoman state mutated from amiable in the seventeenth century to hostile in the early nineteenth century. Modern-era missionary theological debates even arose as to whether Muslims had to convert to Christianity in order to obtain salvation.

v. Christian Missionaries to the Ottoman Empire

Catholic groups entered Ottoman domains in the fifteenth century, starting with Franciscans in Dubrovnik and Bosnia, ministering to fellow Catholics. By the middle of the fifteenth century Franciscan friars lived in sixty monasteries throughout Bosnia.[58] French Jesuits launched their missionary work in Istanbul in 1609 as a result of Capitulation agreements between the Ottoman Empire and France. Capuchin missionaries entered the Ottoman Empire in the same period. They arrived in Istanbul and spread to Egypt and the Empire's Persian borderlands during the Counter-Reformation to convert Copts and Armenians to Catholicism and woo higher clergy of Orthodox Christian churches into communion with Rome. The Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (*Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide*) in Rome was responsible for these Catholic missionary activities in the Middle East. Pope Gregory XV founded this congregation in 1622 to arrange missionary work on behalf of various Catholic institutions. Both Jesuits and Capuchins spread to the Middle East and established

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[58]   István György Tóth, "Between Islam and Catholicism: Bosnian Franciscan Missionaries in Turkish Hungary, 1584-1716," *The Catholic Historical Review* 89, No. 3 (July 2003): 409-433.

themselves in Aleppo by the middle of the seventeenth century.[59]

Catholic missionaries in the Middle East had a positive approach to religious debate with Muslims and believed that discussion was possible, provided their interlocutor was of a certain intellectual level and shared their religious concerns. This was the result of the Jesuit method of *accomodatio*, first employed in sixteenth-century China, in which it was determined that if Catholicism were to thrive in its new setting it could not be seen as an exotic, foreign religion, but would have to become something familiar in order to germinate in Middle East culture. They considered this new culture to consist of a people both intelligent and learned.[60]

Protestant missionaries appeared in the Levant in a parallel fashion, although their approaches to conversion differed from Catholics. The Protestant missionary presence in the Ottoman Empire began in the sixteenth century, primarily through Anglican and Dutch chaplains. They first arrived in Mediterranean port cities that housed European consulates in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Many translated Christian texts to Ottoman languages for the purposes of evangelism. Wealthy patrons in England funded translation projects of Christian apologetic works due to their millenarian belief that the distribution of such writings in the Mediterranean would lead to the mass conversion of

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[59] Charles Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Bernard Heyberger, "Polemical Dialogues between Christians and Muslims in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 495-516.

[60] Bernard Heyberger, "Polemical Dialogues between Christians and Muslims in the Seventeenth Century."; Adina Ruiu, "Conflicting Visions of the Jesuit Missions to the Ottoman Empire, 1609-1628," *Journal of Jesuit Stuides* 1, No. 2 (2014): 260-280; Emanuele Colombo, "Jesuits and Islam in Seventeenth-Century Europe: War, Preaching and Conversions," in *L'islam visto da occidente. Cultura e religione del Seicento europeo di fronte all'Islam*, eds. Bernard Heyberger, Mercedes García-Arenal, Emanuele Colombo, and Paola Vismara (Marietti: Milano-Genova 2009): 315-340; David Mungello, *Curious Land: Jesuit Accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1989).

Jews and Muslims to Christianity. Robert Boyle, the seventeenth-century scientist and member of the Royal Society, was the driving force behind Edward Pococke's Arabic translation of Hugo Grotius's *De Veritae Religionis Christianae.* Through his own study of Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic, Boyle became associated with Pococke, who desired to bring about Jewish and Muslim conversions to Protestantism through religious texts such as these in the native languages of the Levant. Pococke and other scholars were fueled by a strong missionary impulse sought to disseminate these books in the Levant, with the help of sympathetic merchants who distributed the apologetics.[61]

Other missionary approaches to Islam in the pre-modern period involved translation projects of the Bible into Turkish, which are nearly as old as translations into European vernacular languages. The earliest translations were actually done by Ottoman Muslim scholars. During Süleyman's reign, Ahmed b. Mustafa (d. 1563), known as Le'âlî, a Sufi poet and Qur'anic scholar, translated the Psalms into Turkish. The first full Turkish translation of the Bible was a 1661 draft manuscript by Yahyâ b. Ishâk, also known as Hâki, a Jewish dragoman and Istanbul native. It was followed by the more well-known 1666 translation by Ali Bey, a Polish convert to Islam whose Christian name was Wojciech Bobowski. He served as an interpreter to the sultan and possessed a remarkable linguistic ability, understanding multiple European and Middle Eastern languages.[62] Only after a century and a half did the first printed Turkish Bible appear.

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[61] Eleanor H. Tejirian and Reeva Spector Simon, *Conflict, Conquest, and Conversion: Two Thousand Years of Christian Missions in the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012) 58-59; Alastair Hamilton, M. Van Der Boogert, and Bart Westerweel. *The Republic of Letters and the Levant* (Lieden: Brill, 2005), 1-5; 151-158.

[62] Hannah Neudecker, "Wojciech Bobowski and his Turkish grammar (1666): A dragoman and musician at the court of Sultan Mehmed IV," *Dutch Studies on Near Eastern Languages and Literatures* 2, No. 2 (1996): 169-192.

Funded by the British and Foreign Bible Society (BFBS), a Turkish Bible based on Ali

Bey's manuscript was printed in Paris in 1827, and it became the basis for further

Armeno-Turkish and Greco-Turkish translations. Foreign missionaries began a revision

in 1852 of the 1827 version in Arabic script for Muslim readers of Ottoman Turkish. The

project accelerated after the 1856 reform edict was announced in the missionaries'

optimistic belief that an era of open evangelization to Muslims was imminent. This

optimism instigated such acts as the British Ambassador Stratford Canning gifting the

1827 Turkish Bible translation to Sultan Abdülmecit. In 1857 translators produced the

Kitâb ül-ʿAhd el-Cedīd el-mensûb ilâ Rabbinâ ʿİsâ el-Mesîḥ (The Book of the New

Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ) in London. James Redhouse produced this

translation by revising a rare 1853 New Testament manuscript by Turabi Efendi, a

translator about whom almost nothing is known.[63]

The watershed break in missionary history in the Ottoman Empire comes in the

eighteenth century. Before this time, Catholics and Protestants in the Middle East largely

held a peaceful approach to Muslims. Sultans were mostly indifferent toward Catholic

missionaries to Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches, reflecting the

ambivalence of Islamic law to doctrinal differences among Christians. In the eighteenth

century Ottoman political and military power relations with Europe underwent a

profound transformation. At the beginning of the century Catholic missionaries worked in

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[63] See H. Neudecker, *The Turkish Bible Translation by Yahya bin 'Ishaq, also called Haki (1659)*, (Leiden: Het Oosters Instituut, 1994); Paul H. Nilson, "Western Turkish versions of the Bible," *The Bible Translator* Vol. 17, 3 (July 1966): 133-138; Bruce Privratsky, "A History of Turkish Bible Translations," *Bruce Privratsky*, Version P (May 2013), 1-3, 49; A.A. Cooper, "The story of the (Osmanli) Turkish version, with a brief account of related versions" (London: British & Foreign Bible Society, 1901); previously printed in *Bible House Papers*, Vol. 1, 6 (1899). Charles T. Riggs, "The Turkish translations of the Bible," *The Moslem World* 30 (1940): 236-248.

the Empire due to the permission of the state, working under capitulation agreements with France. By the end of the eighteenth century the missionaries had transformed into religious emissaries from more powerful states that posed a threat to the Ottoman Empire's political integrity. They created a parallel Catholic hierarchy to that of the traditional clergy in every Eastern rite church. In 1711, violence erupted between Ottoman Christian communities and missionaries. Armenian notables petitioned the custodian of Jerusalem, signed by the Chaldeans, Melkites, and Maronites, about the Jesuits and Capuchins that visited their homes and deceived their wives and sons with icons, pious images, crosses, and money (similar tropes that Muslim authorities used to complain of foreign missionaries in the nineteenth century). These new Catholic Uniate churches pledged loyalty to the pope and built stronger ties with Catholic Europe, with the Chaldean Catholic Church growing out of the Nestorians and the Melkite Catholic Church splitting from the Greek Orthodox in the See of Antioch. French pressure led to Sultan Mahmud II's recognizing the Armenian Catholic millet in 1830, but he and other sultans sided with the Apostolic Armenian patriarch and the Ecumenical patriarch against Catholic missionary attempts to win the Empire's Christians over to the papacy, as they all believed that Catholicism made for disloyal subjects.[64]

New waves of Protestant missionaries arrived in the early nineteenth century due to the renewed evangelical commitment to global evangelism. Their arrival in the Ottoman Empire marked a new stage of Christian-Muslim polemical discourse. Pre-

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[64] Bernard Heyberger, *Hindiyya, Mystic and Criminal, 1720-1798: A Political and Religious Crisis in Lebanon* (London: James Clarke & Co, 2001), 12; Heyberger, *Les Chretiens du Proche-Orient au temps de la reforme catholique* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1994); *The Cambridge History of Turkey,* 277.

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eminent among them was the ABCFM, a Congregationalist-based organization that formed in in 1810 in America's Second Great Awakening – a Protestant revival movement that arose as a reaction against skepticism, deism, and rationalism, enrolling millions in evangelical denominations, and began sending missionaries throughout the world in 1813. Fueled by millennialist eschatology, its missionaries believed in the eminent global spread of the gospel, the fall of the pope, and the end of Islam. Levi Parsons and Pliny Fisk, the first representatives of this organization to visit the Ottoman Empire, arrived in Izmir in 1820. Parsons died a year later and was replaced by Jonas King, who along with Isaac Bird and William Goodell founded the Beirut station in 1823. It soon spread throughout the Ottoman Empire's Middle Eastern, Balkan, and Anatolian provinces. From the 1850s onward the ABCFM poured millions of dollars into the missionary effort, printing four million Bibles, and commissioning hundreds of missionaries to the Ottoman Empire. By the end of the nineteenth century there were 465 ABCFM schools within the Empire, teaching in the native languages of its students, adding further pressure on the imperial center to expand and reform its educational system.[65]

Problems between Protestant missionaries and native Christians soon erupted. The ABCFM missionaries were initially well-received by the Lebanese Maronite Patriarch Yusuf Hubaysh, to whom they gifted a Syriac New Testament and a printed Arabic Bible (minus the apocrypha), but he later issued an anathema against them in the same year for

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[65] Joseph Tracy, *History of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions* (New York: M.W. Dodd, 1842); Betül Başaran, "Reinterpreting American Missionary Presence in the Ottoman Empire: American Schools and the Evolution of Ottoman Educational Policies" (unpublished MA thesis, Bilkent University, 1997), 87.

their aggressive attack on Catholic doctrine.[66] Relations between the Protestant

missionaries and the Maronite Church reached their nadir in 1830 with the death of As'ad

Shidyaq, the first Arab convert to Protestantism. The Maronite patriarch later conveyed

these events to the Propaganda Fide in Rome as yet another heresy conquered by the

resilient Maronite Church.[67] Goodell went on to establish the Istanbul station in 1831 and

worked under the protection of the British government prior to the formal opening of

diplomatic relations between the United States and the Ottoman Empire.[68]

In a similar vein, the ABCFM held amicable relations with the Istanbul-based

Apostolic Armenian Church in their initial encounters, but bolder evangelistic initiatives

led to a series of patriarchal anathemas in the 1840s issued against Apostolic Armenians

who attended Protestant schools or purchased their literature. Patriarch in Istanbul

Stephan III (r. 1831-9 and 1840-1) allowed Protestant missionaries to proceed

undisturbed, but Patriarchs Asduadsadur II (r. 1841-4) and Matteos II (r. 1844-8) opposed

them, the latter threatening excommunication with those who engaged the foreign

missionaries.[69]

Most Istanbul-based Protestant missionaries, however, preferred to avoid such

combative approaches to evangelism. William Goodell entreated Karl Pfander not to

publish his famous anti-Muslim polemic *Mîzân u'l-hakk* upon its translation into

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[66] Ussama Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008), 94.

[67] Ibid., 136-137.

[68] David Finnie. *Pioneers East: The Early American Experience in the Middle East* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press: 1967), 104.

[69] H.L. Murre-Van Der Berg: "Why Protestant Churches? The American Board and the Eastern Churches: Mission among 'Nominal' Christians. 104.

Turkish.[70] Goodell's apprehension about Pfander's approach was borne out of a desire to preserve the work of the ABCFM. It was also born out of the influence of theological liberalism on their mission. By the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries many foreign missionaries and their Ottoman converts to Protestantism embraced a social gospel and post-millennial teachings in which the first category was absorbed into the second. Native Ottoman figures had a religiosity largely formed by their encounters with American missionaries but directed their faith convictions to improving the Ottoman state rather than pursuing missionary strategies whose end goal was the conversion of the Empire to Protestantism. This is the case, for instance, with Butrus al-Bustani, a central figure in Makdisi's *Artillery of Heaven*, who was a Lebanese Maronite convert to Protestantism. Without any prompting from the American missionaries, he opened national schools that celebrated ecumenism, tolerated religious difference, and taught a modern, secular curriculum.[71]

Makdisi's characterization of a secularization process among foreign missionaries is an accurate description of the situation in 1860s Lebanon, but such outcomes were not universal throughout the Ottoman Empire. My research shows that while evangelical attempts to reconcile social and missional works failed in Ottoman Lebanon, it succeeded

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[70] E.D.G Prime, *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire: The Memoirs of Rev. William Goodell* (New York: Robert Carter and Bros, 1877), 431-432.

[71] Ussama Makdisi. *Artillery of Heaven: American Missionaries and the Failed Conversion of the Middle East.* (Cornell University Press: Ithaca, 2008), 14. Makdisi notes the ascendancy of missionary social works to the detriment of ministerial works. He describes the secularization of the American Board mission in Syria following the 1860 massacres in Lebanon between the Maronites and Druze as a failure to evangelize independently of a secular power. The American missionaries were so shocked by the violence of 1860 that they no longer felt a sense of common cultural belonging with native Christians. Makdisi, "Reclaiming the Land of the Bible: Missionaries, Secularism, and Evangelical Modernity," *The American Historical Review* 102, No. 3 (June 1997), 709-711.

to a fair degree in other parts of the Ottoman Empire that had a large American

missionary presence, particularly in Anatolia. Foreign missionaries could also connect to

Ottoman subjects on a common religious level, particularly Apostolic Armenians who

worked to reform their church along the lines of evangelical Christianity and emphasized

the themes of a common religious heritage of all Armenians. And the tools of political

and intellectual modernity — a secular education, vocational training, and emphasis on

national character — influenced the religious expression of the Apostolic Armenian

church. By the late nineteenth century, local priests preached in the vernacular language

to their congregations instead of reciting the liturgy in classical Armenian. As this

dissertation will discuss in Chapter 4, religion and intellectual modernity complemented

each other in the religious movement catalyzed by the American Board in late nineteenth

century Anatolia. They did not contest each other.

I propose an analytical framework in which the religious polemical battle among

missionaries, Ottoman Christians, and Muslim intellectuals represented a shared belief in

intellectual modernism, education, and irreversible progress; a competition to appear as

the exemplar of these values in an Ottoman and trans-imperial public opinion; and a

genuine difference in religious belief whose debate was informed by social realities of

friction in the Empire between the growing Ottoman state bureaucracy and the Protestant

missionary network. To be sure, these polemics did represent distrust and bad feelings

toward the opposing religion. However, they were not merely indicative of a souring

public perception of Christianity, the ratcheting effect of political Islam in the late

nineteenth century Ottoman Empire, or the failure of missionaries to effect influence

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beyond social works. State officials and missionaries were known to cooperate in various

ventures. Ebüzziya Tevfik, a printer, editor, journalist, and writer generally disliked

Protestant missionaries, but he printed a treatise on education commissioned by George F.

Herrick, a longtime ABCFM missionary known among some Muslim intellectuals as

"Muallim Herrick."[72] For his part, Herrick wrote the inclusive 1912 book "Christian and

Mohammedan: A Plea for Bridging the Chasm." While he still believed that Muslims

required spiritual regeneration, he called for social unity between the two religions and

for their spiritual and material progress via "the enlightenment, education, and the

uplifting of entire races of men [...] by the power of Christian civilization."[73]

Both Christian and Muslim polemicists believed in the integration of their

religious beliefs with scientific progress, and both groups favored the propagation of

education in belief that modern education would lead its recipients to the respective

religion, resulting in its global spread into places whose dominant religion was not a

monotheistic one, such as Africa, China, and India. Protestant missionaries believed in a

post-millennial eschatology in which the moral and material progress of Christianity and

Western civilization would convert the world to Christianity, ultimately culminating in

the return of Christ, an event some missionaries believe was mere decades away."[74] Many

Muslim reformers believed in the eventual conversion of Asian states, particularly Japan,

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[72]   Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa*, 234.
[73]   George F. Herrick. *Christian and Mohammedan: A Plea for Bridging the Chasm* (New York: 1912), 17-18. Quoted in Thomas S. Kidd's *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 65-66.
[74]   ABCFM missionary Charles Tracy reported to his superiors that the church growth and school attendance in Merzifon and the surrounding cities in central Anatolia had been so successful in previous decades that,"The millennium would not be far off if the serious spirit and Christian conscientiousness which reign in this school were to reign in all schools on earth ." Report of Marsovan Station, 1882-1883. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

to Islamic beliefs. An Islamic Eurasian bloc of solidarity would be formed to oppose

Western imperialism by incorporating Western knowledge with an "Eastern" essence.[75]

While there was significant overlap in the missionary-Muslim discourse of

intellectual and religious modernity, it was not fully mutually intelligible. Many of the

Muslim literati used what Johann Strauss has called a "French and Islamo-Ottoman"

cultural tradition in its use of sources and approach to rationality and European history.[76]

They wrote within the classic Islamic intellectual tradition as taught in Istanbul-based

*medrese*s but colored their writings with French philosophy and literature. In contrast, the

missionary authors wrote in an Anglo-Saxon and Puritan cultural tradition, preferring to

quote traditionalist Bible scholars and historians. The two sides' conceptualization of

political, intellectual, and religious modernity is an entangled history, but it is not without

its loose threads.

The ABCFM's enormous publishing efforts of Turkish Bibles were partially

coupled with optimism that Ottoman domestic reforms would remove hindrances in their

distribution of Christian scripture, if not enable more direct evangelical efforts toward

Muslims. The Ottoman economic domestic crises of the nineteenth century, its inefficient

fiscal and tax collection systems, and outside foreign pressure to increase the rights of

Ottoman Christians prompted the state to issue fundamental reforms to its government in

its reform edicts. The 1839 Gülhane edict promised universal equality in fiscal matters

and jurisprudence and to secure personal rights for all Ottoman subjects regardless of

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[75] Renee Worringer, *"Sick Man of Europe or 'Japan of the Near East'?" Constructing Ottoman Modernity in the Hamidian and Young Turk Eras," International Journal of Middle East Studies* 36, No. 2 (2004), 222-223.
[76] Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa*," 97.

religion. As an unintended consequence, however, the edict created a bifurcated system of patronage: Ottoman Muslim society, through its access to the military and government education, became entrenched in the state bureaucracy; Ottoman Christian society received its patronage through Western business contacts and foreign missionaries. This bifurcation contributed to the political tensions between the state and missionaries that are under consideration in this dissertation.[77]

vi. Religious Polemics

The genre of Christian-Muslim religious polemics has existed since the early centuries of Islam, beginning with a passage in the heresiology of John of Damascus's (d. 749) *Fount of Knowledge* entitled "The Heresy of the Ishmaelites." They were produced in frequent iterations throughout the medieval and early modern periods, written by Muslim and Christian authors with or without direct contact with the practitioners of their target religion, often composed during times of significant political and social upheaval. Such times included the Crusades, the thirteenth-century Mongolian conquest of the Middle East, and the sixteenth-century Ottoman conquest of Eastern and Central Europe.[78] These sometimes appeared in conjunction with Muslim-Jewish polemics.[79]

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[77] Ryan Gingeras. *Sorrowful Shores: Violence, Ethnicity, and the End of the Ottoman Empire, 1912-1923* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 19.

[78] See Sydney Griffith's, *The Church in the Shadow of the Mosque* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008). For more on the medieval and early modern Christian-Muslim polemical tradition see Nancy Roberts' "Reopening the Muslim-Christian dialogue of the 13th-14th Centuries: Critical Reflections on Ibn Taymiyyah's response to Christianity in Al-Jawâb al-Ṣahih li man Baddala dîn al-Masîḥ," *The Muslim World* 86, No. 3 (1996): 342-366; Norman Daniel, *Islam and the West: The Making of an Image* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2009); Adam S. Francisco, *Martin Luther and Islam: A Study in Sixteenth-Century Polemics and Apologetics* (Lieden: Brill, 2007); and Elmarsafy, Ziad, *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2009).

[79] The Jewish-Muslim polemical debate shared many characteristics with its Muslim-Christian counterpart, as polemical arguments in the pre-modern period were rooted in differences between the two sides' respective holy books. This genre appeared after the emergence of Islam in the seventh

In the introduction I described the early centuries of Christian-Muslim polemics. Without rehashing them, I will focus on the works of the early modern and modern periods in this section. It is also worth emphasizing that religious polemics were not merely a genre in their own right but also a literary element embodied in other genres, particularly in early Muslim chroniclers such as Ibn İshâk (d. 761) and the early major hadith collections. In early Muslim writings, the false beliefs of Christians and Jews served as negative examples of true religion in order to enjoin good and forbid evil. Muslim interpretations of Christianity and Judaism evolved over the early centuries of Islam. The Qur'an spoke in ambivalent terms of the two monotheistic religions, with both praise and condemnation. Over time, primary hadith collections showed a general mistrust of Jews and Christians. The classical exegetes fully turn away from Islamic pluralism, particularly al-Tabari (d. 923), al-Zamakshari (d. 1144), and al-Razi (d. 1209).[80]

Christian-Muslim polemics took on new intellectual contours in the early modern period. The *Tuhfa* of 1420 impacted the genre of Ottoman polemics in important ways. In the polemic Abdullah Tercüman tells the story of how he, a Catholic native of Mallorca and educated in Lleida and Bologna, became a Franciscan priest, discovered the truth of

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century, notably el-Esamm (d. 815-16)'s *Kitâbu'r-red 'ale'l-Yehûd.* Muslim polemicists often did not distinguish between Jews and Christians in their writings, referring to them collectively as *Ehl-i Kitab* ("People of the Book"). See Adem Özen, "İslâm-Yahudi Polemiği ve Tartışma Konuları" *Divan* 5 No. 9 (2002): 237-256; Moritz Steinschneider, *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache* (Leipzig: Hildesheim, 1877); Ignaz Goldziher, "Ehli Kitaba Karşı İslam Polemiği I," tr. Cihad Tunç, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi İslam İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, No. 4 (1980); Goldziher "Ehli Kitaba Karşı İslâm Polemiği II", tr. Cihad Tunç, *Ankara Üniversitesi İlâhiyat Fakültesi İslâm İlimleri Enstitüsü Dergisi*, No. 5 (1982).

[80] Simon Wood, *Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida's Modernist Defense of Islam* (London: One World, 2008) 1-8.

Islam, and converted in 1387 in the presence of Hafsid sultan Abū al-'Abbās Aḥmad. He speaks of his career in the court of the sultan as an interpreter and customs official. In the final section he writes a polemic against Christianity, based on arguments of the corruption of its scripture, sprinkled with Qur'anic quotations and references to classical Muslim polemics. It survives in large numbers in Turkish manuscript collections and was made available to Turkish scholars and polemicists by at least the seventeenth century. Katip Çelebi mentions it several times in his Arabic bibliographical dictionary *Kashf aẓ-ẓunūn 'an asāmī l-kutub wa l-funūn.* Its impact can be seen on Ottoman conversion narratives to Islam beginning in the seventeenth century. Other texts of this time contain polemical elements that would be repeated in later centuries. Serrac b. Abdullah's sixteenth-century *"Collection of Pleasantries"* (*Mecmū'atü'l-letā'if*) discusses at length Paul's role in corrupting the original Gospel and Jesus's teachings, a frequent theme in nineteenth-century polemics.[81]

Among the first Christian polemics produced in the Ottoman Empire are those by Jesuit and Capuchin missionaries in the Middle East who came to convert Orthodox Christians to Catholicism in the wake of the Counter-Reformation. In the late seventeenth century two French priests in Aleppo, Capuchin Michel Febvre and Jesuit Michel Nau, wrote polemical accounts with the belief that debate with Muslims was possible, provided their interlocutors were educated and shared their religious concerns. Their writings came during a torrent of Jesuit publishing in Aleppo, which included catechisms, dialogues, sermons, and handbooks. The two came from rival orders but both opposed the

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[81] Krstić, "Reading Abdallāh b. Abdallāh al-Tarjumān's *Tuḥfa,*" 20-23. Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam,* 89-90.

idea that discussing religion with Muslims should be avoided because it endangered the missionary presence in Islamic countries or would ultimately be in vain. Both priests acknowledged that Muslims shared with Catholics one and the same God. They did not demonize Islam and were impressed by the social class of their Muslim interlocutors. Other elements of their polemics are less original: Muhammed was not a prophet due to his immorality and absence of miracles during his ministry, and that Islam had spread due to violent conquest or its lax morals. Their arguments would be repeated in the nineteenth-century Christian missionary offensive push.[82]

Ottoman anti-Christian polemics appeared throughout the early modern period, but with few exceptions they tapered out in the eighteenth century. The most notable work during this period is Ibrahim Müteferrika's (d. 1745) *Risâle-i İslâmiyye* (Treatise on Islam). The 1710 treatise, written by the Hungarian-born Calvinist convert to Islam, who is best-known for his efforts to inaugurate printing in Ottoman Turkish, provided a short summary of Christian theology and the corruption of its scriptures.[83] His account bears similarities to the self-narrative conversion accounts to Islam written in the previous century. Müteferrika opens his text with a story of receiving theological instruction in Transylvania, where he was ordained. Like other converts, he writes that the seeds of his conversion were planted when he "discovered" verses of scripture that prophesy the coming of Muhammed. Other verses supporting this thesis were supposedly removed from the Christian canonical text and others added, such as those establishing the doctrine

[82] Bernard Heyberger, "Polemical Dialogues between Christians and Muslims in the Seventeenth Century," *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 55 (2012): 495-516.

[83] Baki Tezcan, "İbrâhîm Müteferrika ve Risâle-i İslâmiyye [in Turkish]," in *Kitaplara Vakfedilen Bir Ömre Tuhfe: İsmail E. Erünsal'a Armağan*, eds. Hatice Aynur, Bilgin Aydın, and Mustafa Birol Ülker (Istanbul: Ülke Yayınları, 2014): 515-556.

of Jesus's divinity. Any contradiction between these books and the Qur'an was nullified by the latter due to the doctrine of *mensûh* (abrogation).[84] Müteferrika's work is a rigorous study of Muslim and Christian scriptures, demonstrating his deep knowledge of both religious traditions. It contains interesting religio-political elements, with a focus on Sultan Ahmet III's messianic role, but it is primarily theological in character and does not contain the same source text emphasis as the anti-Christian polemics in the following century.

Muslim and Christian polemics in the nineteenth century expanded their sourcing beyond their respective holy books. They were no longer confined to quoting the Bible or the Qur'an or using discrepancies as self-evident proof of one's superiority over the other. They took a modernist approach to religion and believed that faith worked in cooperation, not in antagonism, with independent reasoning, scientific education, and the belief that human agency could direct the course of the future. Ironically, in their attempts to distinguish their own religion as true and their opponent as false, Christian and Muslim conceptions of religion came to resemble one another more closely as writers from both religions appealed to reason as the arbiter of moral and religious truth rather than their respective sacred texts.[85]

This change in intellectual argumentation coincided with a global spread of anti-Christian polemical literature at this time, with the most prominent Muslim intellectuals in the world taking part, such as Rashid Rida, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, and Muhammad

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[84]   Halil Necatioğlu, *Matbaacı İbrahim Müteferrika ve Risale-i İslamiye: Tenkidli Metin.* (Ankara: Elif Matbaacılık, 1982), 38-39.
[85]   Aziz Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities* (London: Verso, 1993), 102.

'Abduh. They wrote polemics as scholars and political activists. As scholars they appropriated European biblical criticism in order to deconstruct the Bible and defeat Christian missionaries in academic and popular debates. As activists they denounced European colonial expansion into Islamic states. 'Abduh, a famed jurist and liberal reformer, wrote "Islam and Christianity in their Attitude to Science and Civilization" and claimed that all scientific discoveries were contained in the Qur'an. He accused Christians of being anti-scientific and irrational.[86] 'Both 'Abduh and al-Afghani held a Comtean model of the evolution of society (natural, social, and political), and placed the three monotheistic religions on this evolutionary trajectory, with Judaism at the bottom and Islam at the top.[87] For his part, Rida applied rationalistic approaches to classical Islamic polemical assertions, such as the corruption of the story of the Crucifixion, claiming that it was crowd psychology that caused first-century witnesses to mistake another for Jesus at his supposed execution.[88]

The most influential Muslim polemic of this period was *İzhâr u'l-hakk* ("The Truth Revealed"). It came about in the 1860s when Sultan Abdülaziz (r. 1861-1876) commissioned the Indian Shi'ite scholar Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî to refute the anti-Islamic works by foreign missionaries, in particular the writings of German CMS missionary Karl Pfander. Al-Kairânawî was uniquely suited to this task.[89] Not only was

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[86] Arthur Jeffrey, "A Collection of anti-Christian Books and Pamphlets Found in Actual use Among Mohammedans of Cairo," *The Muslim World* 15, No. 1 (1925): 26-37.

[87] Al-Azmeh, *Islams and Modernities,* 102-103.

[88] Umar Ryad. *Islamic Reformism and Christianity: A Critical Reading of the Works of Muhammad Rashid Rida and his Associates (1898-1935)* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 313.

[89] Schirrmacher notes that despite his Sh'ia beliefs, al-Kairânawî was embraced by the Sunni Ottoman imperial center for his 1854 debate with Pfander. Christine Schirrmacher, *The Influence of German Biblical Criticism on Muslim Apologetics in the 19th Century* (Gießen: Freien Theologischen Akademie, 1997).

he a globally renowned Muslim theologian and a visible figure in the trans-imperial

polemical exchange between Muslims and Christians, but he had debated with Pfander

before. In 1854 the two engaged in a famous public dispute in Agra, India on the truth of

the Christian and Muslim scripture.[90] Both sides declared victory in the debate and

resumed their work in India until they both left following the 1857 Mutiny. Pfander had

already written his polemic *Mîzân u'l-hakk* in 1829, but upon arrival in Istanbul set out to

release a Turkish translation, which he did in 1862.[91] Sultan Abdülaziz prepared a

counter-attack and personally requested al-Kairânawî to produce a response to Pfander's

Mîzân u'l-hakk. In 1867 he released *İzhâr u'l-hakk* ("The Truth Revealed"). It combined

traditional anti-Christian polemics with European theological tools of historical

criticism.[92]

This particular intellectual hybridization was the result of efforts by al-

Kairânawî's colleague Muhammad Wazir Khan, another Indian Muslim intellectual who

had worked since 1851 at a British medical center in Agra. He obtained dozens of

European theological texts from the Agra and Delhi Anglo-Oriental Colleges' research

libraries, which were, ironically, donated by European missionaries. They formed the

foundation for *İzhâr u'l-hakk*.[93] While al-Kairânawî's arguments against the logic and

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[90] Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India*, 248.

[91] *Mîzân u'l-hakk* enjoyed wide exposure through its many re-printings, reaching readers from Germany to India. I am not able to estimate at this stage how many copies of "The Balance of Truth" circulated in the Ottoman Empire. However, American missionaries were prolific book publishers and distributors, and their print works reached readers of Armenian, Bulgarian, Albanian, Greek, Arabic, Turkish, and all other communities of the Empire, at least in principle. See Johann Strauss' "Who Read What in the Ottoman Empire (19th-20th centuries)?," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 6, No. 1 (2003), 46.

[92] Schirrmacher, *The Influence of German Biblical Criticism on Muslim Apologetics in the 19th Century,* 1-4.

[93] Powell, "Muslim-Christian Confrontation: Dr. Wazir Khan in 19th-Century Agra," in *Controversy in British India*, ed. Kenneth W. Jones (SUNY Press, 1992), 82.

internal harmony of Christian theology were not new (many of them echoed Ibn-Warraq's ninth-century treatise *Against the Trinity* and the *Tuhfat*), his sources were. The European authors he cited included English theologians Thomas Hartley Horne, Matthew Henry, Thomas Scott, Nathaniel Lardner, Richard Mant, William Paley, Samuel Horsley, and Richard Watson. Among the German authors he cited were the pioneers of higher criticism J.D. Michaelis, J.G. Eichhorn, and, above all, David Strauss, whose *Das Leben Jesu* characterized the gospels as a mythological interpretation of the historical life of Jesus.[94] After its 1867 release in Istanbul, *İzhâr u'l-hakk* inspired a new wave of anti-Christian religious polemics among Ottoman Muslim intellectuals.[95] They appropriated al-Kairânawî's universal polemic against Christianity and his methodological tools of literary criticism but narrowed it into a direct argument against Protestant missionaries within the Ottoman Empire.[96] Although a few anti-Christian religious polemics were written in Ottoman Turkish prior to the nineteenth century, as will be explored in detail in the next chapter, the genre experienced a major resurgence in the decades following the release of *İzhâr u'l-hakk.*

Conclusion

In addition to questioning the historiographical narrative about an entangled Ottoman-European history in the realms of intellectual transfers, confessional identity, and methods of imperial governance, the aim of this chapter has been to present these

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[94] Christine Schirrmacher, "Muslim Apologetics and the Agra Debates of 1854: A 19th Century Turning Point," *Bulletin of the Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies* 13, no 1 (1994), 78.
[95] Ibid.
[96] Mehmet Aydın, *Müslümanların Hristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1998), 82-92.

cultural and social phenomena over the long *durée.* But despite the remarkably similar

cultural developments in the Ottoman, European, and Mediterranean worlds, local

observers would not have likely accepted this entanglement or even have been aware of

its existence. Outside of a few cosmopolitan hubs such as Istanbul, Tunis, or, London,

most elites of Europe and the Ottoman Empire did not look to each other for cultural

inspiration. Groups and states may be induced to think and grow like each other through

exchanges, contacts, and mutual borrowings, but this is an inadvertent development.

Andrews and Kalpaklı note this complex process in *The Age of Beloveds,* in which they

argue that common literary themes of love and sexuality filled poetry from England to

Istanbul from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth centuries, casting a common

literary web over all these urban hubs. They qualify this theory with a nota bene that

educated Ottomans consciously copied cultural forms from Persia and Arab lands, not the

West. Ottoman-European mutual imitation did not occur until arguably the eighteenth

century growth in Ottoman conspicuous consumption of Western goods, and definitely

the nineteenth century with the growing popularity of the French language, literature,

dress, and customs. Early-modern Ottomans would have thought it absurd that cultural

ties bound them to Europe equally as much as Persia. Nevertheless, in both their

discussion on late Renaissance literature and my discussion on early modern and modern

religious history, there were interesting commonalities in the social and cultural life of the

Mediterranean world. This shared intellectual network produced similar poetic

sensibilities as it did religious sensibilities found in Christian-Muslim polemics. [97]

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[97]   Walter Andrews & Mehmet Kalpaklı, *The Age of Beloveds: Love and the Beloved in Early-Modern Ottoman and European Culture and Society* (Duke University Press, 2005); Fatma Müğe Göçek, *Rise*

In equal measure, the polemicists in my dissertation would have likely rebuffed the charge that their argumentative strategies mirrored those of their interlocutors. When they did understand that their opponents wrote in their own idiom, they resented it as ignorant appropriation or plagiarism. Yet whether or not an Ottoman scholar at the time understood this intellectual network that connected him to far-flung foreign domains, he would have understood the challenge to his faith of a Protestant missionary publishing an anti-Islamic Turkish text or a book seller trying to peddle it to him on the Galata Bridge in Istanbul for a few *kuruş*. In the next chapter this dissertation will turn to the first Ottoman Christian-Muslim polemical debates of the modern era and consider how the social and cultural trends discussed in the last chapter manifested themselves practically.

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of the Bourgeoisie, Demise of Empire: Ottoman Westernization and Social Change (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

Chapter Two:

Mîzân u'l-hakk and *İzhâr u'l-hakk:* **A Global Christian-Muslim Debate in Istanbul**
(1861-1867)

In 1858 Karl Pfander came to Istanbul, leaving behind one of the greatest failures

of his long missionary career in northern India. By most accounts in the international

press, particularly the Muslim print sphere, he had lost a landmark 1854 public debate

with the Indian ulema member Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî. The two agreed to a five-day-

long debate as to whether the Bible or the Qur'an was the infallible word of God. The

loser, they also agreed, would have to admit his fault and convert to the other's religion.

The debate was held at the CMS station in Agra in front of British government officials,

Catholic and Protestant missionaries, Sunni and Shi'a scholars, and local Christians and

Muslims. The debate topics were supposed to cover all matters of theology – from the

historical development of the two religions, to the persons of Muhammed and Jesus, to

the nature of sin, salvation, and eschatology. The two sides, however, could not move

past the initial debate topic of *tahrîf* (corruption) in Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. Al-

Kairânawî said the discrepancy between it and Luke's genealogical account proved the

Gospels false and textually corrupt. He demanded Pfander to admit as much, but the

German pietist missionary did no such thing. Pfander declared the discussion terminated

after two days. Both sides left declaring victory.[1]

Pfander left India unsuccessful in converting many Muslims to Christianity, but

the CMS was optimistic that political conditions in Ottoman Istanbul were more

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[1]   Avril Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries in Pre-Mutiny India* (London: Curzon Press, 1992), 248.

conducive for Pfander's brand of forthright missionary work. The agency opened a station

there in the aftermath of the Crimean War, a time in which they believed that the Ottoman

Empire would provide leniency for the Empire's Christian population, partially as a

redress for the executions in 1852-1853 of two Muslims from Aleppo and Edirne who

had converted to Christianity. Furthermore, they believed, Britain had accrued enormous

political capital in the Ottoman Empire for its assistance in defeating Russia, and it would

surely spare some on its missionaries. Other CMS missionaries in the Ottoman Empire

had told them that the statues of the 1856 reform edict would be carried out for their

maximum benefit and implemented in Istanbul under the watchful eye of the British

ambassador. The time had come, as CMS historian Eugene Stock wrote reflectively in

1899, using enthusiastic imperial language, for a "direct missionary attack upon

Mohammedan Turkey."[2] With all this missionary zeal, Pfander's polemical spirit could

threaten instability and even violence in Istanbul. However, I will show that his writings

did not come about due to worsening political relations between Ottoman religious

groups. They were counter-intuitively written as a result of Christian and Muslim

attempts to ease tensions in the empire and promote their own visions of social stability.

Furthermore, the American Board largely rejected his confrontational style and preferred

to restrict public evangelism to Ottoman Christians and Jews.

Pfander came from a humble background in Stuttgart, Germany, and was the son

of a baker. His father perceived his intellectual aptitude, sent him to a local Latin school,

then to secondary and university-level education, and finally the missionary institute in

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[2]   Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Mission Society: Its Environment, Its Men, and Its Work*,
      Volume II (London: Church Mission Society, 1899), 148-150.

Basel. He studied there from 1820 to 1825, demonstrating linguistic talent. From 1825 to

1829 he relocated to Shusha in Russian Transcaucasia (modern-day Georgia); from 1829

to 1831 he worked in Baghdad and returned to Shusha. Here he stayed for four years and

married Sophia Reuss, a German, in Moscow in 1834. She died in childbirth the

following year. Russian government officials gave him a deportation order in 1835 due to

the fierce opposition that met his polemics and their prohibition on all non-Eastern

Orthodox missionaries. Pfander briefly travelled to Istanbul in 1836, then relocated to

Calcutta by way of Persia and arrived there in 1838. He became a missionary with the

CMS in 1840, as it appeared most effective to work under the protection of the English

colonial government. There he married the English woman Emily Swineburn on May 12,

1835. Pfander stayed in Agra from 1841 to 1855, Peshawar from 1855 to 1857, and

Istanbul from 1858 to 1865.[3]

  Pfander was joined in Istanbul by R.H. Weakley, an Islington native familiar with

Turkish, and S.W. Koelle, a fellow German who had spent years in Sierra Leon and

published a celebrated compendium on African languages. The early years were

inconspicuous. Unlike in Agra, they engaged in no public preaching on Istanbul's busy

streets or obtrusive book-hawking, as they understood that conditions for open

evangelism were poor. They quietly distributed Turkish scriptures and evangelized those

they met through personal conversations, even giving out copies of Pfander's polemic

Mîzan u'l-hakk.[4] They soon had a number of inquirers come forward to receive private

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3   C.F. Eppler, *D. Karl Gottlieb Pfander* (Basel, 1888); Emily Headland, *Sketches of Church Mission Society Workers* (London, 1897).

4   The actual printing of the Turkish version of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* took place in London in 1861 at William Watts printing house. Ali Birinci notes that at this printer house numerous other influential publications for the CMS's mission to Istanbul were produced here, such as the *Koçi Bey Risâlesi,* and Ali Bey's

instruction in Christianity. One of these catechists even renounced Islam and accepted

Protestantism. The first Turkish convert of the CMS mission was baptized on Easter Day,

1862. He had been an inquirer at Smyrna and twice arrested by the authorities, treaties

notwithstanding, but released through the intervention of the British consul. Several

others followed him in baptism over the next two years.[5]

The three foreign missionaries continued in their evangelical efforts, unaware of

the international controversy that would erupt following the 1864 arrest of Turkish

converts to Christianity and government prohibitions on missionary literature. In 1865 the

Ministry of Public Instruction (*Ma'ârif-i 'Umûmiye Nezareti*) rejected Pfander's request

for *Mîzân u'l-hakk* to be printed in Istanbul, then years later added all of his books to the

official list of forbidden works (*yasaknâme*).[6] Officials belittled *Mîzân u'l-hakk*, which

shocked and angered Pfander and his missionary colleagues, who believed that it would

be the spark that ignited the conversion of the Islamic world to Christianity. To a high-

level Ottoman bureaucrat, however, it was a collection of ridiculous arguments.[7]

1665 translation of the Bible, printed here in 1853 and 1857. See Ali Brinici's "Katip Çelebi'nin "Mizanü'l-hakk"ı yasaklanmış mıydı?" *Dergâh: Edebiyat Sanat Kültür Dergisi* 1, No. 10 (1990): 17-20. Along with these were Pfander's other polemical works, such as the *Mıftâh u'l-asrâr* in 1861. M. Seyfettin Özege, *Eski harflerle basılmış Türkçe eserler kataloğu* (Istanbul: Fatih Matbaası, 1973), 910.

[5]   Ibid., 153-154.

[6]   The first instance of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* being included in the *yasaknâme*s is 1318/1900. See *Matba'a-i Âmire, Darü'l-hilâfeti'l-âliyye* (1318), 94. The inclusion of Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk* onto Hamidian-era *yasaknâme*s has led to confusion among Turkish historians. Until recent decades, many assumed that the work in question was the celebrated *Mîzân u'l-hakk* of Kâtip Çelebi (d. 1657), written in the seventeenth century. The misunderstood instance of censorship has been used by historians as an example of the excesses of press restrictions by Abdülhamit II. Ali Birinci clearned up this confusion in 1990s with an article in Dergâh that mentioned Kâtip Çelebi was never mentioned in the Hamidian *yasaknâme;* the *şeyhü'l-islâm* Abdürrahim Efendi even said that per Kâtip Çelebi's work, "May God give this writer the greatest reward; in this treatise there is a guide for conciliation of the public's state, a demonstration of the straight path, and restraint." Birinci references an 1862 article by Şinasi criticizing Pfander's work and its derogatory nature. Pfander's work, therefore, was a far more likely candidate for being the work in question on the *yasaknâme*. Ali Birinci, "Kâtip Çelebi'nin "Mizanü'l-hakk"ı yasaklanmış mıydı?" *Dergâh: Edebiyat Sanat Kültür Dergisi* 1, No. 10 (1990) 17, 20.

[7]   Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (Prime Ministry, Ottoman Archives, Istanbul hereafter BOA).AMKT.MHM

Pfander played a central role in the late Ottoman Christian-Muslim polemical battle and was an exemplary product of the global growth in Protestant missionary activity, but he was by no means the only foreign voice in the Christian-Muslim dialogues and disputes in the Ottoman Empire. Pfander has achieved significant attention in scholarship of the missionary presence in the Ottoman Empire, but his career in Istanbul lasted less than a decade and he had few connections with the Ottoman bureaucracy. This stands in contrast to such figures as American missionary Elias Riggs, who spent seven decades in the Ottoman Empire, or George Herrick, director of the ABCFM's publishing committee, and author of numerous Ottoman works on education. Herrick enjoyed cordial if not friendly relations with Ottoman officials, who gave him permission to print his books. Nor was Pfander the only promulgator of religious literature. As this chapter will show, the book distribution of the CMS was dwarfed by the ABCFM. Therefore, his rocky relationship with state officials and Muslim intellectuals was not indicative of the entire decades-long Protestant-Ottoman government encounter, nor was the polemical controversy of the 1860s due to the inherently volatile nature of Ottoman inter-religious relations. Rather, it was the result of a convergence of numerous historical factors that defined the Christian-Muslim polemical exchange for decades to come.

This chapter analyzes the polemical debates in Istanbul between 1861 and 1867, the period of Pfander and al-Kairânawî's second polemical encounter in Istanbul. It contextualizes this encounter by exploring the background of the Protestant missionary

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361/34, 29 Ramazan 1283/ 11 August 1866.

presence in the Ottoman Empire and social relations between missionaries, Ottoman state officials, Muslim literati, and Ottoman Christians. I will take the early stages of Pfander's missionary career prior to his arrival to Istanbul into consideration in this chapter, particularly in the 1840s in which he wrote polemics against Indian Muslims. Many of these texts, written in Persian, travelled from India to Istanbul through the intermediation of Persian and Indian intellectuals. They provided ammunition for Pfander's critics prior to al-Kairânawî's 1868 publication of *İzhâr u'l-hakk*.

By surveying the early decades of Protestant missionary activity in the Ottoman capital, I examine the difference between rhetoric on different sides of the encounter, which was often quite acerbic, and actual relations in terms of historical sourcing. I argue that these polemics were not written or given state approval due to worsening relations between confessional groups in the Empire or growing Islamic tendencies within the imperial state. Rather, they were a means of negotiating the imperial concept of religious difference and the tensions of imperial governance in the nineteenth century that sought to balance diversity under a regime maintained by the imperial state and increasingly nationalizing tendencies that sought to eradicate ethnic and religious diversity.[8] It is ironic that the same state officials who permitted Muslim authors to write anti-Christian polemics in the 1860s also supported Ottomanism, a supra-national identity that promoted fraternity and equality among the Empire's religious and ethnic groups. Yet as

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[8] Sviatoslav Kaspe writes about such imperial tensions in regards to nineteenth century-Russia in his definition of empire: Imperial political systems represent a method of resolving conflict-ridden tensions arising from the collision of universalistic, culturally motivated political orientation with the de facto variety and diversity of political cultures represented within a particular space. Sviatoslav Kaspe, "Imperial Political Culture and Modernization in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," *Russian Empire: Space, People, Power, 1700-1930*, eds. Jane Burbank, Mark von Hagen, and Anatolyi Remnev (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002): 455-93.

this chapter will argue, government officials sought to resolve this apparent contradiction by granting rights of religious expression to missionaries that conformed to modern liberal rhetoric but sought to suppress anti-Islamic works for the same reasons. They argued that England would not tolerate such an attack on Protestantism, nor would Germany, which had expelled Jesuit priests. They sought to protect Islam's pre-eminent status in society despite promising equal social standing to non-Muslims, consciously imitating modern European states that protected the interests of its religious minorities but still maintained a Christian identity. Accordingly, they commissioned anti-Christian polemics to counter what it believed to be attempts by foreign diplomats and missionaries to threaten the religion of the state. Ottoman bureaucrats and Christian and Muslim polemicists offered competing visions of public religious expression in the reforming Ottoman state. But these polemicists were not merely tools of state governance. They wrote with independent literary goals outside of domestic policy. The Ottoman state played a direct role in staging the polemical debate between Muslims and Christians, but less so in the contents of these religious polemics.

The second goal of this chapter is to examine the major Tanzimat-era polemical debates to examine how a growing Protestant missionary network, a global Muslim public sphere of internationally circulated print works, and international diplomatic pressure to raise the social status of Ottoman non-Muslims all converged to create a more visible religious dialogical encounter. I analyze the arguments used in these polemics and argue that the means of defending one's religion changed over the course of the decade as reflected in the discursive strategies of the polemics. This was not merely a change in

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strategy but a changing conceptualization of one's religion in regards to the other. Therefore, the aforementioned Islamic scholar Harputî İshak, renowned for his anti-Bektashi polemic *Kâşifü'l-Esrâr*, wrote an officially sanctioned anti-Christian polemic in 1861 that follows classical tropes of quoting Qur'anic verses against biblical passages to disprove such doctrines as the Trinity but still considers the Bible a divinely-inspired book. By 1866 ulema member Sungurî Hasan b. Ömer ignored these theological controversies and only wrote of the New Testament's complete textual corruption.

These factors are embodied in three figures largely responsible for the Christian-Muslim polemical resurgence in the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire: Pfander, Harputî İshak, and al-Kairânawî. They were gifted scholars and linguists that read widely and localized Ottoman religion within global debates concerning religion and modernity. Their religious discussions also took place on the domestic and inter-imperial level. Foreign missionaries now had direct recourse to foreign ambassadors to redress any supposed infringement of their rights, typically appealing to the British embassy for intervention. The relationship between missionaries and Western diplomats was itself complicated, as missionaries frequently sought consular support for perceived Ottoman injustices against native Christians, even though diplomats did not offer unconditional support for their mission; they merely offered them protections available to any European or American citizen residing in the Empire. The re-alignment of international political and economic power in the mid-nineteenth century increased the incursion of European influence within Ottoman internal matters, and their support of religious freedoms for

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local Christians created political friction between the state and non-Muslims.[9] As this

chapter's analysis of the 1864 Ottoman arrest of Turkish converts to Christianity will

show, issues of local criminal law enforcement became international crises and front-page

issues in the foreign press due to diplomatic pressure and missionary influence.

The Origins of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* and the Muslim Response

The origins of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* comes from Karl Pfander's decades of missionary

work across the Islamic world and his desire to produce a useful tool for Muslim

evangelism. Pfander was not an Orientalist scholar by training, nor did he write any of his

works for the purposes of producing a philosophical treatise. He wrote *Mîzân u'l-hakk* as

a practical guide for missionaries attempting to engage Muslim with the gospel or for

Muslims interested in learning of Christianity in an Islamic idiom. Its contents derive

from his conversations with Islamic scholars in Russian Transcaucasia, Baghdad,

Calcutta, and Istanbul. It is concerned with matters that would come up in conversation

with a Muslim cleric or any reasonably educated Muslim, rather than esoteric academic

debates on religion. Topics include the reliability of the Qur'an and the Bible, hadith

collections that refer to Christians, and which religion is most compatible with natural

morality or conscience.

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[9] The most notorious example of this trend was the European powers issuing *berat*s (a document issued in order to grant a privilege) to non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, which allowed them to come under foreign protection and enjoy all the capitulation rights held by foreign residents in the Ottoman domains. See Maurits H. van den Boogert, *Capitulations and the Ottoman Legal System: Qadis, consuls, and Beraths in the 18th Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Salahi R. Sonyel, "The Protégé System in the Ottoman Empire and Its Abuses," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, No. 1 (1991): 675-86; Ali İhsan Bağiş, *Osmanlı ticaretinde gayrî Müslimler: kapitülasyonlar, Avrupa tüccarları, beratlı tüccarlar, hayriye tüccarları, 1750-1839* (Ankara: Turhan Kitabevi, 1983); and Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Levantiner: Lebenswelten und Identitäten einer ethnokonfessionellen Gruppe im osmanischen Reich im "langen 19. Jahrhundert"* (Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 2005).

Pfander wrote *Mîzân u'l-hakk* in German and published it in 1829. He obtained

assistance from native religious scholars to translate it into Persian, Arabic, and Urdu.

The original Persian edition was published in Shusha in 1835, and the Urdu translation

was printed at Mirzapore in 1843. The primary issue in the work is on the reliability of

the Bible and Qur'an. They were compared on the basis of scriptural literalism, of which

Pfander argued the former was inerrant, while the latter contained numerous internal

contradictions. It was a bold tactic: Islamic scholarship since its earliest centuries

defended the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Qur'an and vigorously tested chains of

hadith transmission to determine the reliability of sayings of the Prophet.[10] Pfander's

strategy corresponded with the assumption of contemporary Presbyterian and Anglican

missionaries that the most effective polemic was to attack other religions at their

strongest points, intellectually and socially.[11]

It is here that the most revolutionary aspects of his apologetic appear: Pfander

appeals to the Qur'an itself and early Islamic commentaries to support Christian claims

about the nature of Christ and his perfect character. In the introduction, he quotes verses

21:91 and 66:12, which corroborate the Old Testament prediction of Jesus's birth to a

virgin. He also appeals to Abdâllah ibn Omar al-Baidâwi (d. 1290) and the hadith

collectors al-Bukhâri (810-870) and Muslim (d. 875) for similar proofs. Pfander's

approach to Christian apologetics appeals to the Muslim reader on the basis of their own

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[10] See Nicolai Sinai, Michael Marx, *The Qur'an in Context: Historical and Literary Investigations into the Qur'anic Milieu* (Leiden: Brill, 2010); William Graham, "Traditionalism in Islam: An Essay in Interprepation," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol 23, 3 (Winter, 1993): 495-522; G.H.A. Juynboll, *Studies on the Origins and Uses of Islamic hadith* (Aldershot: Varioru, 1996).

[11] Jeffrey Cox*, Imperial Fault Lines: Christianity and Colonial Power in India, 1818-1840* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 59-60.

scriptures and scholarship.[12]

Pfander writes that determining the true faith could only be accomplished through reasonable analysis and applying a five-part test: first, it must fill the human desire for justification and pardon; second, it must not violate natural morality or conscience; third, its God must reward good, punish evil, and be characterized by justice and holiness; fourth, its God must have immutable and all-powerful attributes; fifth, its soteriology must be revealed through revelation. Regarding the nature of revelation from God, for Pfander it must fulfill the spiritual wants of a man's soul, coincide with natural law and principles of right and wrong known by all humanity through tacit knowledge, present God as just and holy, be consistent with prior revelation, and not contradict human reason.[13] Pfander argues that Christianity met his five criteria in every regard. He runs Islam through the same test and finds it deficient.[14] In early editions of the work he prefers Scriptural quotations over reason to discover knowledge of God. In subsequent editions he argues more from the approach of reason than revelation.[15]

The first half of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* describes the doctrines of Christianity: the attributes of God, man's condition, the nature of the Atonement, its proof from prophecy,

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[12] K.G. Pfander, *Mizan al-Haqq* (Rikon:) 179. This section appears in a reprint of the Arabic translation published in Beirut in 1877. From Mark Beaumont's *Christology in Dialogue with Muslims: A Critical Analysis of Christian Presentations of Christ for Muslims from the Ninth and Twentieth Centuries* (Cumbria: Paternoster, 2005), 117. In the last decade Pfander has come under considerable attention in the fields of religious history and comparative religions for his apologetics written in an Islamic idiom. See *Christians and Missionaries in India: Cross-Cultural Communication since 1500*, ed. Robert Eric Frykenberg (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2003); Jan A.B. Jongeneel, *Jesus Christ in World History* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2009).

[13] William Muir, *The Mohammedan Controversy, Biographies of Mohammed* (Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1897), 20-21.

[14] Clinton Bennett, "The Legacy of Karl Gottleib Pfander," *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 20, No 2 (1996), 76.

[15] Ibid.

the Holy Spirit, and the attributes of a true Christian. Only in the last chapter does the

work become controversial. Here Pfander directly refutes Islam. He describes the

character of a true prophet as one who does not oppose previous revelations, supports his

teachings with miracles or prophecy, and does not enforce his teachings with violence.

Pfander spends several pages demonstrating that Mohammed failed each of his tests. His

coming was not foretold; he was incapable of miracles; and his doctrines were enforced

by the sword.[16] In his examination of the Qur'an, Pfander admits that it includes excellent

precepts and doctrines. But anything worthy in his teachings, he argues, is also found in

Christian Scripture. He criticizes the Qur'an based on blind predestination, and "intolerant

precepts." Mohammed himself is criticized for indulging in licentious passions, which

"held up to deserved reprobation" along with the violent means he used to spread Islam.[17]

The theme of Christian theological revelation in nature runs through this book as

it does in Pfander's other works. In 1840 he wrote *Tarîk u'l-hayât* ("The Way of Life")*,*

concerning the nature of sin and redemption.[18] His 1844 *Mıftâh u'l-asrâr* ("Key of

Mysteries") claims that a number of signs can be found in creation that point to the

trinitarian nature of God: "Nature contains unequivocal marks of the existence of the

Divine nature in Trinity; and, in truth, whoever attentively considers them, will perceive

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[16]   Muir, 21. William Muir describes this portion of the work as "very ably executed; indeed the wonder is, that after its perusal any one could ever again have recourse to such arguments."
[17]   Ibid., 22.
[18]   Pfander's colleague William Muir wrote years later the following concerning this treatise: "[It] stands unrivalled as an exposition of Christian doctrine in the Persian language ...To be interested or profited by the *Tarık u'l-hayât*, requires no doubt, a state of mind much in advance of that which the ordinary Moslem now possesses, for the subject of inward courrption is one foreign to his ideas; but the day is, we trust, approaching, when this will no longer be the case; --- when the leaven of that knowledge which is even now pervaiding the country will work a mighty change in their feelings and ideas; and then, by the blessing of God, will the heart respond with notes of conviction and repentance to the touches of truth contained in this volume. Muir, 30.

that plurality in unity is possible."[19] He uses examples from mathematics: the circle has

no beginning or end, much like the character of God. Trigonometry is necessary for its

measurement and comprehension, which resembles the Trinity and proves the existence

of a system that is self-contained and in perfect unity but dependent upon each of its

parts. No intelligent actor can exist in absolute unity as it would merely exist and be

passive and inactive; therefore, the superadditions of intelligence and the will must exist,

and the Creator's metaphysical nature is of a species in trinity. Therefore, unity is found

in trinity.

Muslim Responses to Pfander in India

Pfander's first print battle with Muslim intellectuals came in India in the 1840s.

Some Indian intellectuals who fled the 1857 Mutiny arrived at the Ottoman Empire and

brought knowledge of this debate with them. They informed Ottoman scholars of

Pfander's writings and inspired the first Ottoman polemics against him. Christian tract

societies in India published Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk*, *Mıftâh u'l-asrâr* and *Tarık u'l-hayât*

(The Way Of Life). Responses from local scholars came shortly after. In the early years

of the decade Pfander and the Islamic scholar Maulavi Said Ali Hassan of Agra

exchanged a total of twenty-two letters. Their correspondence was published in the

collected work *Khair Khah Hind*, a monthly Urdu journal published by Christian

missionaries in Mirzapore. It was a convoluted debate, with each side approaching issues

differently, refusing to acknowledge the validity of the other side's arguments. The main

line of argument taken by Maulavi was Pfander's use, or rather misuse, of reason as a

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[19]   Karl Pfander, *Mıftâh u'l-asrâr*: *The Key of Mysteries. A Treatise on the Doctrine of the Trinity in Unity*
    (London: Christianity Literature Society for India,1844).

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sovereign judge to understand the revealed truth in religion. He attacked his apologetic based on logic to establish the validity of Christian doctrine and supernatural episodes described in the Bible.[20]

These criticism show Pfander's failure to reach Muslim readers by using logic rather than appeals to Scripture. This was a blow to the missionary, who believed that he could sidestep the entire issue of debates on Muslim and Christian Scripture, appealing to the rationalism of his audience. Other scholars mocked Pfander for his allegedly logical proofs of the Trinity and mathematical analogies. These criticisms resurface in the 1860s Ottoman polemics of Harputî Ishak, and al-Kairânawî, suggesting they had their origin here. This rhetoric is found in the anonymous Urdu tract *Khulâsa-i-Saulat-uz-Zaigham* ("The Lion's Onset") in 1845. It was the most popular Muslim polemic in India until the appearance of *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, in no small part due to its sharp rhetoric and biting sarcasm. The author follows up on Pfander's analogy of a triangle as "proof" of the nature of God and mocks the author by pointing out that one may draw a square and thus prove that God is four parts, with the Virgin Mary as part of this deity.[21] Sir William Muir, a Scottish Orientalist and colonial administrator in India who wrote *A Life of Mahomet* and *History of Islam to the Era of the Hegira*, dismissed "The Lion's Onset" as a rambling, desultory attack, full of spite and animosity, careless of its arguments but nevertheless acknowledged that it was attractive in style.[22]

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20 Muir agreed in this criticism of Pfander. In "The Mohammedan Controversy," he says that Pfander's attempts to use reason to explain the Trinity was noble but ultimately misguided, as it was doubtful whether a man, even in a perfect state, could discover the doctrine of the Trinity without revelation, and marks in creation were not sufficient to lead a man to any such belief. *Mohammedan Controversy*, 24-25.
21 Muir, 25.
22 Ibid., 38. As an example he argues that the descendants of Ismail inherit every promise intended for the

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Pfander's final period of engaging Indian Muslims came in the 1850s, but it would resemble the sort of engagement he would have with Ottoman Muslims in the next decade, where arguments centered on textual analysis of scripture rather than discussions of scripture itself. Up until this time Pfander continued to publish treatises defending Christianity and criticizing Islam by using classical Islamic scholasticism, namely Persian and Arabic theological works.[23] His debate methods became anachronistic by the 1850s, when works of Biblical criticism by D.F. Strauss, Tom Payne, and others flooded into India and fell into the hands of educated Muslims. They believed it was time to challenge foreign missionaries with these European theological critical works since Pfander and his ilk were only familiar with traditional Muslim arguments against Christianity. Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî of Delhi challenged Pfander to a public debate. As discussed earlier in this chapter, this confrontation only lasted two of the intended five days, and it was more of a violent clash than a respectful meeting of the minds. Al-Kairânawî relied on arguments of textual criticism to claim the scriptures were corrupted following the time of Muhammed. Pfander demanded that al-Kairânawî produced a copy of the allegedly uncorrupted Scripture that existed in the sixth century and differed from the nineteenth century text to prove the discrepancies. Al-Kairânawî challenged Pfander to sort out the discrepancies between the genealogies of Luke and Matthew. Pfander refused and terminated the discussion. The 1854 debate indicates that Pfander was not equipped to

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Israelites and "more are the children of the desolate (of Hagar), than of the "married wife," or Sarah (Isaiah, chapter 1).

[23] In 1847 Pfander published the *Hall u'l Iskhâl* ("The Solution of Difficulties)," which was a reply to the *Kitâb u'l-ıstıfsâr* and the *Kaşf u'l astâr.* It was a brief reply to the questions to which Maulvi Syad Abdallah Sabzwari of Lucknow put to Pfander, along with a reply to Ali Hassan. The book concludes with the entire correspondence between Pfander and Hassan, and its devolution into personal attacks prior to the termination of the discussion., 96.

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argue with modern Biblical scholarship. His writings in 1860s Istanbul suggest that he still was not.[24]

These controversies with Indian Muslims prefigure the same debates and strategies that Pfander used in Istanbul. When he arrived in the Ottoman Empire in 1858, he spent much of his time in long personal talks with individual Muslims or small groups interested in Christianity. But Pfander believed that the best means of engaging the largest numbers of would-be converts possible was through printing and publishing his religious works still using the same arguments that were unsuccessful against al-Kairânawî. In this way he could appeal to far more interested parties than personal encounters would allow. Such methods were largely supported by the CMS mission in India and his colleagues. What he likely did not expect when he arrived in Istanbul, however, was that initial resistance to his strategy came from other Protestant missionaries.

Missionary Conflict and Muslim Engagement: The Clash Between the ABCMF and the CMS in Istanbul

The American Board was not enthusiastic when it heard of Pfander's establishment of a Church Mission Society station in the Ottoman capital. Internal ABCFM correspondence shows they worried that government would conflate Pfander's polemics as coming from the American missionaries. Such books would cause dissension between religions in the Ottoman Empire and threaten official state permission for the ABCFM's enormous network of schools, churches, and print shops. They held the CMS

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[24] William Muir, "The Mohammedan Controversy." Stephen Neill, *A History of Christianity in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 343-344.

at arm's length. S.W. Koelle recalled in 1877 the chilly reception that other missionaries gave Pfander upon his arrival to Istanbul. Pfander told Koelle that although he had informed the American missionaries that he had come to engage only Turkish Muslims in his ministry, they received him with such coldness and unfriendliness that he saw at once they wished him rather not to have come at all.[25]

In 1860 the American Board in Beirut refused Pfander's request to print his *Mıftâh u'l-asrâr*, fearing it would draw the attention of the Ottoman government and run afoul of state censorship laws.[26] Veteran American missionary Henry Dwight wrote in 1901, recollecting his decades of work in Istanbul, that press censorship laws often prevented the production of polemics, but admitted that such writings were typically not useful for their missionary enterprise: "But [censorship laws] are not obstacles on the whole to the missionary, unless he wishes to write controversial books. And these are commonly best unwritten."[27] William Goodell, the legendary founder of the ABCFM's Istanbul station in 1831, pleaded with Pfander not to translate his work into Turkish. He wrote in 1877 the following concerning his opposition to the book's publication:

> The Rev. Dr. Pfander, of the Church Mission Society, a very worthy and excellent man, came
> and opened his batteries against Islamism. We earnestly advised him not to publish those

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[25] Koelle, November 22, 1877. CM/042/209.

[26] Pfander, May 29, 1860. CM/061/026. Pfander had spent much of the year inquiring various printers in Istanbul to produce the book and present it to Ottoman authorities but was consistently refused. He writes in January 1860 that "I must regret I am not yet able to give any information about the printing of the 'Miftah-ul-Asrar' in Turkish. I first applied to an English printer here to present the book to the Turkish authorities for permission to print it, but he refused to do so. Next I went to a French printer, he promised to get the permission for the Turkish censor and consequently I made arrangements with him for the lithographing of the book. Not after having kept the M.A. For some time he at last returned it, saying that he had no prospect of getting the permission and could therefore do nothing. About a fortnight ago I state the case to our ambassador asking his advice what to do, he promised to take the subject into his consideration, but as yet I have not obtained his reply. Pfander. January 24, 1860. CM/061/21.

[27] Henry Otis Dwight, *Constantinople and its Problems* (Oliphant: London, 1901), 247-248.

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books; we entreated him not to do it; we solemnly protested against his doing it. But this good brother having what the great Dr. Edwards attempted to prove nobody can have, viz., a self-determining power of the will, went on and did it; and the effect has been to bring all our missionary and bible operations into great danger – the very thing of which we had repeatedly warned him.[28]

The ABCFM had quite a different agenda than the CMS. The former was a significantly larger operation, with a printing operation that produced millions of Bibles and hundreds of schools in the Anatolian interior, producing native Ottoman Protestant pastors and publishers. The ABCFM's Turkey Mission alone consisted of hundreds of missionaries and their families spread throughout Istanbul, Izmir, Merzifon, Harput, Aintab, Trabzon, and the Anatolian interior. The CMS, in contrast, had at its maximum three missionaries at the Constantinople station, no independent printing operation to speak of, and its ministry functions were restricted to Sunday meetings in their private, rented rooms in different quarters of the city. Only one to four Muslims ever attended their weekly Turkish services. Their native staff consisted of a few Ottoman subjects whose duty was to walk around the city, sell literature in public markets, visit Muslims with whom they had connections, seek discussions on religious topics, read the Scriptures to them, and bring interested parties to the Sunday services. Though tiny in number, they were considered an indispensable intermediary link between the missionaries and the Muslim public. Among the native helpers employed over the years, two were of Armenian, two Persian, and two of Turkish backgrounds.[29]

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[28] E.D.G Prime, *Forty Years in the Turkish Empire: The Memoirs of Rev. William Goodell* (New York: Robert Carter and Bros, 1877), 431-432.

[29] S.W. Koelle, November 22, 1879. CM/042/209. In an 1867 annual report, Koelle described their recent want of native agency as damaging their ability to execute their missionary endeavors. In their report he writes that their staff had been reduced to two native agents due to others being ordained or hired by other agencies; he describes their catechist has visiting a number of Turks, inviting them to the mission rooms, offering them the Bible or Pfander's books. They were indispensable in this manner, as the publication of Pfander's books had been prohibited by the government and could only be distributed in a

The religious groups to which the two missionary agencies sought to minister were also quite different. The ABCFM, since its establishment in Istanbul in 1831, worked primarily among Armenians and Greeks. Evangelism among Muslim Turks was incidental to their primary mission to revive ancient churches in the Ottoman Empire. The CMS, in contrast, considered their sole duty to evangelize and convert Muslims to Christianity. The CMS shared evangelical and eschatological views with the ABCFM, but their smaller organization and lack of schools meant they did not need to curry as much favor with the Ottoman state. They were less interested in printing books of a general religious character with content that would be unoffensive to Muslims and more interested in the direct discussion of the differences between the monotheistic faiths.[30] Koelle wrote to his superiors in London that it was only due to the mysteries of providence, not their lack of zeal, that they did not establish a Turkish congregation: "There was therefore never any doubt amongst us here as to the purely Musulman character of our Mission, and it is obvious that if you find now that your Mission in Constantinople has not drawn to itself a congregation from amongst the Christians, as has been the case e.g. in Isfahan, this cannot fairly be put down to want of success of divine blessing."[31]

Records of ABCFM publishing activities reveal that the majority of its output

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private manner. Koelle, Annual Letters, February 8, 1867.

[30] Koelle writes that "Pious talk of a general, colourless kind is liked by the majority of Mohammedans; but specifically Chrisitan and Missionary conversation would only be tolerate in society as a most rare exception." Ibid.

[31] S.W. Koelle, November 22, 1879. CM/042/209. The majority of their pages come from the Biblical Catechism in Armenian (5,000 copies totaling 240,000 pages) Armeno-Turkish Old Testament (5,000 copies totaling 960,000 pages), the Psalms and the Pentateuch in Bulgarian (6,000 copies totaling 1,422,000 pages).

from the Constantinople station presses were books and brochures in Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, Bulgarian, and Greco-Turkish, with little to no printing of books in Ottoman Turkish. According to the 1860 report "Printing at Constantinople in 1860," the mission printed 1,292,000 pages in Armenian, 8,632,000 pages in Armeno-Turkish, and 3,332,000 pages in Bulgarian. Most of the works were short books or tracts on Christian morals and catechisms, such as "Repentance Explained," or "The World to Come," a 44-page eschatological tract. The only book that could appear to provoke controversy is the 78-page booklet in Armenian entitled "Reply to Arch Bishop Matteos." The work is an explanation of Protestant belief in an attempt to reconcile with the Istanbul Armenian Patriarch; in the 1840s he had excommunicated members of his flock that fraternized with Protestant missionaries by attending their schools or Sunday services.[32] According to a report of the 1863 printing activities, the only book that the ABCFM Committee of Publications authorized in Ottoman Turkish was the "Commentary on the Sermon on the Mount," an 88-page book of which they printed 3,000 copies, totaling 264,000 pages.[33]

The Ottoman Response to Pfander

The response to Pfander's polemics came swiftly, even before *Mîzân u'l-hakk* was published in Turkish in 1862. There is evidence that Ottoman scholars were in contact with Persian and Indian literati who made them aware of the 1854 debate in Agra. The first candidate is a 24-page-treatise from 1858 by the Diyarbakir scholar Muhammed Şaban Kâmî (d. 1884). Kâmî was a Sufi intellectual who wrote divan poetry, and treatises

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[32] Edwin E. Bliss, ABCFM Committee of Publications. *Printing at Constantinople in 1860.* (Istanbul: May 5, 1861), Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

[33] Elias Riggs, George F. Herrick, ABCFM Committee of Publications, *Report of the Committee of Publications* (Istanbul, May 1864), Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

on medicine, mysticism, and affirmation of the positive sciences. His anti-Christian

polemic is labeled *Redd-i Protestan* (The Refutation of Protestantism) in the Sülemaniye

Library *mecmua* collection, Yazma Bağışlar sub-collection (4517/1), but the original

polemic lacks a title. It is unknown who labeled the treatise and whether Kâmî even

originally intended to single out Protestantism in his anti-Christian work. While Kâmî

may have been inspired to write specifically against Protestant missionary publications

and could have even obtained a Persian copy of Pfander's polemic, there are reasons to

believe his target is more general.

Kâmî's arguments against Christianity do nothing to articulate any features of

Protestantism different from Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy, nor does he make clear

that Pfander inspired him to write. He offers stock criticisms of Christianity in his

polemic: the incoherence of the Incarnation and the Resurrection, in contrast with the true

prophetic mission of Jesus being to proclaim the coming of Mohammed.[34] Questions arise

for his or the archivist's reason for titling the polemic *Redd-i Protestan* rather than *Redd-i*

Nasarâ (The Refutation of Christianity). If it were indeed Kâmî who chose this title,

perhaps he did so as a means of defending Islam against what he perceived to be a threat

from Protestantism at his home in Diyarbakir. The ABCFM had distributed Christian

literature throughout eastern Anatolia since the 1840s, some of it likely appearing in local

book markets. They embarked on numerous tours throughout the region and had

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[34] *Wa-qultu ʾanna taqrīr kalāmuhum wa-taḥrīr marāmuhum, hākadha, liʾanna rūḥ Allāh wa-ʾibnahu wa-man kāna shaʾnuhu hākadha fa-huwa ʾafḍal yuntij al maṭlūb wa-lāken kawnuhū ʾibn ghayr bayyin muḥtāc ʾila al-bayān fa bayānuhu hākadha liʾannahū wulida bilā ab wa man wulida bilā ab fa-huwa ʾibn Allah taʿālā, wa man kāna ʾibnahu fa-huwa ʾafḍal yuntij al maṭlūb, liʾannahū min al-bayyin ʾanna ʾibn al-ʿazīz ʿazīzun wa yustafād min kalāmihim ʾiqrār nubuwwa nabiyyinā sayyid al-kāʾināt ʿalayhi ʾafḍal al-tahiyyāt.* Ali Emirî, Esâmî-i Şuarâ-yı Âmid'de Kâmî, *Redd-i Protestan*, 1275/1858. Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar Bölümü, 4517/1.

established a station in Diyarbakir in 1857. Kâmî may have seen them as a menace to his

religion, his sovereign, and his fellow Ottoman Muslims. He writes in the polemic's

introduction that he prays for the Ottoman Empire and the Sultan Abülaziz, the shadow of

God on earth, that he may protect the oppressed.[35]

More direct challenges to Pfander came only one year later. Popular accounts of

the 1854 debate that were written in Urdu and Persian spread among Muslim

intellectuals. Those that travelled among India, Iran, and the Ottoman Empire who had

heard of Pfander's arrival to Istanbul made themselves available to the sultan's court. In

1859 an Iranian member of the ulema arrived in Istanbul and presented himself to the

deputy Grand Vizier (*Makam-ı Celîl-i Kâymakâm Sadâret-i Uzmâ'ya*) Âli Pasha, the

famed Tanzimat reformer. The Iranian scholar, Resûl Mesti Efendi, requested permission

to publish a response to Pfander, which was granted. He most likely had familiarized

himself with the Persian version of *Mîzân u'l-hakk*. Although he was a proponent of the

Şâfi'î school of *fıkh,* in contrast to the *Hanefî fıkh* espoused by most Islamic teachers and

scholars in Istanbul, these differences did not prevent state officials from giving him a

warm reception. Resûl Mesti Efendi's published work was named *İzhâr u'l-Yakın*

("Revelation of Certainty"), and it was well received by the ulema due to the writer's

"piety, zeal and talent" (*dindâr ve hamîyetkâr ve hünerdâr bulunduğundan*).[36] The

contents of his work are unknown as references to it do not exist outside of the small

number of sources in the Ottoman archives, suggesting it had highly limited distribution

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[35] *Thumma tamannaytu bi al-duʿāʾi li-yunīra dawlat al-ʿuthmaniyya, wa sirāj al-saʿāda al-khaf(q)āniyya ẓill Allah fī al-arḍ khalīfat rasūlih al-qāʾim bi al-nafl, wa al-farḍ, kamā qāl ʿalayhi al-salām , al-sulṭan ẓill Allah fī al-arḍ yuʾwī ʾilayhi al-ḍaʿīf wa bihī yantaṣir al-maẓlūm.* Ibid.
[36] BOA A.MKT.UM 420/79, 27 Muharrem 1277 / 15 8 1860.

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or may have never even been published. It also appears to have garnered little or no

attention from American and British missionaries, as no references to it appears to exist

in CMS or ABCFM sources. Yet whatever its impact in the mid-nineteenth century, it was

soon supplanted by a far better-known work.

In 1861 Islamic scholar and theological instructor Harputî İshak wrote *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* ("The Light of Truth") as a riposte to Pfander, the year before the Turkish edition

of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* appeared. He had government support for the project, which was

prepared under the auspices of Ahmed Kemal (d. 1888), head of the Ministry of Public

Instruction. Harputî İshak was chosen to write the work for his teaching experience at

Istanbul's most prominent Islamic theological centers. He was an instructor at the *Dâru'l-ma'ârif* secondary school who had gained renown at the Fatih *Medrese* for his scholarship

and eloquence. Word of his abilities reached all the way to Sultan Abdülazîz, for he was

invited to Dolmabahçe Palace numerous times and enjoyed a close relationship with the

sultan between 1866-1870. This relationship made it possible for him to acquire state

support for his anti-missionary polemics.[37]

Harputî İshak writes *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* in the form of a classical Islamic

philosophical treatise. He uses the question-and-answer form in which a problem or

series of problems is presented, each of which revolves around a specific subtopic and

challenges the yet-to-be-stated conclusion. Then he answers in the form of an argument

and responds to possible objections. This befits his work as a scholar of *kelâm* and İbn

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[37] İshak Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında II* (İstanbul, 1969), 127. See also Halil Kalyonu, "Harputlu İshak Efendi'nin Eserlerinde Hz. İsa'nin Çarmıha Gerilme Meselesi" (YÖK Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2005), 1.

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Sina, who used this methodology frequently in his writings. Harputî İshak translated Ibn Sina's medical works into Turkish, such as *İştişfâ fî Tercemeti'ş-Şifâ* (The Book of Healing). His other influences include classical scholars of *kelâm* such as Celaleddin Devvani (d. 1502), Al-Gazali, Fahreddin Razi, and Ibn Arabi.[38]

While Harputî İshak does not specifically mention encounters with Protestant missionaries in *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* outside of Pfander, it is possible that he could have interacted with them personally in his hometown of Harput. One of the largest ABCFM missionary stations was located in the eastern Anatolian city and directed missionary operations throughout the province. Established in 1855, the Harput station was the center of the province for non-Muslim education and diffused Protestantism through its missionaries and their hundreds of primary and secondary school students. The ABCFM considered it the center of influence in Eastern Turkey, located near the headwaters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, "in the very heart of Armenia."[39]

In the introduction of *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat,* Harputî İshak says that he composed the work in order to answer "an ignorant critic with the vain pretension to object to the correct religion of Islam."[40] He maintains this acerbic tone whenever he addresses Pfander's ignorance for attacking the sacred books of Islam: "O ignorant opposer [...] As you haven't become aware of your perfect ignorance, you have revealed your ridiculous situation (*Ey câhil mu'teriz [...] Halbuki kemal-i cehlinden haberin olmayıp kendi gülünç*

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[38] Harputî İshak, *Es'ile-i Hikemiyye*, (Istanbul: Ali Şevki Efendi Matbaası: 1278), 119-120.

[39] Erdal Açıkses, *Amerikalıların Harput'taki Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri* (Istanbul: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2003); "Harpoot Station," brochure, *PABCFM*, Reel 714.

[40] *"mu'teriz-i câhilin biri dîn-i kavîm-i islâmiye ba'z-ı itiraz zu'm-ı bâtiliye fârisiyyü'l-ibâre [...] bir risale te'lif edüb. Şems ül-Hakîkat* (Istanbul: Tâkvimhane-i âmire, 1862), 2. Quoted in Strauss, *Müdafa'â'ya Mükabele,* 64.

durumunu meydana çıkarmışsın)."[41] The book's first section is written in a dialogical manner in which a Christian poses a question and a believer (*mü'min*) offers an answer. After an overview of the two religions, the book changes to a question-and-answer format of 72 questions submitted to a Christian by a Muslim. They are largely classic tropes in the Muslim polemical tradition. The most important matter in the book is the issue of the crucifixion of Jesus, as twenty two of the questions address this topic. Harputî İshak also criticizes inconsistencies between the Gospels in secondary details of the narrative of Jesus's life. In his analysis of the Last Supper he discusses the discrepancies of the event in the four gospels. For example, Judas was named as the one who would betray Jesus in the Gospel of John, yet Jesus's betrayer goes unnamed in the Synoptic Gospels: "Four individuals each having different writings is a strange work. It is necessary to agree that according to John the one who would commit treason – Judas Iscariot – was indicated as such; in the statements of the other three individuals, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, a traitor is included, but it is not known who this is."[42]

Textual criticism aside, Harputî İshak finds core tenets of Christian theology unable to withstand rational scrutiny. In his analysis of the doctrine of transubstantiation he considers the idea incoherent, as the finite body of Jesus could not provide unlimited materials for all Eucharistic celebrations across space and time. In Matthew 20, when Jesus presents bread and wine to his disciples as his own body and blood, it is an idea that nobody of sound mind could accept:

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[41]   *Şems ül-Hakîkat*, 18.
[42]   *Şems ül-Hakîkat*, 49-50. *Dört şahsın her birinin başka başka yazmıları 'acâyıp bir iştir. Yuhanna'ya göre hıyânet edecek kişiye yani Yahuda İşkoryat'a o mecliste işâret edildiği anlaşılması gerekirken diğer üç neferin (Matta, Markos, Luka) ifadelerinde hıyânet edecek bir şahıs mevcuttur. Ancak kim olduğu ma'lûm değildir.*

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> Suppose it is asked that, for example, Jesus was 10 spans (*kârîş*) tall, two wide, and one span long, [...] but in what shrunken form can Jesus be a one-span piece of bread; is this not absurd? The reply to this is as follows, 'However large the images are that appear in a mirror, they are the same thing as what is in front of the mirror.' In that case it can be said to them, 'That which appears in the mirror is an image. It in itself is not the same as the thing [being reflected]. According to your belief, you say that Jesus is a man, and even if there are 100,000 pieces of the creator, they are part of Jesus's one body. According to these words there must be 100,000 of Jesus. As the creator increases, the person's body increases. According to this belief, Jesus must be without end.[43]

Throughout *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* Harputî İshak's rhetorical questions are crafted so that for his Christian interlocutor to even ask the question would cause him to produce the answer on his own and show his beliefs to be false. His style is reminiscent of medieval polemicists Ibn Warrâq and Ibn Taymîyah in which they seek incoherence in their opponents' theology and force upon them a conclusion that contradicts their fundamental beliefs.[44] Harputî İshak's other rhetorical method is to show that a particular Christian defense does not comport with common sense or logic. This argumentative device is used to prove that Christian scriptures only consider Jesus to be a prophet. Verses that describe his human character and physical weaknesses are falsehoods (*bâtıl*). For Christians to believe that Jesus is divine but that he also took on human form (*nâsût olmak*) and was born of Mary is to ascribe weakness to the perfect nature of God:

> Recognizing that he descended from heaven means that he became human. [But] if he is the divine one who descended that they designated as the Father, then the deficiencies of his earthly body, like eating and drinking, also apply to God. This is absurd. If God's perfect qualities are omitted, then so is the divinity of Jesus. In short, the idea of the Incarnation is completely false.[45]

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[43] *Sual olunur ki, mesela Hz. İsa'nin on kârîş boyu, iki kârîş eni ve bir kariş boynu farz olunsa, üç tanesi ancak bir kârîş olan ekmek parçası ne vechle Hz. İsa'nın batîke-i cesidi, bu muhâl değil midir? Cevap olarak , 'Bir aynanın karşısına ne kadar büyük görüntüler çıksa da ayna onu gösteri.' derler. O zaman onlara denilir ki, 'Ayna görülen bir hayâldır. Bi-zâtî o şeyin aynısı değildir. İ'tikâdınıza göre, Hz. İsa (a.s.) bir adamdır. Eczâ-i fâtıre yüz bin İsa olmak birinde İsa'nın cesedi mevcuttur." dersin. Bu sözünü göre yüz bin İsa olmak lazım gelir. Fâtır arttıkça insanın cesedi de artar. Bu i'tikâdınıza göre, İsa'nın nihayetsiz olması gerekir."* Ibid., 257-258.

[44] David Thomas, tr., *Anti-Christian Polemic in Early Islam: Abu Isa al-Warraq's Against the Trinity*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Thomas F. Michael, *A Muslim Theologian's Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya's Al-Jawab Al-Sahih* (Caravan Books, 1985).

[45] *Hristiyanlar Emanet'te 'Hak ilâh olan Mesih, gökten yere indi,' derler. İnmekten murât insânileşmektir (nâsût olmak), şeklindeki görüş, Hırıstiyanların icmâsı ile bâtıldır. Zira, 'İnsan, Meryem'den doğdu."*

Şems ü'l-Hakîkat contains many original arguments and analogies such as those listed above, but it lacks reference to modern biblical scholarship. Unlike al-Kairânawî, Harputî İshak appears to have had no contact with European biblical critical works. This is not surprising as there is no evidence that Harputî İshak studied European languages despite being versed in Middle Eastern ones. His work calls to mind Ahmad Fâris al-Shidyâq's gospel critiques of the 1850s, in that instead of attempting to reconstruct the Bible into its historical autograph, he merely deconstructs its arguments. He shows that the Bible lacks historical credibility and contains logical contradiction. Like al-Shidyâq, the work is purely polemical and never moves beyond a rational deconstruction of the Bible.[46]

The larger importance of *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* is its status as the first state-commissioned polemic against modern missions. Government officials believed that the foreign missionary challenge could be mitigated in the print sphere. This was a top-down endeavor, as private printers or authors were not yet involved in this debate. The state believed Pfander to be a threat to the tranquility of its Muslim subjects, but it may have also been instigated into action by foreign Muslim scholars arriving at the sultan's court and offering to refute Pfander. The Persian scholar Resûl Mesti Efendi proposed to write

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derler. İnmekten murâtları, ilâhileşmek olduğu taktirde, eğer nâzil olan, 'Baba' tâbir ettikleri zât lâhût ise, yemek ve içmek gibi hâdis olan bedene mahsus eksik sıfatların Hak Teâlâ'ya lâyık görülmesi söz konusu olur ki; bu ittifâkla muhâldir. Yok eğer nâzil olan, iddiâlarına göre 'ilim' mânâsına gelen; Kelime ve Rûhu'l-kudüs ise, ya Hak Teâlâ'nın ilimsiz bekâsı gerekir, ya da zâtı ile kâim olmayıp insânî Mesih ile kâim olan ilim sıfatıyla Hak Teâlâ'nın vasıflandırılması lâzım geilr. Velhâsıl nüzûl için söylenen her söz mutlakâ bâtıldır Ibid., 271.

[46] Nadia al Bagdadi, "The Cultural Function of Fiction: From the Bible to Libertine Literature. Historical Criticism and Social Critique in Aḥmad Fāris al-Šidyāq," *Arabica,* Vol 46, No. 2 (1999), 384. Nadia al Bagdadi "Print, Script and the Limits of Free-thinking in Arabic Lettres of the 19th century: The case of al-Shidyaq." *Al-Abhath* 48-49 (2000): 99-122.

a response to the foreign missionary, but there is no evidence of the finished product.

Perhaps he did not ever finish his work; perhaps the state offered more robust patronage

to a native ulema member to have more visible involvement in its creation and signal to

Ottoman subjects that it took steps to protect their religion. Whether or not the release of

Şems ü'l-Hakîkat conveyed such a message to Ottoman Muslims, the foreign missionaries

in Istanbul received quite a different message from the polemic.

The Missionary Response to *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*

Harputî İshak's *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* was rejected out of hand by foreign missionaries

and the Christian press in Istanbul. They considered it a "dangerous" work that could

arouse anger against Christians in general and Protestant missionaries in particular.

According to the CMS Intelligencer, "Like the Koran, whose abusive and intolerant spirit

it breaths, [*Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*] is full of misrepresentations of Christianity, against which it

sought to arouse the bigotry of the people."[47] Missionaries were upset with the work for

the same reasons that the ulema disapproved of Pfander's writings: It used their own holy

book to argue against their theological beliefs. The foreign missionaries excoriated

Harputî İshak in particular for using Scripture such as Luke 23:48 – " tarry ye in the city

of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" – to make reference to the

coming of Muhammed and for depicting Paul as the corrupter of Christianity.[48]

Their core frustration with the work, however, came from the Ottoman state not

allowing them to issue a response without risking legal reprisal. They considered the

Ottoman state's restrictions on their writings and permission of Muslim ones as a

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47 CMI, 223.
48 Ibid.

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unilateral disarmament in the public discussion of religion. As a writer for the Church

Missionary Intelligencer noted, the state may have talked of religious tolerance of non-

Muslims to foreign diplomats, but in its internal affairs it hewed to older traditions of

ruling the Empire by institutionalizing religious inequality and protecting Islam's status as

the official religion of the state: "Thus the Turkish government sanctions the publication

of a work intolerant in its character and abusive of Christianity, but a calm and temperate

reply it will not permit. There must be no controversy: in other words, there may be any

amount of irritating aggression on the one side, but not even the most temperate answer

will be permitted on the other."[49] To the writer, the baseless attacks in *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*

and their inability to respond represented another violation of the reform edicts.

The next year a second battlefront opened against the missionaries in the print

sphere. İbrahim Şinasi (d. 1871), the author, journalist, playwright, and translator,

published an article in the journal *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* entitled *Pâyitaht* ("Capital City") on

November 30, 1862, the first year of its print circulation. It criticized *Mîzân u'l-hakk* on

two grounds. First, for its malicious attack on Islam; second, that foreign missionaries

claimed the right to distribute such a work in the guise of press freedom when such an

incendiary polemic would not pass press censorship laws in the most liberal of European

countries.[50] Şinasi writes that every state has the right to prevent any form of book or

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[49] Ibid.

[50] *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* 45, Vol. 7 Cemada II., 17 Teşrnisani, 1279 – November 30, 1862. Published and transliterated in *Şinasi Makalele Külliyat IV*, ed. Fevziye Abdullah Tansel (Ankara: Bugün Yayınevi, 1960), 40-42. Şinasi founded the *Tasvîr-i Efkâr* ("Enlightenment of the Thoughts") in 1862, among the first influential newspapers in the Ottoman Empire. He was a highly influential intellectual and literary critic in mid 19-century Istanbul for his work as one of the primary authors of the Tanzimat. He began his career in the Ottoman administration, learning French, Persian, and Arabic. As the first generation of poets and authors in the Tanzimat period, he was highly influenced by French culture and literature, in particular by Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Comte. From 1849 to 1853 he studied under the direction of

other printed matter that attacks its established principles, even in governments that have

constitutionally protected press freedoms. It is reasonable for civil servants to inspect all

printed works coming from foreign states and arriving in Istanbul and send suspicious

books to the Ministry of Public Instruction. Every book should be confiscated according

to legal requirements if it contains even "half a line of writing that is found to be

religiously or materially destructive." This is true, he argues, even if such books are

found to be useful and profitable to the Ottoman state.[51] Whether or not government

officials heeded his prescription, such a policy became enacted later in the decade,

particularly in an 1867 episode in which Ottoman officials confiscated pamphlets and

books shipped from England's CMS headquarters in London to its Istanbul station.

Şinasi disliked such books not merely for their content but the manner in which

they were created. Works similar to *Mîzân u'l-hakk* in Greek and other foreign languages

had been printed in the Ottoman Empire, suggesting they were produced without official

permission, directly flaunting official book bans. As a writer and publisher he also

disliked them for the deleterious effect that such a print culture had on traditional

methods of book production. The printer Şinasi complains, curiously, that the mass

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the Grand Vizier Mustafa Reşit Pasha, the Ottoman statesman, diplomat, and chief architect of the Tanzimat reforms. It is here that he translated a number of French poems into Turkish, which were released in a collected volume in 1859 entitled *Tercüme-i Manzume*, which included poems from Racine, Gilbert, Lamartine, and La Fontaine. Şinasi was forced into exile in 1865, and Namik Kemal then took over editorship of the *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*. The two authors shared similar convictions in their beliefs of liberty and patriotism. See Abdulhalim Aydın, "Batıllılaşma Döneminde Şinasi ve Fransız Etkisi," *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, 17, Vol. 2 (2000): 105-131; Kendall, 334.

[51] *Her devlet kendi usûl-i mevzu'asına muğâyir her türlü kütüb ve sâir matbu'âtın mülkünde tedâvülünü men' eder, hattâ basma serbestliği olan devletlerin bile ekserinde bu usûl cârîdir binâen'aleyh ecnebî memleketlerinden İstanbul'a gelen kâffe-i matbu'ât dahî , gümrükler tarafından me'mur marifetiyle teftiş olunarak, şüphe olunan kitapların birer nüshası li'ecl-il mu'âyene Ma'ârif-i umûmiye Nezareti tarafına gönderilmek ve bir kitap her ne kadar büyük ve madde ve efkârca sahih olsa ve belki bir tarafı Devlet-i âliye hakkında nâfî bulunsa bile, yine içinde yarım satırı olsun dînen ve mülken muzir bulununca, hîn-i mu'ayenesinde tevkif edilmek, nizâmı iktizâsındandır.*

printing of such books had cheapened and commodified the artistry of Islamic epic

literature. He observed a particularly injurious episode in which copies of illustrated

manuscripts and pictures from the tenth-century epic poem *Şehnâme*, which depicted

Muslims as victorious over rebellious non-Muslims, were hung up and sold in Istanbul's

shops and street corners.[52]

    Şinasi's article is among the first examples of Ottoman journalists using the press

to criticize foreign missionaries and their activities within the Empire. Such articles

appeared in increasing numbers in the 1870s, calling upon the state to remove Protestant

missionaries from the Empire. By the 1880s, polemics totaling hundreds of pages in

length were serialized in Ottoman journals before being released as stand-alone

monographs. As will be seen in the next two chapters, these journalists did much to shape

the opinion of Istanbul's Muslim literati regarding Protestant missionary activity and

Christianity. Despite worsening public opinion of foreign Protestants, missionaries in the

early 1860s maintained their optimism that legal conditions of the Empire would allow

them to openly pursue evangelization of Muslims. This optimism was quickly broken

with the imprisonment of Turkish converts and the confiscation of their books in 1864.

The 1864 Arrest of Turkish Christians

    Foreign missionaries had labored for decades to produce Muslim converts to

Christianity with little success, but by the mid 1860s they saw a small number embrace

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[52] Ibid. *Bundan başka, memâlik-i ecnebiye matba'âları işaretiyle Rumca ve elsine-i sâirede bâzı matbu'ât görülmektedir ki burada basılmış olduğuna hiç şüphe etmeyiz ve bir de bâ'zı vekâyi-i elîme-i sâlifenin Şehnâme sûretleri hey'etinde, yâni birkaç Müsülman, bir âsî-i, gayr-i müslim elinde mağlûp olmuş sûretinde birtakım resimleri pây-i taht-ı saltanatla dükkânlara ve köşebaşlarına ta'lik olunup satılmaktadır ve galiba bunlara te'sirsiz nazarıyla bakılmaktadır.*

Protestantism. Exact numbers vary according to agencies, but reports claimed that by 1857, approximately fifty Ottoman Muslim men, women, and children had been baptized.[53] Some of them pursued theological education abroad for the purposes of returning home and spreading their new religion to their compatriots. In 1860, two Turkish men began their studies at St. Augustine's Missionary College in Canterbury: Mahmud Efendi, who later worked on a Turkish grammar but died in 1865, and Selim Efendi, who contributed to a Turkish translation of the Gospels and Acts in 1862 along with William Schauffler and William Goodell. Selim took the name Edward Williams following his conversion and was ordained in the Church of England. He converted the rest of his family and proselytized under the auspices of the Church Mission Society.[54] They fled to Malta in the 1850s for fear of government reprisal but returned to Istanbul following the 1856 proclamation of the Reform Edict. Schauffler writes that missionaries in Istanbul had resolved that it was their duty to receive and baptize every covert to Christianity, "whatever the consequences to us might be, and that the first Mohammedan man or woman whom we believed to be truly converted should be baptized."[55] The consequences came swiftly.

On July 17, 1864, three Turkish converts to Christianity and 10 or 12 others of unknown religious affiliation were arrested in a CMS-rented public preaching room in Eminönü, the city's commercial and political center. One was Selim Efendi, the second is

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[53] Lyle van der Werff, *Christian Mission to Muslims: The Record: Anglican and Reformed approaches in India and the Near East, 1800-1938* (South Pasadena, Cal.: William Carey Library, 1942), 162. Quoted in Privratsky, 49.

[54] William G. Schauffler, *Autobiography: for forty-nine years a missionary in the Orient* (New York: A.D.F. Randolph, 1887), 199, 204, 232.

[55] Ibid., 206.

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identified in missionary accounts only as Ahmed, who had been baptized with his wife

and three children in 1861 by Schauffler. The third was Abdi Efendi, an imâm prior to his

conversion, a fact the foreign missionaries proudly noted in their reports. Two others

were also baptized converts but not mentioned by name in accounts of the arrest. One

other arrested convert was more recently baptized at the chapel of the Society for the

Propagation of the Gospel. He had what Hermann Schmettau, the secretary of the

Evangelical Alliance, described as "less that is marked in character than those already

mentioned." Among the remainders, none were known to any missionary and had been

only seen at Sunday preaching services on a few occasions.[56]

According to Pfander's explanation of the events leading up to the Turkish

converts' incarceration, he was merely holding a Sunday service in a small, unassuming

hân when police entered, arrested the converts and Turkish attendees, and shut down the

CMS's missionary offices and bookstores. By Pfander's telling the *hân*s were the small,

quiet variety of rented rooms, not located in highly public places of Istanbul. The books

in the room were not publicly circulated, nor did they obtain any objectionable content

that would preclude such an activity. They were only given or sold to those who came to

them and asked for them.[57]

Pfander's detractors recounted the events quite differently. According to an

anonymous letter submitted to *The Times of London* by a self-proclaimed eye-witness to

the events, the English missionaries carried on an open crusade against

[56] H. Schmettau, "Missionary Crisis in Turkey." *The Record*, September 19, 1864.
[57] He notes: "Lectures against Mohammedanism were never delivered, nor were Greeks or Jews invited: only such Turks as wished to converse with the missionaries, or desired to read or purchase their books, or to attend the services, were asked to the rooms, and these invitations were always of a private and friendly character: no placards were ever put up, nor handbills sent about." CMI, 212.

"Mohammedanism" in the center of the city and opened preaching rooms in *hân*s – "the

most public places in Constantinople next to the bazaars – where controversial lectures

were delivered to which the Mohammedans, Jews, and Greeks were invited, with great

persistence, and that at these gatherings polemical knocks were, with impunity, dealt to

Islam."[58] Ottoman state officials believed this version of events. They interpreted the

Protestant missionaries' actions as a direct provocation against the state and its religion.

The minister of police (*zâptiye*) told British Ambassador Henry Bulwer that their efforts

were considered not as a misunderstanding over exercising religious freedoms but a

hostile attack against Islam:

> Do these people want to pray to God in their own way? Let them do so in their churches [...] But if
> they want ... to make public war in our own country against our faith, and to encourage other
> people to join them in this war, then they are abusing our hospitality and protection, and under the
> mask of friendship, acting as our bitterest foes.[59]

All missionaries in the city were affected, regardless of their mission agency

affiliation or their with the native congregation. On Monday, July 18, the ministry of

police arrived at the ABCFM bookstores and offices, ordering their closing. They made

similar visits to the offices of the agents of the British and Foreign Bible Society, the

American Bible Society, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, along with

the printing office for William Shauffler's forthcoming edition of the Turkish New

Testament, locking the doors to each facility. Three or four of the property owners were

arrested for not informing the authorities of the missionaries' proselytizing efforts, but

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58 Ibid., 287.
59 *Correspondence Respecting Protestant Missionaries and Converts in Turkey*, p. 2. Sir H. Bulwer to Earl
    Russel, Constantinople, 18 July 1864. Quoted in Selim Deringil's *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late
    Ottoman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 80.

they were released shortly after.[60]

The CMS, the Bible Society, and the Propagation Society quickly tapped into their respective consular chains of command to rectify the perceived injustice. Appeals for protection were made to the English and American embassies. On the same evening of the Turkish converts' arrest, the American *charge d'affaires* John P. Brown issued a complaint to Foreign Minister Mehmed Emin Âli Pasha, the principal architect of the 1856 Reform Edict. Brown personally visited Âli Pasha the following week, resulting in the latter offering to open immediately the CMS building. He informed Brown that the offices and preaching rooms had been shut on account of the illegal action of its occupants, which, according to the Ottoman statesman, had established secret printing presses to produce and sell their books that contained violent and outrageous attacks upon the faith of the Sultan. Of these facts they said that they had incontrovertible evidence.[61]

Brown challenged him to prove this accusation, which went unanswered, but he was powerless to do much else. Bulwer did not offer any more assistance. In his correspondence with Ottoman officials and the Protestant missionaries, he remained reticent to implicate directly one side or another of wrong-doing. Yet in his correspondence with American missionary George Herrick, who asked the British foreign mission to pressure the Ottoman government to release the Turkish converts, Bulwer gently but firmly reminded him that if the foreign missionaries had indeed engaged in provocative activities, it would endanger their mission in the future. He even went so far as to lecture the veteran missionary on proper evangelical etiquette within the social

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[60] *The Levant Herald*, Wednesday, July 20, 1864.
[61] CMI, 219.

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context of Istanbul and to have the prudence to consider the differences between legal

and ethical behavior:

> It becomes a question whether Protestants may not do more towards Christianizing the
> Mussulmans by practising, quietly and simply, the tenets of their own faith, and leaving others to
> do the same [...] than by any more violence or provocative action, any lectures or lessons against
> Mohammedanism, any employment of salaried converts to spread Christianity. Remember that
> things may be lawful and yet not always expedient.[62]

As these statements indicate, Ottoman state officials and European consuls

considered the missionaries' polemical publishing activity an equal threat to social

stability as their public preaching. When state officials gathered up the missionaries'

materials at the *hân,* they confiscated several Turkish books authored by Pfander, all of

which had been banned by the state for sale or distribution in public or private, including

Mıftâh u'l-asrâr, *Tarık u'l-hayât*, and *Mîzân u'l-hakk*.[63] His colleagues were shocked at

the confiscation of his literature, which they considered to be temperate theological

treatises on Christian doctrine presented in a sympathetic manner to Muslim readers. The

CMS community in Istanbul was particularly outraged at the state banning *Mîzân u'l-*

hakk, a work that was "mild, temperate, and a very able vindication of Christianity from

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[62] *Missionary Herald*, September 1864, 208.

[63] The *Tarık u'l-hayât* was a short treatise on the nature of sin and a critique of the Muslim over-emphasis
on public sin to the exclusion of inward sin and attacks of conscience. Sin results from intention and
corrupt desires, and venial sins were of equal offense to God as mortal sins, as they are both
transgressions of the moral law revealed by Moses. The *Mıftâh u'l-asrâr* was another treatise that
established the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of the Trinity. Similar to *Mîzân u'l-hakk,* it used
Christian scripture to advance its thesis, namely by quoting suras ascribing dignity to Christ. Pfander
addresses common Muslim polemics in this work against Christianity; that Jesus claimed divinity and
that Christian scripture affirmed the mystery and personality of the Holy Spirit. Muir finds parts of this
work unsatisfactory, especially the second chapter in which his introduces arguments intended to
reconcile the mystery of the Trinity with the conclusions of sound reason. Pfander says that nature is a
shadowing of eternal principles by which we may learn divine principles. Had the Fall not occurred,
man would have attained a perfect knowledge of God in his heart and mind, and no written revelation
would have been necessary. Muir says, however that it is doubtful that man could, without revelation,
have discovered the doctrine of the Trinity. See Muir, 24.

the misrepresentations of Mohammedanism."[64] What they did not realize was that these works and their subsequent censorship were more than provocative tracts. They represented competing visions of public religious expression in the reforming Ottoman state.

To the CMS and their American brethren in the ABCFM, the confiscation of their literature and arrest of Turkish converts symbolized a regression in the state's Tanzimat reforms, which some believed allowed for open religious inquiry and the questioning of Islam. Pfander and other foreign missionaries interpreted the edict as the freedom to proselytize Muslims and for any Ottoman subject to change his or her religion. Herrick lamented the backsliding of Ottoman reforms, which he had previously hoped would allow them to spread Christianity to the various ethnic and religious groups of the Empire. He blamed conservative religious elements among the ulema and Ottoman Catholics for pressuring the sultan to order the Turkish converts' arrest under the guise of missionary provocation.[65]

To Ottoman statesmen, these arrests and anti-Christian polemics were tools of social stability and did not contradict the principles of religious tolerance. The government worked actively in the mid-nineteenth century to expand religious freedoms for Ottoman non-Muslims according to its understanding of this concept, but high-level

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[64] *Missionary Herald*, 1864, 223.
[65] "The only really intelligible interpretation of the recent measures of the Government is this ... that by a course of rigid adherence to the letter of religious liberty, in palpable violation of its spirit; by intimidation; by bringing the very cause and name of Protestantism into disgrace, at the same time that the Protestant Christian Turks are deprived of liberty of their own and the public safety, it is intended to prevent, by violence if necessary, a violence masked in the show of leniency, and under cover of conserving the public tranquility, the adoption by Mussulmans of the Christian faith." *Missionary Herald*, September 1864, 304.

officials began to change the direction of this reform trajectory when they perceived that foreign groups and European diplomats desired to challenge Islam's position as the pre-eminent religion in society. They believed that social stability would be threatened if the state's official religion could be freely besmirched. As a result of this suspicion, viziers, administrators, and even Sultan Abdülaziz worked actively to keep missionary proselytization efforts under tighter control. Âli Pasha, the chief architect of the Tanzimat reforms, complained to the Ottoman ambassador in London, Alexander Musurus that these foreign governments and missionaries demanded a level of freedom to spread polemical literature not even granted in Europe. It was their right to place restrictions on such activities:

> No European government has, moreover, sanctioned the principle of religious propaganda. In England, Prussia, Austria, everywhere propaganda is subject to the supervision of the authorities. The most liberal and most tolerant of governments have reserved power to use against it every time it threatens public safety and the interests of the religion of the State; and Democratic Greece has inscribed on the head of its constitution the prohibition of proselytism and any other action contrary to the dominant religion.[66]

Âli Pasha accused foreign missionaries of attempting to extract as much freedom for their actions as possible through an overly liberal interpretation of the promise in the 1856 *Islâhat Fermânı* that no one would be hindered in the exercise of their religion. They intentionally misunderstood its language in order to ignore Ottoman sovereignty. What they truly demanded, Âli Pasha said, was the "right" to insult the religion of the state. It was a right not even given to non-Christians of Europe and an abuse of the generous liberties given to the Empire's religious minorities: "But the missionaries, not content to accuse us of intolerance, still wanting to believe in a violation of pledges

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[66]   BOA.HR.SFR 109/15, 1 Recep 1260 / 30 November 1864.

solemnly contracted, they invoke in their favor the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* and pretend to give their business the sanction of legality"[67]

Âli Pasha desired to defend the interests of the state at a time when European diplomatic pressure bore down on the Ottoman government. Since outright banning of Protestant missionary activity was impossible due to Ottoman concessions to missionaries that British officials wrung out of them following the Crimean War, it could only be curtailed. Even this action risked reprisal, as indicated by the high-level European diplomatic involvement in the events of 1864, along with the arrests being prominently displayed in the foreign press and negative fallout between the British and the Ottoman Empire. With their options limited, the decision of high-level Ottoman administrators to commission Islamic polemics from respected ulema against missionaries and undermine them in the public sphere appeared a sensible course of action. This would serve the purpose of curtailing their influence within the domains while still giving them the freedom to maintain their enterprise. The state could still speak the discourse of liberal religious freedom, and within this discourse religious polemics could act as a relief value to reduce sectarian tensions, giving intellectuals space to contest truth claims of religion. The Ottoman state could also silence missionary voices in the public sphere while bowing to foreign demands to grant them rights of religious expression.

The Ottoman and British press followed the arrests with great interest. They offered no clear endorsement of either side of the conflict. The editors of *The Levant Herald* wrote on July 20 that the English missionaries assailed Islam and were more

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[67]   Ibid.

aggressive than sound prudence should have dictated, but the arrest of Turkish Protestants violated the promises of religious liberty in 1856. The incident was most likely a concession to and a precaution against exciting popular feeling.[68] An anonymous letter to *The Levant Herald* on August 3, 1864 lashed out against the CMS, in particular R.W. Weakley, who had written letters to the paper complaining of insufficient British support. The writer also criticized Harputî İshak's polemic as being "violent as it was weak and foolish," but firmly admonished the Christians for their distribution of polemical works in violation of government policy. However, the Ottoman government's clumsy handling of closing foreign missionary stations had the unfortunate effect of giving undue credence to the missionaries' grievances:

> [The *Mîzân u'l-hakk*] had already appeared in Persian but it was now reproduced in Turkish – and most excellent Turkish too – and was smuggled into the country in a way about which the less said the better. With all adequate admiration for the zeal and scholarship which the volume displays, I cannot agree with Mr. Weakley in his estimate of its "moderation." It is – rather more than by implication – such an onslaught on Mahometanism as neither you nor I would read with patience if directed against Christianity; and certainly for one, therefore, I do not wonder at the Porte interdicting its circulation [...] The act [of closing the missionary station] was in fact a plain violation of treaty privilege, and gave the Missionaries an advantage of complaint which greatly strengthens their "grievance."[69]

Many British press organs sided with the missionaries, although more for their displeasure of the illiberal attitudes of the Ottoman bureaucracy – despite major British financial investment that kept it from bankruptcy – than explicit support of the Protestant missionaries. An August 4 edition of *The Daily Telegraph* opined that the "sick man" of the Europe may be more or less properly fed with bank loans but British liberals must not allow such a backsliding of the Ottoman Empire.[70] Nevertheless, for Britain to impose

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68   *The Levant Herald*, July 20, 1864.
69   *A Layman.* The Levant Herald, Wednesday, August 3, 1864. *The Porte and the Protestants: To the Editor of the Levant Herald.*
70   *The Daily Telegraph*, Thursday, August 4.

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more liberty upon the Empire, as had been done with the Reform Edict in 1856, was a dubious proposition. This remedy might kill the patient rather than heal him. It simply could not handle the consequences of liberal democracy, even if its rhetoric claimed otherwise. The Ottoman state arrested the converts under the guise of regulating injurious speech, but it really did so out of fear of Christianity's superiority: "His Ulemas have told him that the Crescent waxes pale before these doctrines and this civilization of the Nazarene; but they will tell our Ambassador that what they have done was done to prevent the outbreaks of the population, incensed at the danger to their faith." In the same issue the paper added that the missionaries unwisely stigmatized Muhammed as a false prophet. In consequence of this, Fuad Pasha would not have taken the steps he did by arresting the Turkish converts were he not in fear that a disaster would arise form the "injudicious conduct" of the missionaries and the "ungovernable passions of the mob."[71]

Other quarters of the British press criticized the Protestant missionaries, notably *The Daily News*. In the September 20 issue, the correspondent from Istanbul wrote that the "propagandist" missionaries go about blindly in their evangelical efforts, making bad worse. Pfander is incapable of considering his actions from an Ottoman point of view. While the author concedes that the ulema should have refuted Pfander's polemical works rather than employ the police to suppress them, they were within their rights to restrict his criticisms of the state's religion. After all, if an Islamic teacher were to visit London and indulge in a similar rabid abuse of Christianity, he would more likely be moved on

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[71] Ibid. The columnist adds, "They cannot fight the Christianity which, abjuring its old bigotries, and blossoming into new beauty and vigour of faith and fervour, is all the world over becoming a new power. The Sultan must be true to the Hatti-Humayoun, and let "Kismet" – destiny – have her inevitable way."

through a "whole alphabet of police" rather than a synod of learned bishops meeting him

to argue questions of religion:

> The case is sufficiently near a parallel with Mr. Pfander's to illustrate the falseness of the position he assumes. But there will be more discussion yet before the missionaries will be content to let the matter drop, or will be able to take home to themselves the lesson of modesty and moderation which it conveys. In this country, where the people are hospitable and the Government tolerant, the missionaries have been on so short an allowance of persecution that missionary life has grown tame and tedious; it is therefore not unnatural that they should smack their lips over the flavour of martyrdom which lends to the present squabble its peculiar zest.[72]

Other press organs were more sympathetic to the difficulties of the Protestant

missionaries, but less for sympathizing with their cause than reliance upon the

missionaries themselves as correspondents to obtain information from within the

Ottoman Empire. On September 14, 1864, *The Record* printed correspondence between

Bulwer and foreign missionaries in Istanbul. The correspondence itself was sent to the

newspaper by Hermann Schmettau, foreign secretary of the Evangelical Alliance.

Schmettau attached a note stating that he sent them in response to the "surprising

misrepresentations" which had been made to the English public through other London

newspapers, copies of which had recently reached the missionaries in Istanbul: "Such

views as those thus presented, however, are so manifestly from a stand-point unfriendly

to the missionaries, that we are sure all fair-minded persons will await some statement of

this case from the other side before passing judgement."[73]

The results of the controversy of 1864 had far-reaching impact. It served as a

litmus test of the extent that the state tolerated missionary activity and the targeting of

Muslims for conversion to Christianity. The level of ambiguity in the 1856 Reform Edict,

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[72]   Turkey. From Our Own Correspondent. Constantinople, September 12. *The Daily News.*
[73]   "The Missionary Crisis in Turkey," *The Record*, September 14, 1864.

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and its rights of religious self-determination, were made fully clear. To Protestant

missionaries such as S.W. Koelle and Pfander, it promised the freedom of choice that

would allow a Muslim to read Christian literature and to visit CMS missionaries in their

rented rooms and hear their sermons. This view of the reform edicts was largely

maintained by Koelle, who, as the next chapter will show, sent such complaints to the

CMS home office in London and the British consular chain of command when his

Turkish colleague was arrested in 1879. To state officials and Ottoman Muslim

journalists, freedom of religious conscience did not mean that foreigners had unlimited

rights to print malicious books that undercut the religion of the state. They resented the

implication that they would have to accommodate such books while European nations

were already encroaching upon Ottoman foreign and domestic affairs.[74]

Furthermore, the controversy had an unintended effect on the Ottoman print

sphere in the decades to come. In the mid-1860s, missionary agencies increased their

efforts to translate the Bible into Turkish, established large printing houses, and

distributed tens of thousands of copies throughout the Empire.[75] While foreign agencies

such as the Bible Society had been involved in Turkish translation projects since the

1820s, state sanctions against anti-Muslim polemics underlined the importance of Bible

distribution as a means of spreading the message of Christianity rather than other literary

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[74] Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire*, 79-80.
[75] Perhaps a more far-reaching effect among the missionaries on the Christian-Muslim print encounter than any new translation of Christian scripture was the opening of the Bible House in Constantinople in 1867, a joint venture of the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society (ABS). They opened a complex of buildings five years later that housed editors, translators, a printing press, facilities for electrotyping and lithography. Isaac Bliss of the ABS oversaw the project. He reported that by 1883 over 2 million Bibles had been printed here in 30 languages, many of which had been produced in the previous decade-and-a-half. Privratsky, 53.

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works. They translated the Bible with the specific intention of using it as an evangelical tool rather than as a reference to Christian Turcophones, whether Turkish-speaking Armenians or Greeks.[76] The figures involved in these translation projects were many of the same people involved in the 1864 controversy, primarily William Schauffler and Selim Efendi. They were apparently not deterred by the arrests and sought to invest their energies in Turkish Bible promulgation as the best means to spread Protestant Christianity in the Empire.[77]

Translators sought to create a translation that could be read by wider segments of the population and comprehended outside of the scholarly class. They simplified older Bible translations that used the Persian and Arabic-influenced literary language style in favor of simplified Turkish that had become increasingly popular in newspapers and periodicals. The policy to simplify Ottoman foreshadowed official politics of the CUP and even Muslim scholars of the Turkish Republic.[78] Schauffler thought the project

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[76] The ABCFM's immediate goals in the Ottoman Empire following the Reform Edict was not to create a church consisting of Turkish converts to Christianity but to produce a further revision of Turkish scriptures to accommodate the literary fashions in the Ottoman printing industry. The Scripture that was available to Turcophones during the 1860s was likely the first edition translated by the Bible Society and published in 1827 (the *Kitâb ül-'Ahd al-Atik* and the *Kitâb ül-'Ahd el-Cedîd el-mensûb ilâ Rabbinâ 'Îsâ el-Mesîh*). It was a combination of Ali Bey's edited seventeenth-century Pentateuch along with a revised version of the 1819 New Testament. It was edited by Jean Daniel Kieffer (d. 1833) and featured an Arabic title to designate it as a holy book, as was common practice for such books in the Muslim world but was otherwise written in easily accessible Turkish using simple vocabulary and syntax, mostly avoiding the high literary style and Arabo-Persian constructions that would have made it all but inaccessible to non-elites. Aside from other rare productions, the other Bible in circulation was Turabi Efendi's 1853 New Testament and James Redhouse's 1857 revision, which favored more complex Arabic and Persian phrase syntax. Yet these works were still of an elegant Ottoman style that did not fit well within contemporary Turkish diction. See Privratsky, 43-48.

[77] The 1866 Bible translation was an update of an earlier version of the Scriptures, but newly translated from the Greek Thomas H. Darlow and Horace F. Moule, eds., Historical Catalogue of the Printed Editions of Holy Scripture in the Library of the British and Foreign Bible Society, 2 vols. (London: Bible House, 1963 [1903-11] and New York: Kraus, 1963. Quoted in Pravitsky, 52.

[78] Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks:Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918;* Bret Wilson, "The First Translations of the Qur'an in Modern Turkey (1924-1938)," *IJMES* 41, No. 3 (2009): 419-435.

necessary, as a direct transliteration into Ottoman Turkish from the existent Armeno-Turkish or Greco-Turkish Bible translations would not be suitable for a Muslim audience. He argued that the language as spoken by these communities was "too coarse" to be accepted by Turcophone Muslims. Therefore, the goal was to produce an accessible but elegant text of "simple, idiomatic classical Turkish... [and] create the style of language which would be intelligible to the less literary while at the same time being attractive to the educated."[79]

The project did not result in widespread conversions of Muslims to Christianity, but it put far more Muslim scholars and Turkish-speaking Muslims in contact with Scripture. The Bible Society – a joint venture between the British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society (ABS) – began printing thousands of Bibles in the 1870s through its Sirkeci facility that cost over $100,000. By 1882 they increased the total number of Bibles printed in Ottoman languages to almost two million. The Turkish Bible, with its precise sentence syntax and contemporary language, was the basis of future editions, particularly the 1878 and 1886 *Kitab-i Mukaddes*. Whatever the lack of missionary success in their attempts to convert Muslims, their evangelical encounters served as an impetus to produce Scripture on a massive scale. The Bible now flooded the Empire, leaving a lasting impression on the Ottoman print world. In the decades to come, tropes to this effect emerged in Muslim polemics. They spoke of missionary literature, flooding the book markets of the Muslim world. This is an exaggeration in regards to anti-Muslim polemics but more accurate in terms of Turkish-language Bibles.[80]

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[79] Nilson, "Western Turkish versions of the Bible," *The Bible Translator* Vol. 17, 3 (July 1966): 133-138.
[80] Gerald H. Anderson, ed., *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William

Tâ'ife-i Yehûd ve Nasâra (1866) and *İzhâr u'l-hakk* (1867)

Leaving behind the 1864 controversy, we return now to Muslim polemical writing in 1860s Istanbul. The central importance of defending one's religious text and discrediting an opponent's scripturalist tradition became a dominant theme in the polemics in this period. This became apparent with the release of a five-page treatise by Sungurî Hasan b. Ömer in 1866, entitled *Tâ'ife-i Yehûd ve Nasâranın Usûl ve İ'tikâtlarını Reddeden Muhtasarca Bir Risâle-i 'Acîbe* (A Wonderful Abridged Polemical Tract Denouncing the Fundamentals and Beliefs of Jewish and Christian Sects), and even more so the following year with the release of al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk*.[81]

Sungurî Hasan's work shares many characteristics with that of *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*. He begins with a short description of the four gospel accounts and the years of their release after the Crucifixion. He dismisses the extant New Testament as a forgery. The original İncîl was only one book and identical to the Qur'an, not four separate works. Nor was the original work compiled by humans. Sungurî Hasan's polemic is concerned solely with textual criticisms of Jewish and Christian holy books. It does not mention arguments concerning the divinity of Christ or even the doctrine of the Trinity, a rare omission in anti-Christian polemics of the nineteenth century. It appears to be consciously written to inform Muslims of the nature of the Bible, whether it is abrogated, what it means for Christians to be "People of the Book," and how to carry out the dictates of Qur'anic

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B. Eerdmans, 1999), 69.

[81] Sungurî Hasan b. Ömer, *Tâ'ife-i Yehûd ve Nasâranın Usûl ve İ'tikâtlarını Reddeden Muhtasarca Bir Risâle-i 'Acîbe* (Istanbul: Süleymaniye Manuscript Collection, Düğümlü Baba Bölümü, No: 00197, 1865/1866), 83-88. Little is known about Sungurî Hasan, but he was most likely a member of the ulema due to the literary Ottoman used in his tract, detailed knowledge of Jewish and Christian scriptures, and interest in inter-Islamic confessional matters, as demonstrated by an anti-Alevi polemic that appears in the same *mecmua* as his anti-Christian and anti-Jewish polemic. As such, he appears to be in a similar anti-Shi'a camp as Harputî İshak.

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verses that enjoin Muslims to listen to the People of the Book and seek them for wisdom even if their scripture is corrupt. He addresses these matters in a short question-and-answer formulation, similar to *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*, and fatwas issued by the clerical class and the *şeyhü'l-islâm*:

> If it is asked "Where is the real Gospel?" the answer is: It is lost.
> If it is asked, "When was it lost?" The answer is: When the Jews wanted to kill Jesus, they threw the gospel into the fire and destroyed it by tearing it to pieces. Because the gospel still had not come into book form, it ascended with Jesus into heaven."[82]

Sungurî Hasan then discusses Qur'anic verses that speak favorably of the İncîl , responding to the hypothetical question of what one is to make of verses such as Al-'A`rāf: 157, which reads, "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel... they who have believed in him, honored him, supported him and followed the light which was sent down with him – it is those who will be successful."[83] To answer the question of whether this verse indicates that the Gospels and the Old Testament survived uncorrupted to the period of Muhammed, he says that this verse is addressed to Moses, who lived 1,500 years before the New Testament and 2,000 years before Muhammed. While Ömer does not single out contemporary Christian polemics or polemicists by name in his tract, he warns his readers against lines of argument used in these works, such as Pfander's use of the Qur'an to engage Muslim readers and trick them into accepting his arguments.

Regarding the matter of whether Christians can even be considered people of the book, Sungurî Hasan quotes İsmail Hakki Bursevî (d. 1725), an Ottoman Islamic scholar and author of works on mysticism and Islamic philosophy. He is best known for his

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[82]   Ibid., 84.
[83]   Sahih International 7:157.

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Rûhu'l-Beyân, an Arabic commentary on the Qur'an that is still popular in modern-day Turkey. According to Bursevî, they can be considered people of the book, since "book" does not only refer to the gospels but the Old Testament and the Psalms. When considering if Muslims are required to obey the words of Jesus in the New Testament, he responds in the negative. These gospels contradict one another and only two of the four authors ever even looked upon Jesus. Other false beliefs and teachers were added onto Christianity between the third and fourth centuries that are not found in any of the gospels, such as the appearance of icons or the belief that Jesus sacrificed himself to free humanity from slavery to Satan. He notes later in the tract that it is not incumbent on Muslims to reject or accept all of the words of Jesus. They should test these words and determine if they are in accordance with the Qur'an.[84]

Sungurî Hasan then criticizes the Bible for lacking religious statutes and procedures for moral behavior as is found in Islam. To illustrate this point, Sungurî Hasan repeats a story found in classical polemics, and repeated by Ottoman polemicists such as Hacı Abdi Bey in 1871 in his *Îzâhu'l-Merâm.* A new convert to Christianity – in this example a former Zoroastrian – asks a priest about the provisions of the religion of Jesus. The priest will have nothing to say except what comes to his mind, as there are no pronouncements in the Bible on matters of prayer, fasting, marriage, divorce, trade, or what is permissible and what is forbidden. If somebody responds that faith alone is sufficient, if it were so, then there would not be so many contradictions in the Bible or religious divisions in Christianity.[85]

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[84]   Sungurî Hasan b. Ömer, 85.
[85]   Ibid., 87.

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Whatever impact *Tâ'ife-i Yehûd ve Nasâra* had in the Istanbul print world – and it appears to be highly limited, as CMS or ABCFM missionaries make no reference to it, nor is there mention of it in Ottoman state archives – it was soon eclipsed by al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk*. His polemic is arguably the most influential work of its kind in the nineteenth century. Much like Harputî İshak, his polemic enjoyed wide exposure due to official state sanction that came from his association with influential religious scholars. Al-Kairânawî arrived in the Ottoman Empire after leaving his homeland from the political fallout of the Indian Rebellion of 1857.[86] While residing in the Hicaz he met Maulânâ Imdâd Allah, who introduced him to the *şeyü'l-ülemâ* Sayyid Ahmad Dahlân. The religious leader recommended to al-Kairânawî to compile the theological components of his debate with Pfander. Sultan Abdülaziz eventually learned of the 1854 Agra debate between Pfander and al-Kairânawî, even though he did not know the Indian scholar lived in his domains. He instructed 'Abd Allâh Pasha, the *şerif* of Mecca, to ask Indian pilgrims about the outcome of the debate and the whereabouts of al-Kairânawî. When the sultan learned he was living in Mecca, Abdülaziz summoned him to Istanbul.[87]

Al-Kairânawî arrived in 1864, an opportune time for Ottoman state officials and Sultan Abdülaziz. Although the sultan could not prevent Protestant missionary settlement in Istanbul, their activities and writings did not have to go unanswered. He could utilize Al-Kairânawî's research against Christianity to claim victory for Islam both within the

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[86] He fled India for Mecca in the same year with a price on his head for his suspected involvement in resistance against the British colonial government in the mutiny. Historical accounts differ on his role in the mutiny, but it was clear that in his capacity as a member of the ulema he signed a *fatwa* calling for *jihâd* against the British at a meeting at the Jam'a Masjid in Delhi. Powell, *Muslim-Christian Controversy in India in the Mid-19th Century*, 60.

[87] Ibid., 61.

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Empire and in the global Muslim print sphere among Islamic intellectuals in Russia, the

Middle East, India, and anywhere else they contended with the external threat of

European colonialism.[88] The Indian intellectual consulted with Abdülaziz and the ulema

on Pfander's activities in the capital. Al-Kairânawî told them of his personal encounters

with the missionary in Agra, Pfander's zeal for converting Muslims to Christianity, and

his own use of modern scholarship to challenge Pfander's scholastic presentation of

Islam. Abdülaziz granted him permission to write *İzhâr u'l-hakk.[89]*

The second stage of the debate between Pfander and al-Kairânawî gave the

Muslim scholar something of a home-field advantage that he did not have before. In

India, Pfander benefited from the East India Company, which claimed religious neutrality

but consisted of colonial officials who openly supported Protestant missionary activity.

Pfander expressed optimism in the enlightening power of European rule in India,

believing in "the efficacy of a technologically superior and socially progressive Europe in

ensuring the eventual success of the Gospel."[90] The reverse was true in the Ottoman

context, in which state officials mustered little more than begrudging acceptance for

Pfander's activities and only with their arms twisted by European diplomatic officials.

But Abdülaziz openly embraced al-Kairânawî when he invited him to instruct the ulema

and to write *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, which was done in 1864-1865 and published in Arabic in

1867.[91] After considerable delay a Turkish version was made available in 1880.[92]

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[88] Adeeb Khalid. *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 203.
[89]   Powell, "Muslim-Christian Controversy," 72.
[90]   Bennett, 78.
[91]   BOA AMKT.MHM 361/34 , 29 Rebiyülevvel 1283/1866.
[92]   See Powell, *Muslims and Missionaries*, 296.

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İzhâr u'l-hakk is grouped into four sections. The first is a summary of the books of the Bible; the second, the contradictions and errors in the biblical text; the third, distortions and abrogation in the Bible, along with a refutation of the Trinity; and the fourth, the authenticity of Islamic traditions, hadiths, and the Qur'an. In each of these sections al-Kairânawî references dozens of internal contradictions of the scriptures, the intra-Christian debate of the biblical canon between Protestants and Catholics – filled with quotes by biblical scholars who noted the discrepancies – and books of the Bible that were added and subtracted by Ecumenical councils. He converges these three lines of argument to produce a central thesis that the corruption of Christian texts is so thorough and complete that even Christian scholars cannot deny its distortion.

In Part I he examines the division of the New Testament and reviews the process by which the Ecumenical councils accepted or rejected books into the canon. His first conclusion is that the present Torah (The Pentateuch) could not have been the original Torah revealed to Moses. It was destroyed and rewritten by Ezra, who was thought by many biblical scholars at the time to have written much of the Old Testament. His second point is that scholars disagreed heavily as to which Old and New Testament books are canonical, casting doubt on the concept of plenary inspiration. From the beginning of the church until the nineteenth century there had been heated disagreement about which books belonged in the biblical canon.[93] To prove that establishing biblical authority quickly turns into a tangled line of transmission, he quotes Eusebius, who then quotes

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[93]   Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî, *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, tr. Muhammad Wali Raazi (London: Ta-Ha Publishers, 1989), 37.

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Origen as to whether Clement of Rome wrote the Epistle of Hebrews.[94] Such debates among the church fathers confirmed the dubious legitimacy of Christian Scripture, and al-Kairânawî believed that open-minded Christians would not help but soon renounce their faith. Overall, distortions would lead the Christians sooner or later to "admit to the truth of the fact that the great part of the Judeo-Christian scriptures have undergone great changes and distortions. We have shown that the Christians do not possess any authentic records or acceptable arguments for the authenticity of the books of either the Old Testament or the New Testament."[95]

In the second section he presents over a hundred contradictions in the Bible. Most are discrepancies in dates and figures in the books of First and Second Kings and First and Second Chronicles. Some of his arguments take on more nuance and demonstrate that parts of Scripture violate the spirit of the word in other sections. He quotes John 11:49-52 in which the High Priest Caiaphas prophesies that Jesus should die for the nation of Israel. Al-Kairânawî disputes this prophecy for three reasons: first, that a high priest should necessarily be a prophet, which is incorrect; second, if it were a prophetic statement then Jesus would have only atoned for the sins of the Jews and not the sins of the world; third, this high priest presided over Jesus's trial and execution in which he was judged to be a liar and false prophet, which contradicts his prophecy. In Matthew the high priest is quoted as striking Jesus, when in the book of John he acknowledges Jesus as the Son of God (Matthew 26: 63-68). It is illogical that he would have commanded the

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94   Ibid.
95   Ibid., 40.

people to kill whom he knew to be God.[96]

In Part Three he quotes from European scholars who acknowledge textual incongruities in the Bible, such as Joseph Benson, Johann Scholz, Ernst Rosenmuller, and Alexander Geddes. Al-Kairânawî takes these admissions from Protestant scholars and compares them to similar opinions from medieval Muslim scholars and polemicists such as İmâm ar-Razi (d. 925), al-Qurtubi (d. 1273), and al-Maqrizi (d. 1442). He dates ancient manuscripts to prove that no extant Bibles exist before the revelation of Islam. To do this he uses the textual source research of Thomas Horne (d. 1862) to establish the date of the Codex Vaticanus in the seventh century or later.[97]

The Arabic edition of *İzhâr u'l-hakk* was an immediate sensation. Ahmed Faris al-Shidyâq, the Istanbul-based editor of the Arabic newspaper *Al-Gawaib*, and himself a Bible critic and former Protestant, wrote a glowing forward to the work.[98] According to the introduction to the Turkish translation, prepared by Nüzhet Efendi, the secretary-general of the Ministry of Public Instruction, Âli Pasha believed the work to be so important after having read it that he ordered a translation to Turkish. He desired that the work be written in a simple language, apparently believing that anti-Islamic polemics were so widely available that even non-elite Muslims were in need of the knowledge to properly defend their religion. He considered *İzhâr u'l-hakk* an adequate defense for Muslims of all social classes against attacks from Protestant missionaries.[99]

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[96]   Ibid., 153, 154.
[97]   Ibid., 340.
[98]   Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele,* 65.
[99]   *...devletlû Mehmed Emin Ali Paşa hazretlerinin bilmutala'â meşmûl-i ilm-i hakâyik-şümûl-i vekâlet-i penahîleri buyurulmasiyle isâbet efzâ-yı sünûh ve sudûr olan emr ü irade-i hayriyetâde-i cenab-ı âsâfîleri mantuk-i celili üzere kitâb-ı mezkûr herkesin anlıyacağı tâ'birat ile lisân-ı türkîye terceme olunarak sâye-i muvaffakıyet-vaye-i cenab-ı padışahîde tab'u temsil kılınmışdır. (Terceme-i İzhâr ü'l-*

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From the state's perspective, Pfander's published writings posed a serious threat to Islam and its image as the protector of Muslims. Al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk* was the answer. Even decades later members of the Islamic religious establishment held up this seminal work as an adequate defense against Protestant missionary activity. Legal and religious scholar Mahmud Es'ad Şeydişehrî (d. 1918) wrote in a published series of sermons in 1914 that foreign missionaries travel through villages in the distant provinces of the Empire, preaching these ideas and spreading their literature. These Christians must be addressed by intellectuals, and these intellectuals should answer the missionaries by appealing to polemicists with a "perfect knowledge of Christianity, such as Rahmetullah Efendi."[100]

Whether or not *İzhâr u'l-hakk* curtailed Protestant missionary activity, its release had long-lasting effects on Muslim apologetics and anti-Christian polemics. Al-Kairânawî's synthesis of European critical methods within the idiom of classical Islamic apologetics permanently affected Muslim responses to Christianity. Harputî İshak wrote *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* before *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, and a second polemic, *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* ("The Light of Hearts") years after its release. The difference between the two is significant. The former is a purely theological treatise that occupies itself almost entirely with the internal consistency of Christian scripture. The latter makes extensive use of European biblical

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hakk), 4. See Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele*, 66.

[100] *Bu bâbda hem hükûmete hem de efrâda müterettib birtakım vezâif vardır. Hükûmet, misyonerler tarafından imzasız birtakım risâleler neşredilip bunlarda âyât-i kerîmeye yanlış ma'nalar verilerek ahâlî-i İslâmiyye'nin iğfâline çalışıldığından bahs ile, umûmun nazar-ı dikkatini celb etmelidir...Nasrâniyyet'e dâ'ir ma'lûmât-ı mükemmele ahzı için bu bâbda yazılan reddiyelere mürâca'at etmektir. Nasrâniyyet aleyhine hem bizzat nasârâ mütefekkiri, hem de ehl-i İslâm tarafından elsine-i muhtelifede pek çok reddiyeler yazılmıştır. Bize en ziyade münâsebeti olanlar, Rahmetullâh Efendi'nin İhzâru'l-hakk nâm eseriyle...*Müdafaat-ı Dîniye Hutbeler, Hikmetullah Hakkında I, Sebîlü'r-Reşâd No. 244 (April 1911), 168-172.

criticism and directly borrows many of al-Kairânawî's arguments. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, Harputî İshak Efendi's primary accusations against Christianity were still based on *tahrîf,* but to argue this point he moved beyond the classical Islamic approach of comparing biblical and Qur'anic verses. He instead claimed that these Scriptural innovations were borrowed from Stoic and Neoplatonic philosophers by whom he believed the apostles had been influenced.[101]

Conclusion

Christian and Muslim Ottoman religious polemics underwent an important progression in the mid-nineteenth century due to modernist intellectual movements and political reforms in the Empire. Both types of polemicists crafted their arguments to meet particular social threats that they believed their interlocutors presented to the state. Kâmî wrote his 1858 polemic with little or no understanding of unique elements of Protestant theology, offering stock arguments against Christianity. He likely crafted it counter the perceived threat of the new ABCFM station in his home city of Diyarbakir and the missionaries' book distribution network in Southeast Anatolia. Harputî İshak wrote *Şems ül-Hakîkat* specifically to challenge Pfander before he could even complete his translation of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* into Turkish, but the Muslim scholar used a traditionalist, theological approach. Sungurî Hasan restricted his polemic to a purely textual approach by 1866, concurrent with the flood of Bibles and missionary literature in the Empire.

It was *İzhâr u'l-hakk* that truly expanded the Islamic polemical scope of attack against Christianity. While *tahrîf* was a critical part of any polemical tool kit against

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[101]   Harputî İshak, *Ziyâu'l-kulûb* (Istanbul, 1876).

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Christianity in medieval and early modern Muslim polemics, it took on a more

comprehensive meaning in the mid-nineteenth century. *Tahrîf* no longer meant a group of

errors and falsifications in the textual transmissions of the Christian scriptures that had

crept in through centuries of compounding copyist errors. Following his research of

contemporary European biblical criticism, al-Kairânawî depicted the Bible as totally

distorted in its historical and textual entirety. His arguments moved the Christian-Muslim

debate outside a self-contained argument of the holy books and into wider debates of

historical empirical evidence. In the past, Christianity's particular dogmas were rejected

while the religion itself was considered to contain the same basic message as Islam. Now

Christianity was rejected in its entirety.[102]

 İzhâr u'l-hakk did not completely mitigate the influence of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* in the

Ottoman Empire. As we will see in the next chapter, the CMS continued to import copies

to Istanbul throughout the next two decades through the personal distribution efforts of

S.W. Weakley, Koelle, and their colporteurs. These books and others authored by Pfander

found their way into the hands of Ottoman Muslim scholars, as references to these books

continue in press accounts throughout the nineteenth century. But *Mîzân u'l-hakk* was

eventually overshadowed by a polemical work by Koelle that came to dominate religious

discussion in the 1870s. It was the direct catalyst for multiple Muslim responses that were

written for decades to come, even into the 1910s, long after Koelle had left the Empire.

The Christian polemical surge even impelled the ABCFM to take bolder steps in the print

sphere, despite its opposition to Pfander's methods. Along with its enormous Bible

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[102] Schirrmacher, *The Influence of German Biblical Criticism on Muslim Apologetics in the 19th Century*, 277.

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production program, it produced a few Christian works in Ottoman Turkish and even a

number of Protestant apologetics up through the 1880s, despite the ABCFM's directors

ordering their staff to stay away from controversial works.

Al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk* was written in response to Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk*,

but it was also influenced by it. Pfander wrote his polemic in an Islamic idiom with the

hopes that he would reach Muslim readers by writing in a familiar style and using

traditional Islamic sources. The work appeared to produce more animosity than it did

converts (although this is not entirely the case[103]), but it inspired al-Kairânawî to follow

Pfander's method of writing a religious polemic using authoritative sources familiar to its

intended audience. The work represented a new intellectual line of assault in the

Christian-Muslim polemical battle. Ironically, it also represented a dramatic rupture from

the past in terms of religious authority. Defending religious truth now meant relying on

rationalist sources as the means of definitive truth rather than appealing to their

respective holy books. Christians and Muslim polemicists would discover in the coming

decades that in using such weapons, they were now in danger of destroying their own

religious foundations as well.

The polemical debate that was launched by the Ottoman state commissioning

Şems ü'l-Hakîkat and *İzhâr u'l-hakk* also signaled an active attempt by the government to

establish acceptable boundaries of religious tolerance on its own terms in the face of

foreign pressure to do otherwise. Its interpretation of the 1856 Reform Edict's clauses

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[103] "The subsequent conversion, too, of Safdar Ali (1864), although he did not directly ascribe his
conversion to Pfander's efforts, and of Imad-ud-Din (1866), who did acknowledge Pfander's influence,
were claimed as long-term proof of Pfander's victory." Quoted in Bennett, 79.

meant securing protection for expression of religious belief, but it also meant defending Islam as the pre-eminent religion in the face of internal and external pressure to reform further than it was willing to go. This defense was projected both domestically and internationally, particularly to Muslim intellectuals abroad that looked to the Ottoman Empire as the only Islamic state not under explicit European colonial domination. As a result, in the next two decades the inter-imperial scope of this Istanbul-based Christian-Muslim debate widened as new polemicists joined the fray, including S.W. Koelle and Ottoman Muslim literati Zihni and Said Efendi, who released a Turkish translation of *Tuhfa.* These actors had individual motives for releasing their respective works, but they were all inspired by the debate between Pfander and al-Kairânawî.

This chapter has provided a framework for understanding the polemical strategies and uses of modernist discourse by Christian and Muslim authors in the late Tanzimat period. Now that a sense of how these polemics took shape has been established, particularly in the backdrop of political reforms that provided new but undefined freedoms in religious expression, this dissertation can turn to a closer analysis of the day-to-day missionary operations and the manner in which they distributed their polemics in Istanbul. It can also take a closer look at the forms of Christian-Muslim argument that became a more regular feature of the Istanbul press in the 1870s. During this period, new pressures were put on the government to listen to the voices of sects within Islam, due to the entrenchment of the millet system in 1856 and political powers given to the leaders of these groups. As a result, Muslim polemicists targeted non-Sunni Muslims with equal fervor as Protestant missionaries. Thus in the next chapter I will fill in these gaps by

moving away from state correspondence and look more closely at missionary station

reports along with Ottoman press accounts.Through a focus on religious polemics and the

social structures that supported their authors, not only will their texts be understood, but

also how they narrated modernist religious discourses while tackling state and social

reforms in practice.

Chapter Three

"The Weapons Are Almost Wholly Taken From the Armory Provided by Christendom Itself": The Spread of Religious Polemics in Ottoman Istanbul (1867-1879)

By the late 1860s the first round of salvos fired between Pfander and al-Kairânawî in the polemical debate had cooled off. With *Mîzân u'l-hakk* banned in 1864, Pfander took leave of Istanbul, perhaps disillusioned with the prospect of converting Muslims to Christianity. The CMS office relocated to Egypt, and Pfander traveled to England for furlough when his wife fell ill. He himself fell ill while abroad, and his health rapidly deteriorated. He died unexpectedly in 1866. Following his death the first English translation of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* appear in 1867 and several other European languages, but it remained on the Ottoman *yasaknâme*s, and its distribution was limited to those Ottoman subjects whom foreign missionaries personally gave a copy. Al-Kairanawi's anti-Christian literary activities also came to an end. He outlived Pfander for over two decades, but his polemical works ceased. He returned to the Hicaz and founded an Islamic school, the Medrese as-Sawlatiya, in 1874. He remained there until his death in 1891.[1]

However, Pfander and al-Kairanawi's legacies in the Ottoman and international print spheres did not diminish. Their two polemics heavily influenced Istanbul-based missionaries and Islamic scholars. Even before Pfander's death his CMS colleague S. W. Koelle was inspired to publish his own polemic *Gıdâ ü'l-mülâhazât* (Food For Reflections), a treatise on the historical development of Christianity and Islam. It was

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[1] Powell, "Maulana Rahmat Allâh Kairanawi," 62.

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originally written in English and French in 1865 and translated to Turkish in 1873. He

distributed this and other works such as the "The Life of Christ" to inquiring Muslims

that visited the mission house.[2] An Ottoman-Turkish apologetic of Protestantism was

anonymously published in 1868, most likely by an ABCFM missionary. It was entitled

İ'tikâd ve Î'bâdât: Protestanların İ'tikâd ve İbâdetine Göre Dîni Mesihî Beyâninda (Belief

and Acts Worship: The Proclamation on The Religion of the Messiah According to the

Belief and Worship of Protestants).[3]

The Muslim response came as quickly to Koelle as it had for Pfander. In 1871

Hacı Abdi Bey (d. 1886) published *İzâhu'l-Merâm fî keşfi'z-zalâm* (The Desire for

Elucidation in the Revealing of Darkness)*,* written to warn Muslims against Christian

propaganda and publicly refute them.[4] In 1874 Şinasi republished Mehmet and Zihni

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2   Koelle, November 2, 1868, CM/042/75.
3   *İ'tikâd ve Î'bâdât: Protestanların İ'tikâd ve İbâdetine Göre Dîni Mesihî Beyâninda* (Istanbul: Papazyan
     Artin Basımevi, 1868). This 128-page work, which appears in the *Tekkeler-Hasip Efendi* section of the
     Süleymaniye Library Manuscript collection was written anonymously. It was most likely printed by a
     member of the American Board, as no other agency would have the facilities to print such a work, nor
     the inclination to print a tract supportive of Protestantism while making no mention of Islam. The author
     is most likely George F. Herrick, as an Ottoman Turkish work almost identical in content but nearly
     twice as long was written by him in 1884, called the *Protestanların İ'tikâduna Göre Dini Mesihî*. The
     1868 *İ'tikâd ve Î'bâdât* appeared the same year as the Arabic version of *İzhâr u'l-hakk.* It is a defense of
     Protestantism that charts its historical development in the context of Church history and its separation
     from the Catholic Church. The author speaks positively of Christianity in the introduction, describing it
     as a cure to the idolatry and immorality of Roman society. However, its pure faith and worship was
     corrupted in the fourth century through the church's merging with imperial power, decisions by
     ecumenical councils, and priests eager for power. It was the work of Protestants who wanted to return it
     to its origins, such as Bohemian John Huss, Englishman John Wycliffe, and Martin Luther. They held
     the precept that the commands of the New Testament superseded that of priests and bishops. The work
     spends its latter half discussing Protestantism's relationship with contemporary society, science, art, and
     culture. He argues that faith is not in opposition to reason and science. The two are compatible because
     science lets humanity understand the natural world, while religion lets them understand the creator of all
     these things and matters of the soul. Protestantism in particular proves this compatibility, as Western
     nations have advanced considerably in culture, literature, all through the influence of their holy books.
     The influence of Protestantism leads to advancement in practically every subjects such as book writing,
     child rearing, and general happiness. 121-125.
4   Abdullâh el-Hacc b. Destan Mustafa el-Hac, *İzâhu'l-Merâm fî keşfi'z-zalâm* (Istanbul: Şeyh Yahya
     Efendi Matbaası, 1288/1871).

Efendi's translation of Abdullah Tercüman's *Tuhfa*. High-ranking Ottoman administrators, publishers, and ulema members issued their own short treatises. Pressure against Christian missionary publishing intensified so much that in 1879 an Islamic theology teacher and associate of Koelle received a death sentence for assisting him in translating "The Book of Common Prayer" to Turkish. He was exiled to England, where he converted to Christianity but later renounced his new religion.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the polemical attack on Christianity evolved from questions of New Testament scriptural interpretation to a total attack on the Bible itself. These arguments formed in the backdrop of the Tanzimat period, when periodical literature established itself as a significant cultural force in political commentary, social criticism, instruction, and news reportage. These developments only intensified in the 1870s. Publishers began to print letters in these journals, and the notion of a dialectic between readers and publishers emerged. This project of the mutual production of knowledge became critical as the Istanbul print sphere widened to international dimensions due to the increasing knowledge of European languages among Ottoman elite and contacts with foreign publishers in Istanbul such as the French publisher and Ottoman advocate Charles Mismer, who offered a Western intellectual "attack" on the Protestant missionaries, suggesting they were a force that had to be answered.

However, the phenomenon of writers conversing with their audiences did not mean a unilateral movement toward religious inclusivity. More often than not religious lines hardened between Protestants and Muslims but also between Sunni and non-Sunni

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Muslims. Yet as discussed in the previous chapter, the proliferation of anti-religious writings should not only be understood as a sign of confessional antipathy. Even in the most controversial writings of this period, polemicists attempted to write within the typology of a discussion – and in a few unexpected episodes, even met privately with one another, as is the case of S.W. Koelle being received at the house of a Young Ottoman journalist to discuss political reform on the eve of the First Constitutional Era of 1876-1878.

The goal of this chapter is two-fold: First, I build on the themes of the previous chapter and show the evolution of the Ottoman print sphere in the 1870s. I will put forward the many ways in which periodicals addressed concerns of their readership over issues of religion and modernity, political reform, and the Empire's complicated relationship with Christianity. The global print sphere informed Istanbul's readership of European colonial domination of Muslims across the globe. They followed the British 1840s-1850s massacres of Muslims in Afghanistan and India. I will also show that the print sphere was a contested space between the government, Ottoman journalists, diplomats, missionaries, and even foreigner publishers in Istanbul. This contestation laid the groundwork for censorship laws in the Hamidian period. Yet laws could be subverted, as Koelle did when he quietly but illegally distributed banned polemics within the Empire. Although he only managed to smuggle in a couple hundred of these books and was occasionally caught by the Customs House, his and Pfander's polemics were the principal controversy among Muslims interested in anti-Islamic polemics for decades to come. His efforts came under heavy criticism, but I will show that his complaints of

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government press censorship were shared by many Young Ottomans, whom Koelle

showed initial support for their reform efforts and protested their exile.

Second, I will analyze the literary strategies of the Christian and Muslim

polemical writers in order to better understand their religious imaginaries and attempts to

promote these ideas within the political public sphere. This public sphere is what Craig

Calhoun describes as initially constituted in the world of letters, which paved the way for

that oriented to politics.[5] The two processes are intertwined, and can been seen in Muslim

polemicists promoting the scientific heritage within Islam, and also promoting

government reforms for increased secular scientific education and European language

instruction alongside traditional Islamic curricula. In order to examine these themes as

simply as possible, I have arranged the material chronologically. This is done in order to

show the continuity and developments in literary strategies of these writers. I argue these

polemics and their conceptualizations are intimately tied up with contemporary domestic

and foreign political events in Ottoman Istanbul; therefore, it is necessary to describe

their mutual influence, which I do by moving sequentially throughout the decade. The

station reports of S.W. Koelle and Ottoman Turkish newspaper accounts show that

Muslim and Christian writers were familiar with each other's texts and frequently built

off their co-religionists arguments.

The first polemical work under consideration in this chapter is S.W. Koelle's *Gıdâ*

ü'l-mülâhazât (Food for Reflection), published in 1865 under the pen name 'Abd ü'l-İsa

(Servant of Jesus). This polemic, while almost completely forgotten in modern

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5   Craig Calhoun, "Introduction: Habermas and the Public Sphere," in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*,
ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge: Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992), 1-48.

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scholarship, had far more impact on Christian-Muslim polemics in the Ottoman Turkish print sphere than Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk*. It garnered greater attention from Muslim writers due to its higher print run, the presence of Koelle in the Empire for nearly two decades, his attempts to convert Muslims to Christianity spiraling out of control into international controversies, and descriptions of the Ottoman Empire' civilization as inferior to European Christian civilization.[6] Other works under consideration in this chapter include the 1871 *İzah ü'l-merâm fı keşfı'z-zılam* by Hacı Abdi Bey, written in a classical style reminiscent of *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* but influenced by the British convert to Islam Henry Stanley.

This chapter also considers two works by Harputî İshak: *Kâşif ü'l-esrâr ve dâfıu'l-eşrâr* (The Revealing of Mysteries and the Repelling of Wickedness), an 1874 polemic against Bektashism, and his 1876 *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* (The Light of Hearts), a work against Christianity heavily influenced by al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk.* Concerning the first work, he wrote it at a time when Sultan Abdülaziz desired to lessen the influence of Bektashism due to contemporary social and political factors. While not an explicitly anti-Christian work, I examine it because it is part of a larger program of the state drawing clearer confessional lines. Furthermore, I have the benefit of an author who penned anti-Christian polemics as well and can compare similarities between anti-Bektashi and anti-Christian sentiment. It is instructive to see how "heterodox" Islamic theological belief had become categorized the same way as Protestant Christianity according to the state apparatus. In the *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* Harputî İshak criticizes Protestant missionary activity as

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6   Sigismund Wilhelm Koelle, F*ood for Reflection: Being an Historical Comparison Between Mohammedanism and Christianity* (London: Church Missionary House, 1865), 1.

he did in his first writing the *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*, but in this work he deconstructs the Christian text and reconstructs them according to critical Biblical methods referenced by al-Kairânawî. He describes the formation of the New Testament and its corruption over the centuries through quoting European biblical scholars. These arguments are framed by a line-by-line refutation of Koelle's *Food for Reflections*. Through this process Harputî İshak touches upon theological matters, along with contemporary political events and topics of religion and modernity referenced by Koelle.

S.W. Koelle and Christian Polemical Distribution in the 1870s

The writings of S.W. Koelle heavily influenced perceptions of Protestantism and its threat to the Empire among Istanbul's journalists, ulema, and government circles, but his impact on Istanbul's public sphere in the late Ottoman Empire have been almost completely ignored by scholars of the late nineteenth century, with the exception of his 1879 arrest, which is extensively documented in the archives of the British Foreign Office.[7] I argue that Koelle's influence was critical to the development of Christian-Muslim perceptions of the other for the forthcoming decades and will attempt to fill this lacuna. This chapter will describe the contents of his writings, its reception in Turkish journals, Koelle's reaction to these receptions as recounted in his private letters to the

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7   While articles on the Ottoman polemical legacy such as Johann Strauss's *Müdafa'âya Mukâbele ve Mukâbeleye Müdafa'â* reference the *Food for Reflections*, they do not provide any biographical information, or anything else beside Turkish authors' quotations of the work. Hasan Özarslan comes the closest. He notes in his thesis on Ahmet Mithat Efendi's *Müdafa'â* that such a work was published in 1873 and was 256 pages but is unaware of the author. Regarding Koelle's presence in British and Turkish archives, see *Correspondence Respecting the Arrest of Dr. Koelle by the Turkish Police: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty* (London: Harrison and Sons, 1880); Azmi Özcan, S. Tufan Buzpınar, "Church Mission Society Istanbul'da. Tanzimat, Islahat, Misyonerlik" [The Church Mission Society in Istanbul: The Tanzimat, reform and missionary work], *İstanbul Araştırmaları* 1 (Spring 1997): 63-79.

CMS, and his publishing activity in the international press. His career offers a privileged view to the entangled history of the Istanbul print sphere and its connections to the global Muslim print sphere, along with press organs throughout Europe.

Koelle came to Istanbul in the early 1860s, but he was already an experienced missionary and widely-respected linguist. He had worked for decades in Africa with freed slaves in Freetown, Sierra Leone. Koelle assembled the *Polyglotta Africana* in 1854, a compendium of grammar and vocabulary from various African languages. At a research site in the refugee camps of Freetown, he corresponded with Africans liberated from slave ships by the British. Through interviews with these subjects he assembled nearly 300 word lists from 156 languages. He demonstrated his determination and linguistic abilities in this project: Koelle was given only six months to complete the task, requiring him to compile one language per day, six days per week.[8]

By the 1860s Koelle's career encountered turbulence. He continued to labor on in the CMS station in Istanbul following the arrest of Muslim converts to Christianity in 1864 and the resulting loss of British diplomatic support for their mission. The missionary station slowly diminished from its initial strength and never recovered. He wrote in numerous station reports that missionary efforts in Istanbul were now met by systematized obstruction. The rooms, offices, and chapels of the missionaries were beset with spies, so that no inquiring Muslim could approach them without being reported to the police.[9] Pfander left in 1865 for a furlough in England in ill health and died the same

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[8] George Tucker Childs, *An Introduction to African Languages* (John Benjamins Publishing, Philadelphia, 2003), 15-16.
[9] Stock, *History of the Church Mission Society*, *Volume 2*, 155.

year. Istanbul CMS missionary R.H. Weakley left Istanbul two or three years later and joined the Wolter family at the CMS station in Izmir. The Turkish converts to Christianity of the 1864 controversy, Selim Efendi, Mahmud Efendi, and Abdi Efendi, had died as well.[10] Koelle was left alone with his family and hired assistants to continue the work of the CMS, occasionally meeting with inquirers of Christianity and publishing books and tracts.[11]

The state curtailed the influence of *Mîzân u'l-hakk*, banning its circulation. Koelle continued to distribute the Turkish translation cautiously, but he had limited ability to influence others. Occasionally Muslim inquirers visited him, but he suspected some of being government spies. Later CMS reports claim that those suspected of interest in conversion were sent into exile "by scores" and condemned to work in the galleys. Despite these setbacks, occasional successes punctuated his efforts. Three times in the period from 1862 to 1880 Koelle reported baptisms of former Muslims, once of a Turkish family, and on two occasions of Persians. Yet by and large his missionary work was stalled. Community scrutiny prevented him from public evangelism or even visiting the houses of Muslim neighbors. By 1875 he wrote that very little could be done for the CMS:

> Proselytization efforts offend both the religious and the political susceptibilities of the Mussulmans. A Turkish Mussulman regards them as an insult to his faith, and a Mussulman Turks [regards them] as an act of hostility against his government and country[...] A European missionary could not visit in Mohammedan houses without rousing suspicion. No church for the public Christian service of Turks would have any chance of being authorized by the Government. No missionary school for Mohammedan youths would be tolerated [...] The Government absolutely prohibits the printing of books in which our religion is defended against Mohammedanism, or the importation through the custom-house. Even books like Sale's English

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[10] Stock, *History of the Church Mission Society, Volume 3*, 114.
[11] Stock, *Volume 2*, 155.

translation of the Koran are rigidly excluded.[12]

Yet Koelle's low public profile betrays the extent of his influence. Not only did he manage to keep from falling into obscurity, but his book distribution efforts soon raised a level of controversy that eclipsed that of Pfander. It began with the publishing of the *Food for Reflections* in 1865 in English and French. Koelle wrote the treatise in what he believed to be a temperate language, perfect for accommodating Muslims sincere in their desire to learn of Christianity. In his correspondence with the CMS home office, he expressed optimism that these foreign language versions would go far in demonstrating God's revealed truth to multilingual, educated Ottoman Muslims. It might even be of some use in England by showing the actual nature of Islam to British Christians and of the "unquestionable need of the Mohammedans to have the day-light of Christ's truth brought to bear upon them." On these grounds, he requested his home office to send copies to Christian university educators, headmasters, and missionary agency directors across England. The French version, he wrote, could be useful for foreigners and missionaries traveling to Algiers or Muslim Francophone lands.[13]

Koelle's primary goal, however, was always to put the book in the hands of Turkish-speaking Muslims, particularly when it became clear that these foreign-language editions had little impact. English was hardly used in the Empire outside of intellectual, diplomatic, or trade circles, and French a little more so. He chose to publish the work only in English and French due to hopes that the government would tolerate the public circulation of controversial books in a foreign language. He later found the government

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12   Ibid.
13   S.W. Koelle to Col. Davies. December 20, 1865.CM/042/37. Archives of the Church Mission Society (hereafter CMS), Birmingham University.

made no distinction between native and Western languages when it came to controversy.[14]

For the next seven years he worked with native helpers on a translation of the book into

Turkish. Throughout the 1860s, he continued to distribute other Christian books, whether

through those who called upon him privately or through his colporteur that sold books in

Istanbul's public thoroughfares.

Printing these books locally was a more difficult matter, as it required government

permission, which would not come to the CMS after the events of 1864. To work around

this problem, the actual printing of the *Food for Reflections* in English and French, and

the Turkish version of Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk* and *Tarîku'l-hayât* took place in England,

whereupon the books were shipped to Istanbul without attracting notice from customs

inspectors. Other inconspicuous methods that he considered in order to bypass Ottoman

inspectors included sending the books through the English Foreign Office and obtaining

them from the consul. In an 1868 letter he wrote to the CMS headquarters, requesting 24

copies of *Mîzân u'l-hakk* in Turkish and 24 copies of the *Food for Reflections* in English.

Such requests were repeated every few months, suggesting a steady distribution of these

works.[15]

Flaunting the press ban came with its risks. On October 28, 1867, customs

inspectors confiscated pamphlets and books shipped from England under government

orders and threatened to destroy them. Koelle appealed to British Ambassador Sir Henry

George Elliot on December 6, asking him "to benefit this country by encouraging the

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[14] Koelle, May 11, 1868, CM/042/68, January 11, 1870, CM/042/93. Archives of the CMS, Birmingham University.

[15] S.W. Koelle to Secretary of CMS. October 5, 1868. CM/042/74. Archives of the CMS.

government to advance in the path of liberal reform and sound progress" and use his influence to call upon the Ottoman authorities to release the pamphlets and books. The *Food for Reflections* was not an attack on the government of the country, he argued, but an impartial comparison of the three monotheistic religions. To prove its pacific nature, he quoted its introduction to the ambassador, which compliments the Ottoman government of recent years as rising above its old prejudices and taking a deliberate step toward "Christian liberality" by proclaiming perfect liberty to all their subjects to embrace and exercise whatever religion they think best.[16]

To Koelle, the true scandal of the confiscation was the Ottoman government's not affording the same liberty to religious minorities as enjoyed by non-Christians in British colonies. He knew of former Christians in Istanbul, even English men and women, who converted from Christianity to Islam and did so freely. Yet for him to initiate such a conversion in the other direction was prohibited by the Ottoman implementation of the law, even if it was allowed in word. He writes that the Christians of the Ottoman Empire suffered far worse treatment than Muslims in British-controlled India (a point that Harputî İshak denies in his chapters-long rebuttal of the *Food for Reflections* in the *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb*). This was not only a violation of religious freedom but even violated free commerce clauses written in the capitulation treaties to European expatriates residing in the Ottoman state, as books are not singled out for exclusion by these treaty stipulations.[17]

Despite his skirmishes with the British consulate and Ottoman press statues, Koelle kept cordial relations with native scholars that could assist him in translation.

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[16] S.W. Koelle. January 10, 1868. CM/042/64.
[17] Ibid.

Throughout the production of the Turkish version of the *Food for Reflections,* Koelle records that he found Muslims scholars sympathetic to his project of religious inquiry. In the final revision of the book, Koelle claims that he received editorial assistance from an ulema member. One religious scholar read it and gave his full approval, although he did so with such words of superlative praise that it suggests a misunderstanding or wishful thinking on Koelle's part. The Turkish cleric was so moved by the *Food for Reflections* that Koelle claims it undid his belief in Islam. He told the missionary that he believed in the gospel, but it was impossible to convert under the present circumstances for fear of destroying all his earthly prospects and risk the happiness of his family.[18]

Koelle finished the final revisions of the Turkish *Food for Reflections* in 1873. He first sought a local printer to publish the work, seeking assistance where he could never find it with the English and French versions of the book. No printer agreed, so Koelle requested the CMS publish the sheets of the book, ship them to Istanbul, and have the binding completed locally. When Koelle received copies of the Food for Reflection he took the precaution of removing every sheet into his own house and made arrangements to have it bound in Istanbul. With this process in place, he finally released it. The first edition print run cost £60, with £50 provided by the Christian Knowledge Society and £10 more by the remaining proceeds of other publications.[19]

Koelle released his polemic with similar hopes as Pfander's upon his release of *Mîzân u'l-hakk.* He believed that his book would overcome Muslim prejudices against Christianity. Like Pfander, Koelle had experienced publishing success in his missionary

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[18] Koelle, September 30, 1871. CM/042/116.
[19] Koelle, March 25, 1873. CM/042/136.

posting prior to Istanbul. He believed in the power of the printed word to change hearts.

Also like Pfander, the reception of his book ran opposite to his expectations.

Content of the *Food for Reflections*

The *Food for Reflections* is presented as a study of the grounds by which

Christians believe in the Crucifixion and Muslims deny it. It includes a historical

narrative of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, comparing the three religions on many

points. It uses Old Testament prophecies, gospel accounts, Jewish testimony, "heathen"

testimony" and indirect testimony from most ancient symbols, observances, and

practices. By Jewish and "heathen" testimony, he meant the works of Josephus and

accounts of Arab chroniclers in the early centuries of Islam. Koelle quoted them by way

of Canon Edward Sell's "The Life of Muhammed."[20]

Koelle was aware of the dangers that such a work would bring due to his

experiences with Pfander during the 1864 controversy. He knew that addressing Islam's

deficiencies could bring considerable risk to his missionary agency and even his personal

safety (as he would experience a decade later in his 1879 arrest following the

controversial project of translating the Anglican "Book of Common Prayer" into

Turkish). As such he directly addresses Muslim readers on the second page and appeals to

their open-mindedness, claiming that it is one's duty to investigate unknown divine truths.

It was his duty as the reader's "brother" to warn him of religious error, as it is not true

kindness to see someone in fault and remain silent for fear of disturbing his contentment:

"The spirit of genuine love does not shrink from inflicting a wound so salutary, known

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[20] S.W. Koelle [Abd Isa], *The Death of Christ Upon the Cross, A Fact Not a Fiction Being a Word of Defense of Christianity Against Mohammedan Attacks* (London: CMS, 1876). CM/042/212-B.

well there is an exquisite satisfaction to the soul of man in the possession of truth, which compensates a thousandfold for the doubts, fears, and difficulties, which must be overcome to reach that goal." As he was merely a messenger of religious truth, Koelle washes his hands clean of any violent reaction that could result from his work:

> In short, to dislike and hate a man because he seeks to throw some light on our highest interests and most sacred duties would be such a strange inversion of common sense and good feeling, that I am confident my Moslem brethren will not blame me for dismissing any fears of this kind respecting them, and firmly relying, in what I am about to say, on their willingness and readiness to appreciate good intentions.[21]

The core question of *Food for Reflections* is which of the three monotheistic religions supersedes the other two. If Christianity has superseded Judaism, then the former is no longer the fullest form of revealed religion, and now only a powerless, lifeless shell. Likewise, if Islam has superseded Christianity, then all Christians are compelled to obey God's fullest expression of religion and convert to Islam. However, if Islam does not contain the characteristics of a revealed religion that has superseded Christianity, then every Muslim will learn from his own conscience what step it is his sacred duty to take.[22]

To determine the merits of each religion Koelle compares them based on six criteria: with regard to God; with regard to worship; with respect to the kingdom of God; on retaliation; on the subject of slavery; and on polygamy and divorce. In the first chapter he compares the Old and New Testaments to juxtapose Jewish and Christian practice. In every regard Christianity is a superior revelation to Judaism and an advance beyond the Jewish dispensation. The Jewish God is solitary and one of justice; the Christian God is

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[21] *Food for Reflections*, 3.
[22] Ibid., 34.

triune and one of love. The Jewish God is worshipped with animal sacrifices; the

Christian God is worshiped in spirit. The Jewish Kingdom of God is in the form of the

national character of Israel; the Christian Kingdom of God is a heavenly kingdom.

Retaliation in Old Testament times meant an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth;

retaliation among Christians means forgiveness and loving one's enemies. Slavery in the

Old Testament meant Jews offering better treatment to their slaves than heathens did to

their slaves; slavery in the New Testament meant a desire for abolition, as Paul advised to

Philemon. Marriage in the Old Testament was sacred but susceptible to polygamy and

divorce; marriage in the New Testament rejected both practices. He concludes that it is

clear that Christianity is superior to Judaism in every regard in providing both spiritual

and temporal blessings. As God's dispensation had moved from Judaism to Christianity,

"it must be a sin for anyone to remain in the Jewish religion after having received the

opportunity of becoming a Christian." [23]

He then moves to a comparison with Christianity and Islam by comparing their

origins, temporal successes, and level of civilizational attainment. Koelle first asks if

Islam is better at conquering the hearts of men than Christianity. To this question he does

admit that there is enough religious truth in Islam to exercise a degree of power over the

hearts of men. However, it is a difficult comparison to make as Islam represented a

political-religious system built upon Muhammed's rulership in Medina, compared to

Christ's public ministry that lacked political power, which Christians would continue to

lack for the next three hundred years until Constantine's conversion. Koelle quotes Arab

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[23] Ibid., 13-33.

chroniclers to confirm that Muhammed gained approximately one hundred thirty converts after thirteen years of ministry, while Jesus gained five hundreds in three years despite lacking political power. Islam's spread then accelerated, but not due to its religious merit: "After this short period, the proportion in the respective spread of Christianity and Islam changed; but this change was effected by means proving, no doubt, that the Muslims were daring and successful warriors, but by no means that their religion, as such, has more power to subdue the hearts of men than the religion of Christ."[24] Repeating an ancient facet of anti-Muslim polemics, he notes that Islam was established via military conquest, political rule, and the desire of its adherents for material gain, while Christianity was established by spiritual renewal.

In comparing the relative success of gathering adherents Koelle turns to a civilizational argument. Islam successfully spread because it could unite the warring tribes in Arabia under one command and increase plundering opportunities, much in the way that Alexander the Great spread Hellenic civilization across Asia a millennium earlier. Yet if one is to argue for the truth of religion based on the temporal power of its adherents, then Christian nations in the nineteenth century have clearly won this contest. One only had to consider the extent of European colonialism to see that Christian nations possessed the greater part of the habitable world and projected influence over every region on earth: "It can now be said, without exaggeration, that the Christians stand highest in the scale of nations, and that the providence of God has already invested them with power over the whole earth."[25] Many Muslims of Arabia, in contrast, were stuck at

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24 Ibid., 38.
25 Ibid., 46.

the same civilizational level as they were in the seventh century in the same "semi-barbarous, ignorant, and marauding Beduin tribes they were before Muhammed was born, not so civilized as some even of the heathen nations."[26]

Koelle says that Muhammed's teachings do not supersede Christianity because he was not foretold in the Scriptures – contrary to polemical and ulema assertions that verses referring to the Holy Spirit foretell Muhammed – nor did he appear in Christian lands. If God had wanted to send a revelation superseding Christianity, why did Muhammed appear in a pagan culture rather than a Christian land? Additionally, unlike Christ, he was not able to substantiate his claims through supernatural works or miracles. He merely pointed to the Qur'an itself as a miracle, (Surah Banî Israel 92:4), which Koelle finds to be tautological. If he could not do miracles then he could not claim to hold the office of a prophet. It is self-evident he was a preacher only, because in reality, he was nothing more.[27]

Koelle returns to the six questions he posed at the beginning of the study to determine that Christianity was superior to Judaism in order to compare Christianity to Islam. In each instance he finds Christianity not only superior to Islam, but Islam as a regression back to Judaism and even below it in several points.In the first criteria, the nature of God, he is a loving Creator in Christianity but only a righteous judge in Islam. This is a regression to a Judaic God and tantamount to a teacher that, after having taught his scholars to read fluently, sent them back to the alphabet.[28] In terms of the worship of

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[26]   Ibid.
[27]   Ibid., 64.
[28]   Ibid., 73.

God, Christianity nullifies the outward forms of worship in Judaism yet Islam returns to them and extends them to such areas as the twelve requisites to acceptable prayer in terms of ablutions, formulaic supplications, and prayer positions. Incumbent duties such as the pilgrimage to Mecca and washing of the feet are not only an affront to spiritual worship but actually lack logic. If an observant Muslim is caught in a far north latitudinal zone during a summer Ramadan, he would starve to death from the lack of a setting sun. Koelle asks if it is consistent with the wisdom of God to enforce a law on man so obviously inapplicable to all of humanity.[29]

In terms of the third comparison, the Kingdom of God, Jesus expanded it from the national and political character of Israel by establishing a global spiritual authority that superseded nation. Islam in contrast was a polity from the beginning. Through the establishment of the Caliphate, Islam irrevocably passed into the domain of worldly government. Islam was as a result open to political manipulation and earthly hostilities. For example, over ten thousands Muslims were killed in the battle of the Camel twenty-five years after Mohammed's death, and three of the four caliphs died by assassination from political intrigue.[30]

Koelle is not uniformly churlish in his survey of Islamic history. He praises the Ottoman Empire for implementing policies to treat non-Muslims with equanimity and no longer considering them infidels or political enemies. His praise is constrained, however, as these political reforms that increased respect for those of other faiths came from the wisdom of Christian governments, not from Qur'anic wisdom. Because "Islamic armies"

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[29]   Ibid., 93.
[30]   Ibid., 102.

had not achieved significant military victories for centuries and looked particularly weak

in the late nineteenth century, in order for the Ottoman Empire to remain independent of

direct European colonization, it had to abandon aspects of *şerî'at* that assigned Muslims

the top position in society, and institutionalized their political dominance. To Koelle, any

independent observer could see the truth of Christian belief based on Europe's dominance

of international affairs and the utter failure of Muslim states to achieve power in the game

of imperial politics:

> God, in His all-wise providence, has yet so diminished the worldly power of the Muslim nations, and so marvelously increased the general prosperity and political power of the nations professing Christianity, that there are a number of Christian lands, e.g. England, America, France, Prussia, Austria, Italy, and Russia, each one of which is more civilized, more generally educated, and politically more powerful, than the Osmanli Empire, which, of all remaining Muhammadan states, is, without contradiction, the most civilized, the best educated, and the most powerful.[31]

Koelle concludes by asking his Muslim reader to consider whether his religion is

divinely revealed, and, if so, why Gabriel would bring an inferior religion after Judaism

and Christianity. He claims that such questions have already been stirring in the minds of

Muslims around the world and compelled them to convert to Christianity. They testify

that the faith they have embraced approves itself nobler and better than the one they have

renounced. He concludes with a prayer that God may hasten the time that Muslim nations

walk with Christians in the same light of truth and experience the same love of God.[32]

The *Food for Reflections* met significant opposition from Islamic scholars,

perhaps more vociferous than Karl Pfander's *Mîzân u'l-hakk*. From the 1870s until the

1910, responses came from the Empire's premier religious scholars and authors, including

Ahmet Midhat, Harputî İshak, and numerous Ottoman journalists. It appeared to offend

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[31] Ibid., 112.
[32] Ibid., 149.

many authors on a personal level. As shall be shown in this and later chapters, Harputî İshak and possibly Mahmud Es'ad Şeydişehri not only responded to each of his arguments line-by-line, but referred to Koelle directly throughout their works with the sarcastic title of praise *hatîb* (preacher). The common title of respect for foreigners was *Mösyö* (monsieur), or *papaz* (priest/pastor) for religious figures. This phrase may be an insult of Koelle for his attempts to portray himself as a religious teacher perfectly comfortable with authoritative Muslim sources and using the Arabic pen name 'Abd Isa. These authors also used frequent sacrasm whenever they thought Koelle was misinterpreting a Qur'anic verse, asking how a scholar such as himself could commit such a basic error.

Koelle's polemic stoked the flames of polemical debate in the Ottoman capital. Muslim rejoinders to the *Food for Reflections* came almost exclusively from Istanbul authors. They can be considered works of independent scholarship by Ottoman writers and reflect their particular religious and social concerns. Therefore the rejoinders to Koelle that shall be considered for the rest of this chapter offer unique insight on literary strategies used by polemical writers to answer concerns of religion, society, and modernity that were unique to the Empire.

Koelle, The Young Ottomans, and the Reception of the *Food for Reflections*

After only distributing a modest number of *Food for Reflections* Koelle came in contact with Young Ottoman publishers. He thought highly of their political writings and fluency in European literature, although he was less enthusiastic about their interest in French literature and influence by Voltaire and Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet. He read their

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newspapers with great interest, particular their mouthpiece *İbret*. Koelle even thought that the simplified Turkish writing style could serve as a pattern for his future religious publications. Both the Young Ottoman writers and Protestant missionaries shared a vision of creating a simpler form of Ottoman Turkish to reach wider audiences, an important aspect of the shared global polemical culture that Easterners created alongside Westerners. Eventually, Koelle called upon Ahmet Midhat Efendi, whom he considered to be the mental and spiritual center of the Young Ottoman movement.[33]

In early 1873 Koelle visited his residence. According to his account, the two remained in discussion until midnight. They conversed on domestic and international politics, reform movements in the Empire, freedom of speech, and press censorship, of which the *İbret* had received many government warnings, as had Koelle. The two authors shared many political sentiments and disliked traditional Islamic elements with close connections to Sultan Abdülaziz's court, which harassed Muslim reformers who supported European educational and legal models but synthesized them with Islamic language and discourse. As such they shared the same ideological foe: Harputî İshak. The scholar was the current enemy of Young Ottoman authors and the future enemy of Koelle, as he had publicly criticized Ahmet Midhat's writings on scientific discovery and its connection to the Qur'an and hadith collections.

In terms of the latter controversy, Harputî İshak wrote an anonymous letter to *Basiret*, a conservative publication, on March 4, 1873 regarding Ahmet Midhat's embrace of modern scientific discovery, which he thought crossed the line of acceptable opinion.

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[33]   Koelle, March 25, 1873, CM/042/137.

The title of his letter was "O Infidel without religion!" (*Ey kâfir-i bî-din!*). Ahmet Midhat attempted to have the article redacted by issuing a letter twice, claiming that *Basiret* ran afoul of the regulations of the Ministry of the Press (*Matbû'ât nizâmnâmesi*) for printing such inflammatory language. His appeals were ignored, so Ahmet Midhat responded to these accusations in issues seven and eight of *Basiret.* His articles were entitled, "Who Has the Right to Treat One as an Infidel?" and "A Refutation of the Attack and Explication of the Truth" (*Kim kimi nasıl tekfîr edebilir* and *Redd-i itirâz ve Îzâh-ı hakîkât*).[34]

During his meeting with Koelle, Ahmet Midhat spoke of the press restrictions in the Ottoman capital and legal threats against those who opposed Sultan Abdülaziz's policies as a "suspended sword over our head." He and his colleagues needed to leave the Empire in order to continue publishing or risk arrest. Their choices lay among England, Malta, Switzerland, and France. What happened next in their conversation surprised even the missionary. According to his account, Ahmet Midhat praised Koelle for his study of religious truth and for challenging the retrograde form of Islam practiced among the Ottoman religious class. Ahmet Midhat said that Koelle's criticisms served his objective of exposing the errors of Islam, even promising Koelle that there would be an article on religion in each issue of their paper. Such flattery, though, came with a request:

> In return I ask nothing for myself – for the paper must pay itself and provide for my maintenance – except protection that I may live and write without being disturbed and prosecution and help for my family (5 persons) who would remain in this country for the present in case they should need protection and help.[35]

If the meeting did indeed transpire as Koelle describes, then the sincerity of

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[34] Ahmet Midhat, *Menfâ*, 69.
[35] Koelle, CM/042/137.

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Ahmet Midhat to collaborate with the foreign missionary is in doubt. The Ottoman

Muslim writer, after all, later became Abdülhamit's chief defender in the public sphere by

use of Islamic discourses of modernism. His lack of sincerity became particularly evident

later in the meeting. Ahmet Midhat makes the extraordinary claim that he entertained

thoughts of conversion to Christianity. He told Koelle that he had abandoned all religious

belief that was specifically Islamic. Ahmet Midhat recognized the truth of Protestant

Christianity, and had even argued with a Muslim friend in the belief of a trinity. He was

only prevented in openly expressing his Christian belief for fear that doing so would

destroy his social influence.[36]

If the sincerity of Ahmet Midhat is doubted in Koelle's account, then the reasons

for his false claim can be understood in a variety of ways. Perhaps Ahmet Midhat

accepted the audience of the German missionary in hopes of securing printing and

political connections abroad. Exiled Turkish writers and their newspapers were spread

throughout Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The CMS was also the

dominant printer of Arabic-script texts in England and had important connections to the

global press, in both the Middle East and Europe. If Ahmet Midhat and his Young

Ottoman associates wanted assistance in relocating to Europe, they could have done far

worse than seek the aid of the CMS, whose operations spanned England and other parts

of the globe.

If the purpose of Ahmet Midhat's Christian "confession" was to influence Koelle

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[36] For a description of the outsized influence of the CMS in developing Arabic-script print throughout the Muslim world see Nile Green's "Journeymen, Middlemen: Travel, Trans-Culture and Technology in the Origins of Muslim Printing", IJMES 41, 2 (May 2009): 203-224.

or earn his sympathies, it worked. Koelle noted that although the political cause of Ottoman reform was not his own, he considered it important and "not without connection to the prospects of the cause of Christ." He noted that as a missionary he should rejoice if an influential man would take up the matter and thus secure influence upon a movement that has "begun to agitate the stagnant waters of Muhammedan Turkey and which tends to widen our liberty and increase our opportunities for pointing out to the Mohammedans the way of life."[37] If Ahmet Midhat's claims to Koelle are true, they indicate incredible pragmatism, or desperation, on the part of Young Ottoman writers to seek alliances against ideological foes in the central administration wherever they could find them, even from an unpopular missionary.

Such optimism for Muslim interest in Christianity soon proved to be unfounded. Shortly after their meeting, a letter hostile to the *Food for Reflections* appeared in an issue of the *İbret*, likely written by the staff. It gave a summary of the book's contents and claimed that such writings were "raining down" on every part of Istanbul, even though only thirteen copies had been privately distributed in Istanbul by this point in the year. This came as a surprise to Koelle, who thought that the readership of the pro-reform newspaper would sympathize with his book, which to him was nothing but a plea for religious reform, and offer more favorable reviews. Koelle believed the reason for negative article was for the Young Ottoman authors to ease tensions with the government, who considered them to have insufficient devotion to Islam. The government may have considered Koelle as a Western emissary that posed a threat to the survival of the

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[37] Ibid.

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Ottoman Empire. If that were indeed the strategy of the newspaper staff, their gambit failed. In April 1873, the staff of *İbret* was arrested, a close circle that included Kemal Bey, the editor, along with Ahmet Midhat Efendi, Menapirzade Nuri Bey, Bereketzade Hakki Efendi, and Ebüzziya Tevfik, editor of the Turkish newspaper *Sirâc*.[38]

Other newspapers soon opened fire on the *Food for Reflections*, including *Basiret*. The identity of Koelle remained anonymous, as Turkish columnists thought the book to be written by a Jesuit expelled from a European country. Koelle complained that none of these articles attempted a refutation of the facts mentioned in the pamphlet; the writers contended themselves with vituperations and a demand of the removal of the dangerous "Jesuits" from the Empire. He took umbrage at such a suggestion, as it confirmed to him the discrimination against Christians who openly professed their beliefs in the Empire, whatever reform edicts might say to the contrary.

Despite such controversies, Koelle continued to quietly circulate the *Food For Reflections* around Istanbul in the months ahead, gaining the attention of more than members of the Turkish press. The diplomatic corps warned him of the dangers of such activities. When Koelle consulted with a German consul prior to a furlough in his home country in 1873 to ask whether he would support him if Ottoman officials prevented his re-entry into the Empire, the consul advised Koelle to mitigate the risk of falling into the bad graces of the government by removing controversial books from his house. As a result, he only kept a limited number of "Food for Reflection," placing the bulk of them with some friends.[39]

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[38] Koelle, April 10, 1873. CM/042/140.
[39] Koelle, September 22, 1873, CM/042/144. December 8, 1873. CM/042/242.

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The Istanbul press world accelerated the Muslim response to Christian polemics. Sultan Abdülaziz's court took one year to marshal Harputî İshak's polemical response to Pfander, and six more years for al-Kairânawî's response. Press responses to the *Food for Reflections* only took weeks. Koelle understood much faster than Pfander that his attempts to write a "temperate" polemic would not win many sympathetic Muslim readers. The German consuls' polite rebuffing also showed him that Western consuls were privately distancing themselves from him, even if they offered public support in the case of controversies. However, he still interpreted the Ottoman Reform Edicts as he did in 1864 for freedom to seek the conversions of Muslims, even if he proceeded more cautiously. This caution did not apply in his attacks on other foreigners in Istanbul.

Koelle, Charles Mismer, and *Soirées de Constantinople*

Koelle's intellectual opponents came from other quarters than the Turkish press. Western-language newspapers largely sided with the Islamic religious establishment in the debate. His most notable foreign opponent was Charles Mismer, editor of the Istanbul-based French newspaper *La Turquie* (1867-1875). The positivist French intellectual, who consulted the governments in Cairo and Istanbul from 1867 onward, also served as Âli Pasha's secretary and wrote on Islamic modernism and its contributions to the development of science. Mismer was a tireless promoter of the government's reform and ideological programs. He enthusiastically supported state attempts to promote the supra-national identity of Ottomanism. Mismer even went one step further than government ministers in his inclusive spirit. He published a proposal that the Ottoman Empire should change its name to the "Oriental Empire" and it subjects called

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"Orientals" to promote radical equality before the law and erase any differences between ethnicity and religion.

Mismer was the mirror opposite of Koelle in his stance toward science and religion. The French author agreed that the two accommodated each other, but he believed Islam to complement science and Christianity to be its inhibitor, not the other way around as Koelle argued. He made this argument to counter French philologist Joseph Ernest Renan, who argued from the 1860s onward that Semitic culture and the Islamic religion to be polarized against rationalism. Mismer writes in his 1869 book *Soirées de Constantinople* that arguments in Europe concerning the conflict between religion and science was a uniquely Christian phenomenon, as no such contradiction existed between Islam and rationalism. The title of the book was apparently inspired from a contemporary well-known work *Soirées de Carthage* (1847), authored by Abbé Bourgade, a French chaplain of the chapel to Saint Louis at Carthage who wrote the book to make Muslims receptive to the Christian gospel. Although Mismer's book was never translated into Turkish or Arabic, it became a sensation in the Ottoman capital. There were at least six reprints in Istanbul. It was also distributed by booksellers in Leipzig, Brussels, and Paris.[40]

Mismer's critique of Renan was first among a series of refutations in the Muslim world, followed by Jamal al-din al-Afghani' "Réponse à Renan" in 1883 and Namik Kemal's *Renan Müdâfa'anâmesi*, a 1910 posthumous response, in addition to criticisms

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[40] Klaus Kreiser, *The Beginnings of Printing in the Near and Middle East: Jews, Christians, and Muslims* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz in Kommission, 2001), 69.

of Renan in Ottoman Muslim religious polemics.[41] Mismer's promotion of Islam and modernism in the French language made him a useful figure to the Porte during the high Tanzimat period. In the third chapter of *Soirées de Constantinople* he notes the scientific discoveries owed to Islam in the medieval period and spoke optimistically of current Muslim modernization projects. He writes that Christians, in becoming learned, cease to be Christians while Muslims, in becoming ignorant, cease to be Muslims.[42]

Koelle describes the *Soirées de Constantinople* as a "mischievous book" that tampered with history by placing Islam in an artificially high standing, even claiming that Islam was the link between Greco-Roman civilization and modern civilization. To him the book was part of a fashionable trend in European literature to praise Islam but only as another means of attacking Christianity. To his disappointment, such praise of Islam had caught the attention of educated Ottoman Muslims, even though the book covered the same ground as the *Food for Reflections* and used the same arguments, albeit arriving at

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[41] Renan was a frequent subject of criticism by Muslim polemicists by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Many of the polemicists under consideration in this dissertation, such as Ahmet Midhat and Abdülahad Davûd, single him out as an exemplar of Western claims to cultural, intellectual, and racial superiority in the age of high colonialism. The most famous response to Renan came from Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, who published a riposte to a Renan lecture in French and Arabic days after the publication of his lecture. He took issue with Renan's claim that science and philosophy only entered the Muslim world from non-Arab sources and such science and philosophy were in fact Persian or Greek. Anwar Moazzam*, Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghani: A Muslim Intellectual* (New Delhi: Naurang Rai, 1984); Nelly Lahoud, "Saving Muslims from Islam: Renan and Al-Afghani" in *Islamic Responses to Europe at the Dawn of Colonialism*, eds.Takashi Shogimen, Cary J. Nederman (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008): 163-185; Michelangelo Guida, "Al-Afghani and Namik Kemal's Replies to Ernest Renan: Two Anti-Westernist Works in the Formative Stage of Islamist Thought," in *Turkish Journal of Politics* 2, Issue 2 (Winter 2011), 61; Ernest Renan, "Islamism and Science," in *Orientalism: Early Sources; Readings in Orientalism*, ed. Bryan Turner (London: Routledge, 2000): 199-217.

[42] Cemil Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 50; Alexander Vezenkov, "Formulating and Reformulating Ottomanism," *Entangled Histories of the Balkans* eds. Roumen Daskalov and Tchavdar Marinov (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 254; Souleymane Bachir Diagne, *Islam and Open Society: Fidelity and Movement in the Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal* (Dakar, Senegal: Codesria, 2011). For the political context of Mismer's service to these governments, see Roderic H. Davison's *Nineteenth Century Ottoman Diplomacy and Reforms* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 1999).

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the opposite conclusions. Mismer wrote that Islam surpasses Christianity in every respect and is destined to become the religion of an enlightened society of the future. Despite similarities between his work and Mismer's, Koelle's French translation of the *Food for Reflections* (Etudes Critiques) was prohibited from passing through the customs house.[43]

Koelle requested the editor of *The Levant Herald* to publish his review and refutation of Mismer's "cleverly and sententiously written book." He received his chance in November 1869, when he rehashed the same arguments as those written in his private letters to the CMS office, criticizing Mismer's flattery of Muslim readers. In his review, he took the opportunity to advertise the *Food for Reflections*. Mismer's book treated all the questions of his own book but took the anti-Christian position, thus Koelle's book was a "remedy" for the "poison." The editor of the *Levant Herald* translated his review into French for his bi-lingual daily. The authorities appeared not to have interfered with this discussion between the two foreigners.[44]

The state was not interested in this press dispute; Ottoman archives do not make mention of the Koelle-Mismer debate. While the state did follow accounts of the Ottoman Empire in the European press, particularly in the Hamidian era, it was more concerned with Turkish-language books in its domains than European-language works. Ottoman scholars, however, did take note of foreign literature such as Mismer's and began applying it to their own anti-Christian works.

İzâhü'l-Merâm fî keşfi'z-zılâm

Whether or not Muslim religious scholars followed the arguments between

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[43] S.W. Koelle, October 28, 1869. CM/042/91.
[44] S.W. Koelle, November 30, 1869. CM/042/238.

Mismer and Koelle, European literature that praised Islam and referenced pseudepigraphical texts such as the so-called *Gospel of Barnabas* found purchase among this class. This text claims to be by the biblical Barnabas but is widely recognized as a forgery that contains an Islamic interpretation of the foundation of Christianity. Its authorship is unknown, but the oldest surviving manuscript dates to the last decade of the sixteenth century. The collaboration between religious scholars and Istanbul journalists with close ties to European intellectuals and critical sources appeared to grow in this period as well. All of these developments can be seen in *İzâhü'l-Merâm Fı Keşfi'z-Zilam* (The Desire for Elucidation in the Revealing of Oppression), a comprehensive 1871 work by El-Hac Abdi Bey Abdullâh b. Destan Mustafa (d. 1886), known also as Hacı Abdi Bey. He references the Gospel of Barnabas, which had found wide support among Muslim scholars in the late nineteenth century, as it rejects the same tenets of the Christian faith that Islam also dismisses and claims to be the only gospel written by a witness of the life of Jesus. Hacı Abdi Bey appears to have acquired these texts through his association with Faris al-Shidyâq, who was well acquainted with English scholarship on the textual studies of the New Testament.[45]

Hacı Abdi Bey was an Islamic scholar and well-versed in the polemical battle occurring in Istanbul between Pfander and the Ottoman state. He released *İzâhü'l-Merâm* only four years after al-Kairânawî's 1867 release of *İzhâr u'l-hakk* in Arabic. He claims that he was instigated to write as a result of the Christian propaganda that had entered the Ottoman Empire and called on his fellow Muslims to study for themselves the authentic

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[45]   Hacı Abdi Bey, *İzâhü'l-Merâm Fı Keşfi'z-Zilam* (Istanbul: Şeyh Yahya Efendi Matbaası, 1288/1871).

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sources of early Christianity.[46] In this work Hacı Abdi Bey does not directly reference *İzhâr u'l-hakk, Şems ü'l-Hakîkat* or any other Muslim polemic. It is unknown the degree to which the former influenced the latter, but there are numerous similarities between the three works. The book shares al-Kairânawî's categorical rejection of the New Testament as a holy book (*ilâhî kitap*). The New Testament in its current form was not merely a holy book misunderstood, as argued by some medieval Islamic polemicists, but the total corruption of original gospel presented to Jesus by Gabriel. The extant New Testament is better to be understood by the narrative intent of its authors rather than treating it as the words of God.

In the opening pages of the book Hacı Abdi Bey writes that Protestants have distributed their holy books among Muslims and have succeeded in presenting it as God's word because the public is ignorant of the historical distortion of Christianity and the forgeries of the four gospels.

> It is well known among Muslims that the books published and circulated by a sect of Christianity, the Protestants, upon dispersing and spreading a group of books named the New Testament, it was found they are distorted and abrogated [...] they confuse the minds of some commoners and ignorant people. [Thus] a treatise has been written that includes the true declaration of these things and a proclamation of the fundamentals and statues of Christianity.[47]

Hacı Abdi Bey first challenges the authenticity of the gospels. Matthew's gospel was merely a history book of Jesus's birth; Mark himself was not even a disciple but wrote the events of Jesus's ministry 28 years after his ascent into heaven; and Luke's

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46 *İzâhü'l-Merâm Fı Keşfı'z-Zilam* (Istanbul: Şeyh Yahya Efendi Matbaası, 1288/1871), 2. See Aydin, *Müslümanların Hristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları*, 84.

47 *İzâhü'l-Merâm*, 2-3. *Ta'rıftan müstağni olduğunu üzere bir vakitten berü ve vaktâ ki fırak-ı nasârâ'dan Protestânlar İncîl ve Tevrât nâmîyla bir tâkım kitâblar neşr ve ilan etmekte bulunmuşlar ve bunlar her ne kadar mensûh ve tahrîf oldukları 'inde'l-muslimîn mevâdd-i ma'lûmeden ise de yine caîca 'avâm ve cıhâldan bâzılarının teşvîş hatırlarına ve beyne'n-nâs kâl ve kîyle bâ'ıs olduklarından bunların yine ve Hakîkatlarini beyan ve dîn-i nasârânın esas ve kavâ'ıdînı ilan zımninda....*

gospel was merely the correspondence between an Alexandrian Jew, who had also never met Jesus, and his friend Theophilus. These books were composed as histories and biographies by four persons after Christ's ministry, and it is "clear as the sun" that the four books contain differences, contradictions, and discrepancies, particularly since the books include stories and narratives of which the authors could have never heard from Jesus, such as the text of his personal prayers during his imprisonment and crucifixion. In sum, four contradictory history books written by four authors does not constitute one holy book.

Hacı Abdi Bey also quotes extensively from the Gospel of Barnabas, which itself stresses that the original gospels were falsified. Its guiding concept is that Muhammed is the savior promised in Jewish and Christian Scriptures. The work, which was already used for Muslim polemical purposes since its production in the seventeenth century – most likely by a Morisco author – was popularized by al-Kairânawî in 1867. It contains numerous features attractive to an Islamic audience, such as descriptions of Old Testament falsification and Jesus proclaiming that he himself was only a prophet. It claims that the promise of the birth of Jesus was given to Ishmael, not Isaac, an Islamic view of the story of Abraham. It even has Adam reciting the Islamic confession of faith, which could not have existed in the early Christian period in which this text is purportedly written.[48]

The rest of *İzâhü'l-Merâm* consists of classical polemical arguments: discourses of *tahrîf,* the four gospels' contradictions, and etymological arguments of Greek words that

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[48] Ibid., 8-11. See Christine Schirrmacher's *Has the True Gospel of Jesus Been Found? On the First German Edition of the Gospel of Barnabas* (Bonn: Institute of Islamic Studies, 2008).

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in its original language referred to prophecies of Muhammed (Parakletos) instead of the Holy Spirit. Hacı Abdi Bey repeats claims that the original gospel given to Jesus was lost, perhaps through Jews burning it, or it may have never even been committed to paper. Traces of his teachings only survived in such accounts as the Gospel of Barnabas. The ministry of Jesus only lasted three years and his disciples were illiterate; therefore, it was not committed into writing but existed only in the memory of Jesus. It was thus removed with him into heaven.[49]

Like many Muslim polemicists, Hacı Abdi Bey traces the corruption of Christianity to its broken chain of textual transmission. Using medieval Muslim polemical argumentation that echoes the writings of al-Jâhiz (d. 868-9), Hacı Abdi Bey lays most of the blame of the text's corruption at the feet of the Apostle Paul. He relates the story of Paul's conversion to Christianity from Acts 9 while he was on the road to Damascus. Paul is described as an intellectual Jew who knew science and philosophy (*'ilm ve filosof*) but persecuted the church as a zealot prior to his conversion. Following his conversion he began to proclaim a different teaching and confession. To some Paul taught that Jesus was the messenger of God; to others he taught that he was the son of God. He writes in 1 Corinthians 7 and 10 and Colossians 2 that Jewish dietary laws had been abrogated, and all food and drink were now lawful. Circumcision and various other provisions of Jewish law should be abandoned. Here, Hacı Abdi Bey argues that the reason for Paul's rejection of Jewish law (what he describes as "*şeria't*") was a form of revenge on Jewish religious leaders. When some Christians opposed him on these

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[49] *İzâhü'l-Merâm*, 11-27.

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matters, he silenced them through his rhetoric and sophistry (*san'atî ve safsatalar*).[50]

Hacı Abdi Bey historicizes the events of the early church, analyzing the personality characteristics of each disciple as a means to explain the New Testament's corruption. Paul was able to trick the disciples, as they were uneducated, not trustworthy, and prone to deception. Hacı Abdi Bey asks if it has ever come into the minds of those who read these accounts that the disciples were gullible that perhaps the devil himself appeared to them and claimed to be the resurrected Jesus. They were so prone to deception, there can be no doubt that if a Jew had suddenly descended from a roof upon them and had said, "Behold, I am Jesus who has been crucified: I am come to you," they would not have been able to distinguish him, but rather, would have been ready to believe him.[51]

Hacı Abdi Bey explores history with greater detail in his discussion of the Trinity. On this topic he uses an Arabic translation of a French-language history of early Christianity that reconstruct the doctrine's historical development in the context of Alexandrian philosophy. This work may be a piece of classical Islamic scholarship translated to French by an Orientalist scholar. It could be the Ottoman author Serrac b. Abdullah's sixteenth-century *Collection of Pleasantries* (*Mecmûʿatü'l-letâ'if*), which was translated to French at an indeterminate date. More likely, Hacı Abdi Bey is using older medieval arguments from authors such as al-Jâhiz.[52] The teaching, which abrogates the

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50 Ibid., 31. For more on al-Jâhiz's written disputes with Christianity see Hanna E. Kassis, "Critique of Scriptures: Polemics of al-Jâhiz and Ibn Hazm against Christianity and Judaism." In *Religious Apologetics – Philosophical Argumentation,* eds. Yossef Schwartz, Volkhard Krech (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 237-250.

51 Ibid. 8-15. Koelle provides a short summation of this polemic in a letter to the CMS office and quotes sections of Hacı Abdi Bey. Koelle, May 1, 1871, CM/042/110.

52 I am unable to determine the original work in reference here, but Hacı Abdi Bey says he uses an Arabic

doctrine unity of God (*tevhîd*), was a later addition to Christian doctrine informed by Neo-Platonism and the influence of neighboring Near East pagan religions to the early Christians. The early Christians essentially believed monotheism, but seeds of trinitarianism were planted in the early third century with Sibelius. Nontrinitiariansm entered a decline in the early fourth century until the priest Arius of Alexandria attempted to revive monotheism. He proclaimed the Trinity false and attracted many followers. At this time, the Patriarch of Alexandria opposed Arius in order to preserve his station and title. Other bishops gathered to renounce Arius's teaching in order to retain their power. These efforts culminated in the organization of the Council of Nicaea, in which he was excommunicated. Thus the Nicene Creed emerged in 325 and Jesus was elevated to the Son of God, although some such as Theonas of Marmarica still dissented that the Holy Spirit was divine.[53]

İzâhü'l-Merâm received moderate notice upon its release. It was not a sensation on the level of al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, nor was it frequently quoted by polemicists in the years to come. However, the work did receive notice by foreign missionaries in Istanbul, particularly for its innovative use of European scholarship. S.W. Koelle wrote back to the CMS station that this pamphlet against the New Testament was prepared under the auspices of someone acquainted with the European literature, Faris al-Shidyâq. He offers faint praise for the work, because "though superficial," it was not written in a vulgar, abusive manner as some of its predecessors, nor against the persons or writings of missionaries, but wholly against the New Testament as the foundation of Christianity. Yet

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translation of the French work entitled *Qurretu'n-nufûs ve'l-uyûn* (The Blessed Hearts and Eyes).
[53] Ibid., 72-76.

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he feared that even though this work did not implicate foreign Christians such as himself, its attack on the New Testament was all the more likely to do harm to those ignorant of his misuse of sources.[54]

Above all, Koelle lamented that Muslims used Western scholarship to undermine Christianity, even though Christians used the same global print sphere to attempt to undermine Islam. He wrote a summary of *İzâhü'l-Merâm* to his superiors at the CMS headquarters in London and wondered if such a work required a response in Turkish. Although he never accomplished such a task, Koelle considered such a Muslim polemical treatise using European scholarship against their missionary efforts to be a grave threat. Modern textual criticism of Christianity was now out of the hands of a few Islamic scholars fluent in European languages and now in the hands of the traditional *ulema* class: "It is sad to think that the weapons of his book are almost wholly taken from the armory provided by Christendom itself."[55]

The Backlash Against Bektashism and *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr*

While Muslim scholars with close ties to the imperial court produced anti-Christian polemics on an ever-increasing level of sophistication in the 1870s, a parallel literary development occurred in which authors who wrote against missionary activity also wrote anti-Bektashi polemics. These writings were produced within a short timespan of each other, and sometimes in the same *mecmua*. The most notable example is Harputî İshak's 1871 *Kâşifu'l-Esrâr ve Dâfiu'l-Eşrâr* ("The Revealing of Mysteries and the Repelling of Wickedness"), a religious tract that attacked Bektashism due to its supposed

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[54] Koelle, May 1, 1871. CM/042/110.
[55] Ibid.

Hurûfî teachings. Sungurî Hasan also wrote against Christianity and Aleviism. I argue in

this section that these writings should not be considered as two distinct genres. Rather,

they were part of a growing politicization of Sunni identity up to and including the

ascension of Sultan Abdülhamit II in 1876. Although the views of Sungurî Hasan and

Harputî İshak cannot be taken to totalize the Ottoman state views of "heterodox" Islam

and Christianity, Harputî İshak's high-level position within Istanbul's Islamic educational

system speak to the currency of such arguments. Furthermore, their polemics should also

be understood as works written to counter the voices of non-Muslim and "heterodox"

millet leaders, who on the heels of the 1856 reform edict had more formalized political

roles. Such anti-Bektashi works were an opening salvo against what was perceived to be

a spread of Bektashi literature in the Ottoman Empire. These polemical works even had

significant influence on Western scholarship of Bektashism and its origins in the early

twentieth century until they were supplanted in the 1920s by critical scholarship of early

Ottoman religious history.[56]

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[56] The origins of the Bektashi religion and its development in Anatolia has been a major topic in Islamic historical studies for over a century. See Georg Jacob, *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Derwisch-Ordens der Bektaschis* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1908); Clement Huart, *Textes Persans Relatifs à la Secte des Houroufî*s (London: Brill & Luzac, 1909); Fuat Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2003), and "Les Origines du Bektachisme," *Extrait des Acts du Congres International d'histoire des Religions* (Paris, 1926); John Kingsley Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London, Luzac Orientail, 1937); Frank Kressing, "A Preliminary Account of Research Regarding the Albanian Bektashis – Myths and Unresolved Questions" in *Albania – A Country in Transition. Aspects of Changing Identities in a South-East European Country*, ed. Karl Kaser, Frank Kressing (Nomos, 2002), 65-92; Martin van Bruinessen, "When Haji Bektash Still Bore the Name of Sultan Sahak: Notes on the Ahl-i Haqq of the Guran District," in *Bektachiyya: études sur l'ordre mystique des Bektachis et les groupes relevant de Hadji Bektach* (Istanbul: Isis, 1995), 117-138; Ahmet Karamustafa, *God's Unruly Friends: Dervish Groups in the Islamic Later Middle Period, 1200-1500* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1994); Hamid Algar, "The Hurufi Influence on Bektashism," *Revue des Etudes Islamiques* Vol 60, 1 (1995), 41-54; Hamid Algar, *'Ali al-A'lâ*, Encyclopedia Iranica, 1985; Arnakis, G., 1953. Futuwwa Traditions in Ottoman Empire, Journal of Near Eastern Studies Vol 12, (4), (October, 1953), 232-247; Irene Melikoff, "Bektashi/Kızılbaş: Historical Bipartition and its Consequences" in *Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives* (Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute, 1998); Albert Doja, "A Political History of Bektashism from Ottoman Anatolia to Contemporary Turkey,"

Kâşifû'l-Esrâr's purpose was to discredit Bektashism as derived from myth and theologically heterodox. It is more specifically a work against Hurûfism, which Harputî İshak erroneously thought to have collated with Bektashi belief in the fifteenth century. The thesis of *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr* is that Bektashism began under Hacı Bektâş-ı Velî as a legitimate religious movement but was later corrupted by Hurûfism and its followers. He then explains the principles of Hurûfism as taught by its founder Fazlullâh el-Hurûfi, an Iranian mystic whose real name was Fazlallâh Astarâbâdî (d. 1394), also known by his pen name Nâimî. In the second chapter he criticizes Abdülmecid Firişteoğlu's *Işknâme,* an 1871 interpretation of Hurûfism; in the third chapter he criticizes el-Hurûfi's *Cavidnâme,* which establishes the foundations of Hurûfism. Harputî İshak's rhetoric is acerbic, much as it was in his anti-Christian polemics.[57] He writes the following in the introduction:

> It is known that there is the Bektashi group that came at the beginning to humiliate Muslims. If their perceptible words and actions are observed, it can be appraised that there are no differences from Islam. However, there are six books named the "Cavidan." One of the principle works is by Fazlullah Hurufi; as for the others they are works composed by [Fazlullah's deputies]. Because their heresies are evident, in order to report their conditions and the heretical beliefs in their books, it was necessary for me to compose this treatise.[58]

Hurûfism was a mystical, kabbalistic Sufi doctrine that spread in Persia, Anatolia and Azerbaijan in the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. It had significant

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Journal of Church and State Vol. 48, 2 (2006): 423-450.

[57] Ebû'l-Ulâ Mardinî, *Huzûr Dersleri I* (Istanbul 1966), 955; Mustafa Kara, *İshak Efendi, Harputlu,* DİA XXII, 532. See Halil Kalyoncu, "Harputlu İshak Efendi'nin Eserlerinde Hz. İsa'nin Çarmiha Gerilme Meselesi" (Firat Üniversitesi Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2005), 4. He submitted this work to the sultan, and having been found insufficient, Ebcizâde Hoca Zülfikar Efendi made necessary corrections. It was then submitted for printing.

[58] Harputî İshak*, İzâhü'l-Merâm,* 2. *Bilinmelidir ki, Müslümanları aşağılayanların başında gelen Bektaşiler grubudur. Bunların görünürdeki söz ve hareketlerine bakılacak olursa Müslümanlardan farkları yokmuş gibi değerlendirilebilir. Halbuki bunların "Cavidan" adını verdikleri altı kitapları vardır. Birisi liderleri olan Fazlullâh Hurûfî'nin, diğerleri ise onun halîfelerinin kaleme aldıkları eserlerdir. Onların sapıklıkları açıkça belli olduğundan durumları ile beraber kitaplarındaki sapıklıklarını inananlara bildirmek için, tarafımızdan bir risale kaleme almak zorunlu olmuştur.*

influence on Bektashism during its formative period. According to Harputî İshak, Hurûfi doctrines infiltrated Bektashi tekkes in the early fifteenth century due to the influence of 'Ali-ul A'la (d. 1419), a disciple of Fazlallâh Astarâbâdî. He entered the dervish lodge of Hacı Bektash in the central Anatolian city of Kırşehir in disguise and presented the *Cavidnâme* to the dervishes as the ideas of Hacı Bektash himself. 'Ali-ul A'la claimed that some statements in the book considered to be unnecessary Islamic injunctions were actually divine mysteries that should be kept secret. In this manner, Hurûfism entered Anatolia.[59]

Harputî İshak's argument has come under scrutiny, with studies published since the second quarter of the twentieth century arguing that Hurûfism and Bektashism always remained separate systems.[60] Before this discovery, however, European Orientalist scholars hewed closely to Harputî İshak's thesis. In 1908 Georg Jacob published the first critical study of the Bektashis, but his influential work relied heavily on the interpretation of *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr*. His *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Derwisch-Ordens der Bektaschis* (Contributions To The Knowledge of the Bektashi Dervish Order) critically examined the history and spread of the Bektashis and whether Hacı Bektash himself actually blessed the foundation of the Janissary Corps.[61] In this work he included a translation from Turkish into German of *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr*, exposing it to Western scholars. Later researchers recognized its inaccuracies. Wilhelm Barthold, an early twentieth-century Russian specialist of Islamic history and Turcology, wrote that Jacob fell into significant error by

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[59]   Ibid., 4. See Elanur Yılmaz, "Harputlu İshak Hoca'nın Teolojık Görüşleri" (Firat Üniversitesi Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2006), 32.
[60]   Birge, 60.
[61]   See Jacob.

relying heavily on *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr* for his study on Bektashism and mixing it with

Hurûfism.[62] As a critical study of Hacı Bektash, it was eventually supplanted in 1918 by

Fuat Köprülü's *Türk Edebiyantında İlk Mutasavvıflar.* This work, coupled with Köprülü's

1923 address at the International Congress of the History of Religions in Paris on the

origins of Bektashism, established the historical character of Hacı Bektash in the context

of early-modern Anatolian Islamic religious practice, arguing that it contained pre-Islamic

elements.[63] Köprülü's thesis in turn has been recognized by researchers for problematic

issues of its own.[64]

Much like Harputî İshak's anti-Christian polemics, *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr* was reactionary.

He wrote against a public and unprecedented burst of Bektashi literary activity in Istanbul

from 1868 to 1876. Bektashi publishing of poetry and theology accelerated at an

unprecedented rate in the Ottoman Empire. Professor John Kingsley Birge commented on

its proliferation during his research in Istanbul in the 1930s. He found no printed book

expounding Bektashi ideas until 1868, excepting the 1867 *Tahmîs-ı Derviş Azbî Dîvân-ı

Mısrî,* written by Derviş Mustafa Azbî. After this year numerous books with explicit and

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[62]   He writes "The treatise is not a polemic against Bektashism but against Hurufism; he mixed the two
       sects with each other, "Wilhelm Barthold *İslam Medeniyet Tarihi,* ed. Füat Köprülü (Ankara: Diyanet
       İşleri Başkanlığı, 1963), 244.
[63]   Fuat Köprülü, *Türk Edebiyatında İlk Mutasavvıflar* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 2003); "Les Origines du
       Bektachisme," *Extrait des Acts du Congres International d'histoire des Religions* (Paris, 1926); Birge,
       19; Shahzad Bashir, *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2005); Hamid Dabashi,
       The World of Persian Literary Humanism (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012); Beatrice
       Forbes Mans, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
       2007).
[64]   Markus Dressler has challenged the limits set by Köprülü on the religious historiography of Anatolia,
       what he calls the "Köprülü paradigm." Dressler notes that discussions of non-Sunni groups, particularly
       Alevis, remained confined to a discursive framework attached to Turkish nationalism, creating a false
       knowledge about these groups. Much of the history of these groups is still filtered through a Western-
       modernists concept of religion. Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam*
       (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

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implicit Bektashi content were published. In 1869 the *divan* of Eşrefoğlu appeared.[65] The

dîvân of the Hurufi Nesîmî was also published of 1869. In 1871 Firişteoğlu published the

'*Işknâme*; the same year the *Makalât* of Cafer Sadık and the *Makalât* of Hacı Bektash

(under the name *Vilâyetnâme*) appeared. Another Hurufi book supporting Bektashism, the

Risale of *Virani Baba*, appeared in 1873, followed by the *Miratü'l-Mekâsit* in 1876,

which was a reply to Harputî İshak's *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr.*[66]

　　　The proliferation of Bektashi literature and its legalized publication in the

nominally Sunni Hanafite Ottoman Empire owed to official patronage of this sect by

those high in authority, according to the opinions of early twentieth-century Orientalist

scholars. Birge repeats a claim that the *Vilâyetnâme* and the '*Işknâme* were published in

1871 under the secret protection of Besîme Sultan, the wife of Mahmud II (r. 1808-1839)

and mother of Abdülaziz (1861-1876), whom Birge notes apparently held Bektashi

sympathies despite her husband outlawing the order after 1826. The valide sultan

apparently funded the printing of the *Miratü'l-Mekâsit* to counter the *Kâşifû'l-Esrâr*.

Bektashi and Bektashi-influenced authors were ostensibly assured that in the government

there were powerful influences that guarded their interests.[67] Other European accounts

corroborate this theory. According to British folklorist and traveller Lucy Garnett, Besîme

Sultan attributed her marriage to Mahmud II to once standing upon a "wishing stone,"

located on the grounds of a Bektashi tekke at Merdivenköy in the environs of Istanbul.

Garnett referred to the valide sultan as "a Turkish lady of my acquaintance" that believed

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[65] Although he himself was not a Bektashi, according to *Osmanlı Müellifleri* Eşrefoğlu was a popular poet among Bektashis. Mehmet Tahir Bursalı, *Osmanlı Müellifleri,* Şairleri 2, No. 2 (Istanbul: Matbaa-i Amire, 1914).

[66] Birge, 80-81.

[67] Ibid.

this stone possessed great power due to its proximity to the grave of the Bektashi saint

Azbi Baba. She made her wish after, "of course, depositing her devotional offering on the

neighboring shrine of the Evliyâ."[68]

Whatever Harputî İshak's influence on spreading anti-Bektashism among high-

ranking ulema and government officials, he was not the only voice in this argument.[69]

Sungurî Hasan b. Ömer, while writing against Aleviism instead of Bektashiism, appears

to be in a similar pro-Sunni camp as Harputî İshak.[70] Chapter 2 mentioned his anti-

Christian polemic *Tâ'ife-i Yehûd ve Nasâra* in 1866. In another tract written in the same

mecmua, and presumably in the same year, he writes disparagingly of Alevi Muslims.

The short work, entitled *Elsîne-i Nasda Kızılbaş Demekle Marûf Tâ'ifenin Hezeyânlarını*

describes the history of the group, its break from orthodox Sunni Islam during the

Abbasid period, its resurgence during the sultanate of the Yavuz Sultan Selim (r. 1512-

1520), his warfare with Safavid Sultan Ismail, and its re-emergence in the nineteenth-

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[68] Lucy Garnett, *Mysticism and Magic in Turkey: An Account of the Religious Doctrines, Monastic Organisation, and Ecstatic Powers of the Dervish Orders* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), 73-74.

[69] Markus Dressler notes the transformation of state conceptualizations of Alevism in the nineteen century. Until the late Ottoman period, the heterogenous Kızılbaş were considered heretics and superficially Muslim. The concept of "Alevism," which developed as they were incorporated into the Ottoman state apparatus during and after the Tanzimat period, homogenized these groups and integrated them into Islam, while still maintaining their "heterodoxy." Markus Dressler, *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

[70] Recent scholarship on Alevis and Bektashis has untangled them from the classical framework of Turkish culture and tribal networks, noting their multicultural and multilingual nature. Nevertheless, Aleviism and Bektashiism has an entangled history. Ayfer Karakaya-Stump notes that the building blocks of the Anatolian Kizilbash milieu were not tribal networks but Sufi circles and dervish groups who joined together under the leadership of the Safavid shahs. *Dede*s of Anatolia received authorization letters from the *Vefaiye* order, which blended in the course of the 16th century with the Kizilbash and fell into the Bektashi order between the 16th and 17th centuries. Ayfer Karakaya Stump, "Subjects of the Sultan, disciples of the Shah: Formation and transformation of the Kizilbash/Alevi communities in Ottoman Anatolia (unpublished diss., Harvard University, 2008), 37, 180; Dressler, *Writing Religion,* 12; Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, ed., *Sufism and Sufis in Ottoman Society* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Yayınları, 2005).

century Ottoman Empire.

Sungurî Hasan first praises God for his belonging to the people of Islam and not a heretical group. During the Abbasid period a group known as the *Rafida* – a derogatory Sunni term meaning "defectors" in Arabic and used for Shi'as – did not recognize Abu Bakr or his successors as having been legitimate rulers of the early Muslim community. With their heretical beliefs that they imputed to Islam, Alevis worked to destroy the religion. However, God in his mercy raised up a group to destroy those who attempted to divert Muslims from the straight path. For this reason, there have been trustworthy Muslims and distinguished scholars of *fiqh* in every period in the Islamic religion.[71]

They emerged once again when Shah Ismail began to attack the Ummah. Due to his promotion of Shi'a Islam and having fatwas proclaimed against Sunni ulema, he caused many subjects to convert. Many Sunni Muslims were killed or remained Shi'a for fear of losing their life and property. Sultan Selim I eventually defeated Shah Ismail, but similar confessional battles continued during the Celali revolts in Anatolia of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were only brought to an end during the reign of Murad IV (r. 1623-1640) when he finally put down these irregular troops. Yet his victory did not eliminate the threat. At no time were the Ottoman sultans successful in completely destroying these "people with distorted beliefs." Today these people are everywhere, blaspheming the companions of the prophet, slandering Aisha, "the mother of Muslims," and insulting the scholars of Islam.[72]

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[71] Sungurî Hasan b. Ömer, *Elsine-i Nâsda Kızılbaş Demekle Ma'rûf Tâ'ifenin Hezeyanlarını Mübeyyin Bir Risale-i Müstakilledir* (Istanbul: Süleymaniye Manuscript Collection, Düğümlü Baba Bölümü, No: 00197, 1865/1866), 89-94.

[72] Ibid., 89.

Harputî İshak and Sungurî Hasan wrote anti-Bektashi and anti-Alevi works in the same period as their anti-Christian polemics. These writings reflect the challenges of religious scholars of the late Tanzimat period as the state attempted to fit its heterogenous subject population in to clearly demarcated ethno-religious categories and shape the expression of religion in the print sphere. From the perspective of Istanbul, Protestant Christians and non-Sunni Muslims shared heretical beliefs. At a time in which confessional identity became increasingly politicized, they also represented a threat to the government. Missionaries had long held friendly relations with Alevis in Anatolia; the missionary George Nutting in Adiyaman even suggested the state grant an imperial edict (*fermân*) for the *Kızılbaş* based on the reform edict of 1856 to have their own millet. The state was strongly opposed to this suggestion and resisted integrating this group into the imperial center or granting them patronage in the forms of education, high-level government posts, and advancement in critical institutions such as the military.[73] Such an alliance between Protestants and Alevis never came to be, but the prospect caused worry within the state as foreign missionaries extended into Anatolia. While the state did not hold Aleviism and Christianity as the same, the similar polemical methods that Muslim literati used to engage Protestants, Alevis, and Bektashi's are notable in this era.

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[73] Hans-Lukas Kieser, "Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th-20th cc.)," *Altruism and Imperialism: The Western Religious and Cultural Missionary Enterprise in the Middle East* (Middle East Institute Conference: Bellagio, Italy, 2000). Also see Kieser's *Iskalanmış Barış: Doğu Vilâyetleri'nde misyonerlik, etnik kimlik ve devlet 1839-1938*, translated by Atilla Dirim (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2005); "Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia: The Interactions Between Alevis and Missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia," *Die Welt des Islams* 41, No. 1 (2001): 89-111; and *Nearest East: American Millenialism and Mission to the Middle East* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).

Tuhfa

The state continued to sanction anti-Christian polemics throughout the decade. In addition to commissioning authors to produce original works, it also authorized translations of polemical works from the early modern period. In 1874 a Turkish version of *Tuhfa* was printed at the government press in Istanbul and published with the permission of the Ministry of Instruction.[74] As discussed in Chapter 1, this humanist-logic inspired polemic was written in Tunis in 1420 by Abdullah Tercüman*,* a Spanish Franciscan monk born in Mallorca as Anselm Turmeda who converted to Islam and became the official interpreter of the Hafsid sultan of Tunis. In the work he presents a long polemic against his former religion using Christian Scriptures and humanist scholarship.[75] The work was largely unknown among Muslims in the Mediterranean until the seventeenth century. A Sufi *şeyh* from Tunis, al-Qashshâsh, who assisted Morisco refugees from Spain, believed that the work had important political capital. He had it translated into Turkish during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I (r. 1603-1617) with the hopes that the sultan would offer patronage to Moriscos. The Turkish translation impacted the Ottoman reading public and became highly popular.[76]

The new translation was produced in 1874 by two Ottoman men of letters, Said and Zihni Efendi, the latter an editor of the *Takvim-i Vekayi*. Apparently ignoring the

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[74] BOA 16/49/MF.MKT (1290/1874).

[75] See M. Epalza's *Fray Anselm Turmeda (Abdallah al-Taryumán) y su polémica islamo-cristiana* (Madrid: Hiperión, 1994).

[76] Tijana Krstić notes the rise of religious polemics and Ottoman self-narratives of conversion during the reign of Sultan Süleyman (1520-1566), and Muslim literati produced them in small numbers until the early eighteenth century. These self-narratives took on the particular contours of early modern humanist scholarship but also commented on domestic and inter-imperial political issues of interest to the Ottoman reading public. *Contested Conversions to Islam: Narratives of Religious Change and Communal Politics in the Early Modern Ottoman Empire* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), 99-102.

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original seventeenth-century Turkish version of this work, the authors made use of a new Arabic edition recently produced in London. The new version included many notes from Mehmed Zihni at the bottom of the page, which referred readers to modern polemics such as those by al-Kairânawî, Hacı Abdi Bey, and the editor of the English version "Murad İstanli," most likely Henry Edward John Stanley (d. 1903), a British convert to Islam.[77] *Tuhfa* was once again a sensation in the Ottoman Empire, flooding libraries and booksellers in Istanbul. It was translated into French in 1885 as *Le présent de l'homme lettré pour réfuter les partisans de la Croix.* The 1886 Turkish second edition circulated throughout the Empire from Anatolia and Damascus, and Cairo and Tunis. Today copies of the work fill Ottoman manuscript collections in Istanbul. The work still enjoys a measure of popularity, as it was translated into modern Turkish by Bedir Yayınevi and published in 1965 and 1990 as *Hıristiyanlığa Reddiye*.[78]

Koelle did not begrudge the Ottoman government for approving the printing of *Tuhfa*, even if it encouraged attacks upon Christianity. He argued that Christians have nothing to fear from discussion, and they need not shrink from attacks from their antagonists if they possess "spiritual weapons" of argument and proof. To him, the problem with the state's printing of *Tuhfa* was the larger problem of the government and Muslim intellectuals cheating in the war of ideas. It always prevented books supportive of

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77 Henry Edward John Stanley, third Baron of Alderly, was a historian who translated works from the age of discovery. He converted to Islam in 1869, adopting the name Abdul Rahman, and became the first Muslim member of the House of Lords. Stanley was familiar with Arabic and Turkish, and also held pro-Ottoman political sympathies. Johann Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa*: Une controverse islamochrétienne dans la presse d´Istanbul (1883)," in *Querelles privées et contestations publiques. Le rôle de la presse dans la formation de l´opinion publique au Proche Orient, textes réunies et publiés* par Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika et Michael Ursinus, (Istanbul, 2003), 67.

78 Epalza, 53.

Christianity from entering the Empire. *Tuhfa* was yet another reminder that Christians

were unilaterally disarmed in the Ottoman print sphere. Koelle had to suffer the worst

form of insults while his books were censored for what he believed to be temperate

language.

> The Turkish government has therefore placed itself in the singular position of encouraging
> Mohammedan attacks upon Christianity, and at the same time, preventing the Christians by all
> means in their power from defending themselves and their religion, yet of threatening with
> destruction Christian books in which the objections against Mohammedanism are set forth with an
> evident effort of using the mildest terms compatible with the truth of facts, and in which insulting
> epithets of the Mohammedans are of course altogether avoided whilst honoring with the stamp of
> official approval Mohammedan diatribes in which Christian baptism is called a calumny invented
> against God and his prophet, and the Christians are held up as deaf, blind, and dumb, and unable
> to reason.[79]

Koelle sensed that the momentum of polemical production was increasing. He

also sensed that the argument was slipping away from him. Since the government did not

allow him the chance to respond to the reprinting of *Tuhfa*, his "silence" was perceived as

the inability to answer by his interlocutors. However, none of the anti-Christian works

challenged him to the degree of Harputî İshak's *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb*. It was the most

extensively researched response to the *Food for Reflections* ever produced.

Ziyâu'l-Kulûb

Koelle complained of government bans, but he was largely able to attract attention

to his writings.[80] They fell into enough hands of journalists and publishers to create the

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[79] Koelle, June 23, 1874. CM/042/157.

[80] In 1876, a box containing 250 copies of the *Food for Reflections* that was sent from printers in England
to the CMS station in Istanbul was seized at the custom house and its contents destroyed. Before its
destruction, Koelle went to the custom house on February 8 to clear the box of tracts that had recently
arrived. As soon as it was seen that the tracts were in Turkish, an inspector said that they had to be sent
to government officials. Later he received word from the Ministry of Instruction that read "Seeing that
this tract is improper for circulation in this country, it is to be confiscated." Koelle called upon the
British ambassador and asked him to intervene in order to prevent the destruction of "English property,"
beseeching him to intervene since the tract was of moderate character and the Ministry of Instruction
had authorized numerous publications of "the most violent articles against the Old and New Testament,
with a view of throwing contempt and ridicule upon that venerable book." The ambassador wrote to him

impression of a tidal wave of anti-Muslim literary production. As a consequence, Muslim authors created a trope in the 1870s of omnipresent foreign missionaries flooding the Empire with books and tracts. An 1875 issue of *Sadâkat* (Fidelity) issued a warning call against the supposed incursion, stating that missionaries "tore asunder the band of the belief of the people possessing the lucid Islamic religion." The article described the process by which the missionaries spread their books and a call for Islamic scholars to rise up against them.

> Leaving those in Asia and those in Africa out of the question, liberty is given to some tendencies of these shameful evils in many places of the Turkish empire, and even within the capital of the Sultan. On the [Galata] bridge, one of the most frequented thoroughfares, mischievous publications are sold for half a piaster, or given away gratis whose binding alone would cost more than 8 or 10 piasters. The slaps of chastisement which they received from some of our Muslims have no other effect than that they turn also the other cheek. Now we are patiently waiting to see whether all these things are to remain hid under the cover of convenience. We expect in this matter effort of gracious help from the ulema of Islam. Let there be formed among them a society of ulema to appoint and send able and suitable men to the requisite places![81]

Harputî İshak, whether or not he read this article, took up the call for the doctors of Islam to answer the missionary challenge. In 1876 he released *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* (The Light of Hearts), a thoroughly researched refutation of the *Food for Reflections*. In the 17 intervening years since his first anti-Christian polemic *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*, Harputî İshak devoted himself to considerable research on Christianity and European scholarship of the

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on April 19 the following short reply that the Porte will order the Custom house to allow the books to be re-exported, upon receiving from Koelle an engagement that they shall not be re-imported. The ambassador later declined to give him any further assistance when it was understood that Koelle thought himself at liberty to pass around the tracts without giving trouble to the custom house. Koelle, May 3, 1876. CM/042/187. Stock, 114-115.

[81] Koelle, *Translation of an Article which appeared in the Turkish Newspaper, "the Sadakat" (Fidelity) on Demecber 21, 1875*. CM/042/180B. The author of the article calls for government investment for such a project, criticizing officials who waste significant funds on entertainment or conspicuous consumption of Western goods in the foreign quarters of Istanbul: "Would it not be a good thing, if the sum of money of which skirtfuls are spent and wasted in Pera as it were by thoughtless children upon scented gloves, buttoned dresses, worldly pomp, or amorous ignorant women, were given to pursue the good of society in aid of the glory of our religion?"

Bible. In his new polemic he quotes freely from Morton Scott Enslin, Edward Carpenter, Winwood Reade, Gilbert Murray, and Edwin Hatch, none of whom had been translated into Turkish or Arabic. Although this work borrowed arguments and European textual criticism from *İzhâr u'l-hakk*, Harputî İshak presents many original arguments in his responses to Koelle's claims. He also weaves these works of contemporary scholarship with classical Islamic sources and contemporary politics. Thus his work should not be considered derivative of al-Kairânawî but an innovative treatise in its own right. It demonstrates that by the late nineteenth century, modernist discourses of religion had far-reaching impact on intellectual camps within the Empire, even on an ulema member from a traditional background.

Harputî İshak argues in a dialogical manner with the *Food for Reflections*. He quotes a sentence or paragraph from Koelle, then responds with a counter-statement using authoritative Islamic sources or European scholars. He then moves to the actual argument, generally clarifying an issue in which he believes Koelle to be mistaken. Sometimes he does not even bother with an argument but resorts to mocking the missionary for the nonsensical nature of his statements. In the introduction he writes that all the heavenly religions stress the one-ness of God and are only differentiated by knowledge and forms of worship. Christianity was a heavenly religion at its inception. There was no dispute concerning the doctrine of *tevhîd* in the first two hundred years following Jesus's ministry, except for John's gospel, which according to Harputî İshak was an outlier. His gospel was heavily influenced by Greek philosophy, especially Plato and Alexandrian proponents of Neoplatonism. Mystery cults had a huge impact on his

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tenets. Their belief in the doctrine of the Trinity came from an ancient Greek belief in the

three hypostases, developed by the philosopher Timaios, a pupil of Pythagoras, in 500

B.C.E. He acquired cultic knowledge in Egypt and accepted their teachings on three

gods, three metastases, and the concept of the Son of God.[82] These false beliefs spread

over the centuries, resulting in violent theological conflict. The concept of God's unity

was ultimately rejected at the Council of Nicea in 325 C.E., a touchstone event frequently

mentioned by medieval, early modern, and modern polemicists.[83] Constantine sensed that

the Trinitarian faction was more powerful and pressured Athanasius to promote the

platonic concept of the three hypostases of God. With the imperial backing of this

distorted understanding of the nature of Jesus and God, the doctrine of the Trinity rapidly

spread across the Empire. True belief was rooted out; those who disagreed were

excommunicated.[84]

Along with theology, Harputî İshak interweaves contemporary political

commentary and criticism of Protestant missionaries in his historical narrative. When he

mentions the legacy of Islamic tolerance of Christians and Jews since the time of the

Prophet, he rebukes Koelle and other missionaries for abusing the liberal Ottoman

capitulation treaties that allow foreigners to reside in the Empire and worship freely. The

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[82] *Harputî İshak, Ziyâu'l-kulûb* (Istanbul, 1876), 109. *Ekânim-i Selâse sözünü ibtidâ garbda meydana çıkan Time-i hakîmdir ki, milâd-ı İsa'dan beş yüz sene evvel Lokras Şehrinde tavattun eder idi. Bazıların kavlince Time Fisagoras Şâkirdanından olup bu fikri üstadından ahz etmiştir. Her ne ise Time "Rûhu'l-Âlem" namındaki kitabında yazar ki, cümleden evvel mahlûkatın fikr-i misâl-i dâmisi vardır ki; kelime-i evvel ve uknûm-i evvel odur. Kendisi batınî ve kabili't-taakkuldür. İkinci merteb-i madde gayr-i muntazamadır ki, kelime-i sâniye ve mütelâffizedir. Ve uknûm-i sânîdir. Ondan sonra İbn yahut âlem-i hassas yahut mana-yı âlemdir. Ve cemî-i kâinat bu üç sınıftan ibaretdir ki İbn'dir.*

[83] Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, *Muslim-Christian polemics across the Mediterranean: The splendid replies of Shihab al-Din al-Qarafi (d. 684/1285)*, (Boston: Brill, 2015).

[84] *Ziyâu'l-kulûb*, 10.

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Protestants intentionally abused these freedoms in order to antagonize Muslims and harass them to convert to Christianity. Because they were unsuccessful, the missionaries turned to the intellectually weak and bribed them with promises of material provisions, education, vocational training, or transit to a foreign country. They gave monthly and yearly salaries to those who became Protestant, whether through their service at their foreign schools or connection to their missionary enterprises and even offered these "coverts" foreign citizenship. While they had succeeded in deceiving Ottoman Christians to accept Protestantism, they had utterly failed in converting one sincere Muslim to Christianity.[85]

Harputî İshak appeals to recent history and Ottoman treatment of its Christian subjects to counter Koelle's argument that minority religious groups fared better within Islamic states than in Christian states. Muslims, he describes, only fight in defense or to rescue people from oppression or a mission to let people know about the innate peace of Islam. After all, there are still Christians in the Ottoman Empire, but no Muslims in Spain. Here he mentions the apocryphal tale of Mehmet II promising property to Christians, who enjoyed his protection and earned high administrative positions in his

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[85] Ibid., 10-12. *Bu zâtlar ol vechile her memlekette müsteskil oldukları halde devlet-i 'aliyenin öteden beri serbeste-i edyân hakkında mültezimi olan usûl-i semîhanede bil-istifâde kırk elli seneden beri memâlik-i mahrûseye birer ikişer sokuldular. Ve burada mektebler ihdâs ile güya insaniyete hizmet için halkın çocuklarını bedava okutuyoruz, diyerek bazı cüheleyi kandırdılar. Eğerçi; her milletin cühelası vezâif-i diniyelerini lâyıkıyla bilemediklerinden ve husûsuyla Prostestanet cemiyetlerinin sermâyeleri vasi' olmakla mezheblerini kabul edenlere aylık, yıllık gibi nakden mu'âvenetten mâ'adâ sefâretler ve konsoloslar vasıtalarıyla kendilerine tabi olanları mazhar-ı imtiyâz etmeye dahî muktedir olduklarından Anadolu ve Rumeli cihetlerinde tebea-i Hıristiyan'dan baz'î sade dilânın iğfâl ve celbine muktedir oldular ise de bunların mezhebi zehebî olmakla umdukları derece istifâde edemediler... Eğer Protestanlar dîn-i Muhammedî'yi ârif ve terbiye-i İslâmiye ile hakâyık-ı şer-i şerîfe vakıf olarak Kelime-i Tevhid'in lezzet-i rûhaniyyesiyle ta'tir-i dimağ etmiş bir Müslim-i 'aklın kendi mezheblerini kabul ettiğini gösterebilirlerse ol zaman akça ve himâyet gibi esbâbtan birinin mevcûd olup olmadığını teftiş i'ktizâ eder.*

new government.[86] It also did not require a constitutional separation of powers for Islamic states to grant legal protection to its religious minorities as it had done in Europe. The features of religious tolerance existed at the origins of Islam:

> The Ottoman State established the equality prescribed by the [Islamic] şerî'at not in the wake of European Emperors, but by executing Islam's commandment, and declared the principles of equality. As of today, there has not yet been a European State to grant to its own people and put into practice the same extremely vast privileges as was granted by to Ottoman State to the non-Muslims.[87]

To answer the charge that Muslims habitually mistreat Christians and Jews, he references Al-Bakara 256, that there is no compulsion in religion. Christianity has done much worse in its history to non-believers, such as Constantine's treatment of the Jews. Nothing like this was comparable in Islamic history, nor are social spaces carved out for minority religions in non-Muslim societies as there are in Muslim ones. If any violence against non-Muslims did take place under an Islamic government, this can be considered a violation of the pact of 'Umar. The Ottoman Empire always rectified such matters of violence against its non-Muslim population.[88]

Harputî İshak then rejects Koelle's claim that Christianity spread across the earth through peaceful means, in contrast to Islam's use of the sword, or that Christianity's success is self-evident, as there are more Christians on earth compared to Muslims.[89] In

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[86] Ibid., 281-282. *Teba-i gayr-i müslim'in müsâvât-ı hukûku tâ Fatih Sultan Mehmed zamanından beri devlet-i 'aliyede cârî ve mu'teber idi. Rum kilisesinin imtiyâzât-ı kadîmesi Fatih muşârun ileyh tarafından ne mecbûriyete mebnî ibkâ oludu. Ve Fenerli ta'bir olunan Rum familyalarının Şimdiki hâriciye nezâreti makamında olan divan Tercümânlıklarında ve Eflâk ve Boğdan prensliklerinde istihdâmları devletin ne ihtiyâcına mebnî idi.*

[87] Ibid., 282-283. *Şer'in müsâit olduğu müsâvât fi'l-hukûkî devlet-i 'aliyye Avrupa hükümdarânına takirân değil belki ahkâm-ı şer'i şerife temessüken ilân eylemiştir. Zira bu güne kadar devlet-i Osmaniyye teba-i gayr-i Müslime hakkında mebzûl tuttuğu müsâdâtı Avrupa devletlerinden kendi teb'a-i İslâmiyyesi hakkında icrâ etmiş bir devlet görmedigimizden taklît ve iktifâ sözü sarf-i hezeyân kalır.* English translation found in *Could Not Answer, Tenth Edition* (Istanbul: Hakîkat Kitâbevi, 2010).

[88] Ibid., 17.

[89] Ibid., 18-24.

response, Harputî İshak notes Christian gospel is unable to change the hearts and minds of its audience. This was as true in the early Muslim period as it was in the nineteenth century. The Russian Empire had worked to convert its Muslim population to Christianity for over a century but failed despite exposing them to every punishment and promising them every reward. In the Muslim-Christian population exchange following the Crimean War, many Muslims came to the Ottoman Empire but far fewer Christians went to Russia.[90]

Harputî İshak uses three methods to counter the theological claims of the *Food for Reflections* that use Islamic sources. First he replies to Koelle's objections against the Qur'an by using other verses to support its message. This is a purely theological approach that resembles the scripture-based methods used by medieval and early modern polemics, and Harputî İshak's earlier writings found in *Şems ü'l-Hakîkat*. The second method is to dismiss any argument of Koelle's from Christian scripture as based on an unreliable document. The third is to use arguments from European Enlightenment-inspired history, a Whig Theory that sees heroes and villains in the past based on contemporary concerns. Harputî İshak uses al-Kairanawi's arguments of the Bible's poor textual integrity compared to the Qur'an and other Islamic authoritative sources. Islamic texts and hadiths were weighed in importance according to the verifiability of their transmission history. If

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[90] Ibid., 24. *Rusyalılar yüz seneden beri isti'lâ eyledikleri Kazan ve Ejderhan ve Kırım ve Dağıstan ve Türkistan taraflarında bulunan nüfûs-i İslâmiyye'nin sabîlerinden şeyh fanisine varıncaya kadar her bir şahıs için senede birer altın almış iken asker vermek mekteblerinde mesku lisanı t'âlim etmek gibi envâ-i hakâret ve iz'ac dahî görmüşler iken acaba bu kadar müddette bunlardan ne mikdâr âdem tanassur eyledi. Hattâ Kırım muhârebesinde bir muktezâ-yı muâhede-i tarafeyn teba'asından yekdiğeri memâlikine hicret edenlere müsa'ade olduğundan Rusya tarafından iki milyon mütecâviz ehl-i İslâm hicret eyleyip Rusyalılar nüfûs başına yirmi karbon harc-ı rah vermiş iken, teba'a-i devlet-i 'aliyye Hıristiyanları'ndan acaba kaç bin kişi Rusya memâlikine gittiler?*

none could be found then it would be of secondary or tertiary importance. As such, the

entire New Testament falls under this category, rendering all arguments by Koelle against

Islam based on Scriptures as invalid. Harputî İshak mentions the concept of *tevâtür,* in

which a narrative is told unanimously by a group that is confirmed to be trustworthy,

forming absolute knowledge. Christianity, however, is told by one person in each book,

explaining the contradictions in the four gospels. He notes that none of the four gospels

would be accepted as documentary knowledge if they were scrutinized according to the

rules of the knowledge of hadith.[91]

The audience of *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* should be taken into consideration. Numerous

features of the text indicate that the intended audience was Turkish-speaking Muslims. Its

purpose was not to convert any erstwhile Christians into Islam. First of all it would be

inaccessible to anyone without knowledge of Turkish. While many Christians in the

Empire were Turkish speakers (some exclusively so, particularly among Greeks and

Armenians), the text does not attack the faith of these Ottoman Christians explicitly, most

of whom were Eastern Orthodox, not Protestant. Like other Ottoman Muslim polemics,

Harputî İshak has a paternal attitude toward the Empire's native Christians and upholds

them as examples of the state's ability to accommodate multiple communities of faith.

Furthermore, the text reminds Muslims of their incumbent religious duties. The

theological Islamic terminology is specific and lacks explanation, making it inaccessible

to an uninformed audience. In answering Koelle's charge that Christianity emphasizes

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[91] Ibid., 145. *Amma, Markos ve Luka'nın nakl ettikleri haber-i vâhid üzerine mebnî ve kendilerinin zât ve zamanları zunûn u Ğükûke mübtenî olmakla eğer, rivâyât-i Enâcil''de dahî ehâdis hakkında ulema-i muhaddisînin usûl-i hadiste ittihâz ve iltizâm ettikleri kavâid-i tahkîk mu'teber tutulsa hiç biri resîde-i mertebe-i vüsûk u yakîn olamaz. Ibid., 145.*

inward worship while Islam reverts to the outward worship of the Jews, Harputî İshak goes into a lengthly discussion on the levels of worship in the Islamic *fikh*. The most valuable is to avoid *harâm*. The second is to perform acts that are *farz*, or obligatory. The third is to avoid *makrûh tahrîman*, which are actions not as severe as *harâm* but close to *harâm*. The fourth is *vâcib*, or types of worship that fall between *farz* and *sünnet*. Fifth are to enjoin things close to *halâl*, or legitimate actions, considered to be the opposite of *harâm*. The sixth is to perform the *al-sunnah*: the actions and sayings of the Prophet, or prevailing practice at the time of the prophet that were not opposed. The seventh are *mustahab*, or recommended things. These duties are a Sunni legal interpretation of Islamic law, indicating another purpose of this text is to safeguard his readers against both Protestant missionaries and Shi'a Islam. He uses classical Islamic authoritative sources including the commentary *Sa'adet-i Edebiye* and Muhammad ibn Fakhr al-Din al Razi (d. 1209)'s *Tefsîr-ı Kâbir,* a classical commentary on the Qur'an and hadiths.[92]

Although Harputî İshak never mentions Koelle by name, describe his manner of acquiring the *Food for Reflections*, or any other information about the author, his critique says much about its influence in Istanbul. For it to warrant a response from a religious scholar with imperial support suggests it appeared to be a threat to bureaucrats within the Ministry of Public Instruction. In the 1870s Harputî İshak became a *molla,* as he was an instructor at the *Dâru'l-ma'ârif* secondary school. He later attained the rank of *İstanbul pâyesi* (rank of the *kadı* of Istanbul).[93] The *Food For Reflections* was apparently seen as enough of a threat to require a 400-page response from a prominent figure within the

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[92]   Ibid., 264-265.
[93]   Sunguroğlu, *Harput Yollarında*, 125.

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religious establishment.

Ziyâu'l-Kulûb contains many features that became regular features of religious polemics in the 1880s and 1890s, along with Ottoman newspaper articles and books that discussed questions of political, social, and cultural reform. The first is an increasingly paternalistic attitude toward the Christians of the Ottoman Empire. While discourses of Muslims protecting Christians existed in Ottoman political literature for centuries, nineteenth-century discourses of protecting religious minorities were now couched in different terminology. Instead of classical political concepts such as the "circle of justice," the terminology began to employ words such as "civilization" and "enlightenment." These authors stressed the Empire's duty to protect Ottoman Christians against outside influences, whether European diplomatic intrigues or Protestant missionaries looking for converts. This feature increased in the next decade, to the point that Ahmet Midhat wrote as a guest columnist in Armenian newspapers, praising them as the most loyal non-Muslim group in the Empire.

Harputî İshak likely wrote his polemic for multiple reasons beyond those he stated. As a career educator he wrote to remind his readership of their primary religious duties of enjoining good and forbidding evil. He also wanted to deter European intellectual sentiments that would portray Eastern civilization as backward and Western civilization as advanced due to Christianity. His lengthy discussions on the history of science and technological advancement in Islamic history may have been written to reassure his Muslim audience that Europe's political dominance did nothing to undercut the perceived veracity of the claims their religion makes. However, Harputî İshak's

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argumentative tools of political events, modern textual scholarship, and reason suggest that the currency of religious truth had changed. While he does weave these arguments with classical Islamic authoritative sources, they were not his sharpest points of attack against Koelle. That even a traditional religious scholar as himself was forced to debate on his opponent's terms showed the extent to which discourses of modernity had permeated the consciousness of Istanbul's intellectual classes.

Koelle and the 1879 Arrest of Ahmet Tevfik

For the rest of the decade Koelle continued to publish books and tracts, translating them into Turkish with the help of native staff members. These included "The Death of Christ Upon a Cross" in 1878, which responded to Muslim denial of Jesus's crucifixion by using a similar "reasoned apologetic" in his earlier works; and a translation of the Anglican "Book of Common Prayer." Over the years his hopes waned that he would be able to convert enough Turkish Muslims to Christianity to establish a church. Even after decades of labor in Istanbul, Koelle had seen few conversions. Proselyting efforts, he wrote in 1875, offended both the religious and the political sensibilities of the Muslims, making his work nearly impossible: "A European missionary could not visit in Muhammadan houses without rousing suspicion. No church for the public Christian service of Turks would have any chance of being authorized by the government. No missionary school for Muhammad youths would be tolerated."[94]

Koelle's failure to win Muslim converts was not for lack of trying. He actively attempted to gain Protestant converts to Christianity from Islam, even extending his

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[94] Julius Richter, *A history of Protestant Missions in the Near East* (London: Oliphant, Anderson, and Ferrier, 1910), 176.

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efforts to non-Ottoman Muslims. In 1871 four Muslims who had left Iran for fears of the death penalty for apostasy put themselves under his religious instruction with the professed intention of becoming Protestants. Their story hints at opportunistic young men attempting to manipulate missionary patronage to resettle in Europe rather than genuine religious conviction. They were from Isfahan and originally sent by Jesuits for theological education at the Propaganda Fide in Rome. While en route to Istanbul they found Koelle and at once declared they had found in Protestantism what they were seeking all along, indeed what the "popish ceremonies" could not provide. He spent the next few months instructing them on the Old and New Testaments and catechism. Koelle then spoke to the Persian consul and attempted to secure Ottoman citizenship for the potential converts for fear that they would be forcibly returned to Iran and receive the death penalty. Their renunciation of Islam would have had no legal standing in Iran according to state's interpretation of *şeria't.* Koelle still believed that legal recognition of conversion to Christianity from Islam was possible in the Ottoman Empire, despite the tenuous nature of such a proposition after the events of 1864.[95]

A controversial epilogue to his career came in in 1879, which caused a major stir in the European press and diplomatic corps. Koelle had by this time retired from the Church Mission Society, whose station closed in 1878, but continued to live in Istanbul, baptize a small number of converts, and translate Christian literature to Turkish. Koelle worked with the ulema member Ahmet Tevfik to translate the "Book of Common Prayer" into Turkish. Tevfik was what the CMS described to be "a very distinguished Ulema [...]

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[95] *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, 1871.

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a professor and lecturer in leading mosques, and who had expounded the Koran before the Sultan."[96] Tevfik was an instructor at the Emirgan Rüşdiye school and former *medrese* instructor.[97]

One September 23, 1879, Koelle and Ahmet Tevfik were arrested on the street under the order of Hafiz Pasha, the Minister of Police. Koelle was released after six hours of detention, but his books were confiscated; Ahmet Tevfik, on the other hand, was thrown into an "unhealthy dungeon." Ahmet Tevfik had been found to be translating Koelle's new tract "Christ the Word" (*siretü'l-mesîh*). When questioned by the police, he claimed that he was merely assisting Koelle as a language instructor and making necessary revisions to the translations. Ahmet Tevfik was eventually sentenced to death under a fatwa of the *şeyhü'l-islâm* for acting against Islam. English Premier Lord Beaconsfield immediately intervened and delivered a stern ultimatum to Abdülhamit for his release. He backed up the demand with a naval demonstration and ordered ships to the Dardanelles as a means to intimidate the Ottoman government. Along with this show of force, British Ambassador A.H. Layard met with Abdülhamit for four hours to discuss the Koelle affair on January 1, 1880. He claimed that the Ottoman Empire had violated Article 62 of the Treaty of Berlin, in which Britain imposed full religious freedom in its most liberal application on the Empire following its defeat in the 1877-1878 Russo-Turkish War. Abdülhamit gave the familiar reply to European criticisms of the Empire's

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[96] Eugene Stock, *The History of the Church Mission Society: Its Environment, Its Men and Its Work*, Volume 3 (London: Church Mission Society, 1899), 122. Stock adds that "this Ulema was much interested in Christianity, but had not given any sign of personal conviction."

[97] Azmi Özcan, S. Tufan Buzpınar, "Church Mission Society Istanbul'da. Tanzimat, Islahat, Misyonerlik" (The Church Mission Society in Istanbul: The Tanzimat, reform and missionaries), *İstanbul Araştırmaları* 1 (1997), 70.

poor treatment of Christians: in no country is it suitable for anyone to attack the religion

of the state or harm the people's religious feelings, whether in Europe or the Middle East.

Koelle provoked the state, and the police had the right to seize his work and prevent its

circulation: "Ahmet Tevfik, as a religious instructor in public service, because he assisted

in the translation of a work such as this, receiving punishment according to Islamic law is

merited."[98]

Ahmet Tevfik's death sentence was eventually revoked. Abdülhamit lacked

leverage in these negotiations even though he attempted to frame his actions as being in

accordance with the Treaty of Berlin. The sultan claimed that if an ulema member or any

other Muslim became a Christian then no harm would come upon him. Layard then

warned Abdülhamit that arbitrary arrests and denunciations were seriously endangering

his popularity and might lead to grave consequences. The ambassador remained cordial in

the presence of the sultan, but he did not trust Abdülhamit's assertions that he would

protect freedom of religious conscience in the future. In a letter from Layard to the

Marquis of Salisbury, he considered Abdülhamit himself responsible for the Koelle affair,

evidenced by his refusal to dismiss the minister of police.[99]

Ahmet Tevfik's pardon did not translate into a long-term victory for foreign

missionaries. Koelle's books were eventually returned, but within each book "the name of

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[98] British Foreign Office 78/3072 Salisbury to Layard, no 3, Istanbul 1 January 1880. Ibid., 75. Abdülhamit said that the translator was not arrested for choosing Christianity, but participating in the promulgation of an Anti-Islamic work. He stated that anyone in the Ottoman lands could choose his or her own religion. Layard responded that he only accepted the Sultan's words about such a work not being circulated, he said that Dr. Koelle's papers being seized and Ahmed Tevfik being punished did not fulfill the concept of "religious freedom."

[99] Sir A.H. Layard to the Marquis of Salisbury, Istanbul, January 1, 1880. *Correspondence Respecting the Arrest of Dr. Koelle by the Turkish Police: Presented to Both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty*(London: Harrison and Sons), 22.

Christ in every page blotted out."[100] Tevfik was pardoned but exiled to the island of Chios

and placed under constant surveillance. Koelle expressed his bitter frustration that a mere

linguistic assistant was punished to this extent by the government. He had not even

renounced Islam as had the Turkish Christians of 1864. This was a backsliding of the

government in terms of their protection of the rights of religious minorities: "What would

have been his fate if he had asked for baptism?" Koelle asked in a letter to the CMS

headquarters. One year later Ahmet Tevfik escaped to London. He decided to convert to

Christianity upon his arrival, despite some hesitation that such an act would result in the

legal separation of his wife and children, still residing in Istanbul, according to the

statutes of *şeria't* that trigger an automatic divorce due to apostasy. He was publicly

baptized on November 11, 1881, at St. Paul's church in Onslow Square.[101] Missionary

enthusiasm for his conversion ran high, and it represented a happy epilogue to the

British-Ottoman row. Tevfik claimed he was "now fully convinced of the truth of the

Gospel and desired to give his life to advocate and defend it among his countrymen by

mouth and pen."[102] Their hopes were dashed in 1883 when Ahmet Tevfik, whom the

Society had arranged to go to British-occupied Egypt was intercepted and ultimately

returned to Scio. He turned himself in to Ottoman authorities. Ahmet Tevfik then

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[100] Ibid.

[101] Ibid. The celebration echoes the eighteenth-century Ottoman state's enthusiasm of high-profile converts to Islam. At the Ottoman Empire used conversion as a tool to show patronage toward new Muslims, providing for their material needs and religious patronage in an official manner that reflected earlier local customs, thereby shoring up legitimacy at a time when it was beset by military defeats and financial crises. The British government did not formally celebrate Ahmet Tevfik's conversion, but the CMS and other mission agencies were happy to make a public spectacle out of the event. See Anton Minkov's *Conversion to Islam in the Balkans. Kisve Bahasi Petitions and Ottoman Social Life, 1670-1730* (Leiden: Brill, 2004).

[102] Ibid.

abandoned his new religion and returned to Islam.[103]

The Turkish press weighed in on the controversy as it unfolded. *Cerîde-i Havâdis* featured an October 7 article blaming such missionary books as causing calamity in the Muslim world. Traitors like Ahmet Tevfik deserve such punishment, since he assisted the translation of missionary tracts that could quite literally cost Muslims their lives. The author notes that foremost among the causes that led to the 1842 massacre of Kabul in the Anglo-Afghan War was the introduction into Afghanistan of "injurious books" by missionaries. Thus, Ahmed Tevfik deserved execution: "The wretched criminal, to exculpate himself from his abominable sin, pretends that he was driven to it by want. But we demand that the miserable creature may receive an overwhelming punishment, so that he may, by his example deter others from selling their religion for a few pence."[104] On October 10 the paper published a similar attack on Ahmet Tevfik. The author connected him to the larger project of Christian polemical writing and its attempt to confuse the minds of Muslims. Since their Christian polemics demonstrated a respectable level of literary Turkish, the mission had clearly received outside help:

> Although few Muslims were caught in the snares of these Jesuits, it is understood from the diction of those erroneous and seducing books, the *Mîzan u'l-hakk*, the *Food for Reflections*, the *Death of Christ Upon the Cross*, and the likes that he had been dipping his pen into them, and it is clear that this Ahmed did not enter that Society only lately.[105]

Ahmet Mithat, ever perceiving the foreign missionaries to threaten the integrity of the Empire, agreed that Ahmet Tevfik deserved execution for his involvement in the translation of the "Book of Common Prayer" and apostasy from Islam. This punishment

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103   Richter, 176.
104   *Cerîde-i Havâdi*s. Quoted in *The Levant Herald*, "Spirit of the Native Press," October 8, 1879.
105   *Cerîde-i Havâdis*, October 10, 1879. Quoted in Koelle, October 20, 1879. CM/042/223.

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would not violate the principle of religious freedom. In fact, religious freedom "esteems every religious group and is not found to be attacking other religious observants." He wrote an October 10 article in his newspaper *Tercümân-i Hakîkat,* shortly after Ahmet Tevfik's arrest. Ahmet Midhat considered him to be a renegade and traitor to the state:

> Is it to be endured that, while our government has the right to expel the deceivers called missionaries from the country, as Germany expelled the Jesuits, that the Protestant missionaries should thus make use of natives as means of seduction in order to corrupt the nation from within, just as tree worms destroy a tree? The minds all over Istanbul have been greatly roused, not because of the apostasy of the said Ahmed, who is unworthy of his name, but because he assisted those in Istanbul who are earnest and real enemies of religion in seducing Muslims.[106]

The reaction to Koelle from Ottoman newspapers and Abdülhamit must be understood in the context of international politics. In the post-war environment following the 1877-1878 Russo-Ottoman War, the Berlin Conference helped the Empire regain much of its territory lost in the Balkans. In return the Concert of Europe imposed strict obligations on the domestic affairs of the Ottoman Empire. The British used the Koelle Affair, which occurred shortly after the implementation of the Articles of the Treaty of Berlin, as a test to place Ottoman religious authority under its control, particularly the caliphate. This was a critical asset during the strategic rivalry of the Great Game between the British Empire and Russia for supremacy in Central Asia. Britain was determined to prevent Russia's spread through the Balkans, the Caucasus and Central Asia, particularly through Afghanistan and toward India. British officials reasoned that the symbolic capital of the caliphate could tilt the colonial balance of power in their favor. The Ottoman government was in need of British support for its domestic debt, protecting its borders, and handling the influx of millions of Muslim migrants from Russia and the Balkans.

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[106] *Tercüman-ı Hakîkat*, No. 391, 30 Şevval 1296 (October 16, 1879). Quoted in Koelle, October 20, 1879. CM/042/223.

Thus, it was susceptible to threats from the British, such as Layard threatening to cut off diplomatic ties if the Koelle Affair was not resolved peacefully. In this sense the Ottoman Empire was considerably weakened in the impositions it could place upon foreign missionaries and their polemical writings. Abdülhamit partially resolved this threat with his press censorship policies in the next decade, which in addition to missionary literature also forbade other forms of controversial political and religious literature.

The outburst of newspaper articles condemning Koelle represented the beginning of a pattern that was to be repeated in the 1880s. Muslim intellectuals took a more offensive approach to missionary publishing activity, whether religious books, educational books, or even the Bible itself. The purpose of their writings was not only to protect Muslims from the religious threat of Christianity but also from the political threat that such polemics represented. They argued that the violence had occurred in Afghanistan in 1843 and the 1857 India Mutiny due to missionary activity would be repeated in their own domains if they remained silent. It was not a baseless fear: at the time the Ottoman government was severely weakened, its most important possessions in the Balkans were almost lost, and its provinces in Anatolia were coming under Russian occupation. The state needed to shore up strength by any means necessary.[107]

Conclusion

In the 1860s and 1870s a lively print culture developed in Istanbul. Young Ottoman intellectuals, traditional religious scholars, and foreign missionaries were aware of the educational possibilities of the newspaper, the novel, and the book, and they all

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[107] Orhan Koloğlu, "Turning Point for the Arab Caliphate: The Dr. Koelle Affair (1879-1880)," *Ankara Üniversitesi Tarih Araştırmaları Dergisi* 18 (2005): 233-247.

used them to disseminate their agendas. Late nineteenth-century reform edicts created possibilities for all these camps to put society on a trajectory that would favor these individual group interests. Young Ottomans' desired to create European-inspired legal reforms couched in Islamic thought, foreign missionaries wanted the freedom to convert Muslims to Christianity and distribute their books and tracts, and traditional religious scholars sought to teach the public the tenets of Islam but protected them against modernist discourses that could threaten their beliefs. As this chapter has shown, the first Ottoman newspapers had significant impact on the political environment of Istanbul, and the discussions and arguments that took place in the print sphere between these various groups.

Islamic scholars and instructors such as Harputî İshak and Sungurî Hasan advocated a program of defending Sunni Islam, in which they saw Protestant Christianity and non-Sunni sects as similar threats. Their individual religious tracts against these groups had similar goals and converged toward a unified field. They saw themselves as defending the religion of the Empire against outside threats, whether it were Protestants attacking the religion of the state, or Alevis who had threatened the Empire since the reign of Selim I and could do so again because of their ties to Protestant missionaries. Such questions took on increasing significance following the 1856 Reform edict and increasing political power given to millet leaders, and particularly after the 1878 Treaty of Berlin, when Ottoman domestic controversies of religion became international incidents. Questions of religion became subordinated to the larger questions of political ideology.

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Yet the contours of the religious debate in the Ottoman print sphere also contracted from the international to the local level. Koelle's *Food for Reflections* was domestically produced and largely concerned with questions of civilizational discourse, with the Ottoman Empire as his object of criticism. Responses in Istanbul newspapers and Harputî İshak's *Ziyâu'l-Kulûb* defended the Empire against these attacks by arguing that it had always been more civilized in its treatment of religious minorities than Europe. That such polemics could be written against Islam and distributed in the Ottoman Empire was proof enough. Thus, the debate was not merely derivative of Pfander and al-Kairanawi's writings from the previous two decades. Religious writings took on political dimensions by addressing the concerns and anxieties of their readership, particularly Muslim authors' criticizing Christian polemics as an attack every bit as dangerous as the British destruction of Kabul in 1843.

Points of agreement could be found between Christian and Muslim authors despite their many points of disagreement. Ottomans in the late nineteenth century were aware of their status as the only major Empire originating in the medieval Islamic world that had survived with institutional continuity into the modern era. As Selim Deringil notes, disparate elements of Ottoman society, ranging from the bureaucratic elite and the Young Ottoman intelligentsia to the ulema believed that a new social base was necessary for the Empire to remain alive. From this new social base they hoped to confront the ideological challenges of the era.[108] Koelle initially found many points of agreement with Young Ottoman authors, promoting such ideas as freedom (*hürriyet*), homeland (*vatan*),

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[108] Selim Deringil, "The Invention of Tradition as Public Image in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1808 to 1908," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, No. 1 (Jan. 1993): 3-29.

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and rejecting reactionary elements within the religious establishment. Koelle even found points of agreement with Harputî İshak on the disproportionate level of European influence on Ottoman reforms, although they interpreted this fact quite differently.

The next chapter will turn to the Hamidian era when questions of non-Muslim freedoms in the Ottoman Empire continued to take on international dimensions. At the same time, the ability of the state to protect the image of Islam intensified, as did restrictions on the promulgation of anti-religious polemics. The age of Hamidian press censorship allowed a stronger response to these threats with an increased institutionalization of surveillance methods and management of Islamic discourses, when "protecting" moral values was a matter of national security. The regime of Abdülhamit II used communication tools to enhance a particular vision of the sultan and his administration. A state infrastructure was now in place to limit the circulation of any potentially seditious material while offering stronger, official support to anti-Christian polemics produced by those close to the state. The clearest example is Ahmet Midhat's *Müdâfa'a* and *Müdâfa'a'ya Mükâbele ve Mükâbele'ye Müdâfa'a*. The government made sure that no other rival foreign group challenged official ritual and representation while it simultaneously attempted to maintain cordial diplomatic relations with its European allies. As a result, foreign missionaries had to use new strategies to engage Muslim readers. As the next chapter will show, articulations of religious expression took on clearer forms with polemical writings that defined the religious beliefs of the adherent while criticizing those of the other.

Chapter Four

Müdâfa'a'ya Mükâbele ve Mükâbele'ye Müdâfa'a: **Ahmet Midhat and Henry O. Dwight's Apotheosis of Ottoman Polemical Debate (1880-1884)**

In July 1880, Justin Parsons, a 60-year-old American missionary, traveled through the northern Marmara region on a return trip from the Anatolian interior where he distributed materials for famine relief. As he returned with an Armenian servant named Garabet to the İzmit region, where he had been stationed as a missionary for three decades, Parsons briefly stopped at an encampment populated by Turkish locals. Upon leaving, he continued about a mile further up the road. It was growing dark, and he was still 15 miles from his residence in Bağcıcık. Parsons decided to rest for the night under some trees near the road. Three young men from the encampment named Ali, Eyüp, and Süleyman soon caught up to him. They shot him and Garabet with a pistol and double-barreled shotgun, killing both. They took their possessions and fled.[1]

When the news reached G. H. Heap, the *charge d'affairs* ad interim of the Legation of the United States, he immediately informed Ottoman Foreign Minister Abidin Pasha. The minister promised immediate action, but Heap had his doubts about Abidin Pasha. He suspected that the *kâymakâm* of the district had intentionally not dispatched his police force in time, allowing the suspects to escape. Despite these suspicions, the three men were captured anyway and brought to an examination before the *mutasarrıf* (governor) of Izmit. Heap worried that they would not received adequate

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[1] Legation of the United States, Constantinople, August 9, 1880. Mr. Heap to Mr. Evarts. No 620. No. 7. P. 984-986. Accessed September 24, 2013 at http://images.library.wisc.edu/FRUS/EFacs2/1880-81v01/reference/frus.frus188081v01.i0036.pdf

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punishment and believed that the state only punished violence committed by Muslims against Christians if the highest levels of the diplomatic chain intervened. He wrote to the U.S. Secretary of State William Evarts that Muslims were rarely charged for the murder of Christians due to the latter's second-class status in the Ottoman legal code.[2]

Much like Lord Beaconsfield's threat to Sultan Abdülhamit the previous year to bring British warships through the Dardanelles, Heap requested that the United States send a war vessel to Istanbul's environs. This would strengthen their demands for swift sentencing and reassure other American missionaries and expatriates in the region that their government secured their safety.[3] On August 31, 1880, John C. Howell of the U.S. Navy dispatched a vessel to cruise Ottoman waters. Evarts told Howell that the commander of the vessel would render him such aid and assistance in his representations and demands upon the Ottoman government for just and prompt action toward the murderers "as the presence of an American man-of-war may make proper."[4] With this firepower behind him, Heap told Abidin Pasha on October 7 that if the Ottoman courts failed to satisfy his demand of anything short of the condemnation of the guilty parties, it would cause a "painful impression" in the United States.[5]

The vessel had its intended effect. The three prisoners were transferred to Istanbul and brought to trial on October 9. Ali was charged with first-degree murder and sentenced to death by hanging based on Article 174 of the Ottoman penal code. Eyüp and Süleyman were charged as accomplices and sentence to 15 years' imprisonment with hard labor,

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2   Ibid.
3   Legation of the United States. Mr. Evarts to Mr. Heap, No. 622. August 23, 1889. P. 987.
4   Legation of the United States. John Hay, Acting Secretary, to Mr. Heap, Department of State, Washington. September 2, 1880. P. 988.
5   Legation of the United States. Mr. Heap to Mr. Evarts. No. 627/31. Istanbul, October 11, 1880.

according to Article 175.[6] In a follow-up correspondence on the trial and execution,

Evarts commented to Heap that he continue pressing the Ottoman government to defend

American missionaries and travelers, whom he believed had a right to receive the most

perfect protection the Ottoman government could guarantee or afford. With such

lawlessness in the Empire's rural environs, only the most severe punishment of the

murderers could deter such future actions.[7]

      As discussed in the previous chapter, it appears odd that the death or

imprisonment of one foreign missionary could create an international row. Yet the

Hamidian era brought vastly increased Western involvement in Ottoman internal affairs,

particularly its treatment of non-Muslims. The Great Powers provided considerable

military assistance to the Empire in order to prevent Russia from capturing too much of

its territory and projecting power throughout Eurasia. In return, they negotiated a legal

framework for their involvement in Ottoman domestic issues following the 1878

Congress of Berlin. The Ottoman Empire was in a poor position to argue terms – it lost

20 percent of its population (roughly five-and-a-half million people) and 40 percent of its

territory as Romania, Serbia, Montenegro and Bulgaria all became autonomous regions

or independent states. The Treaty of Berlin called for the British to take the lead among

the six European signatories of the treaty, who would superintend the application of the

Ottoman improvements and reforms in provinces inhabited by Armenians.[8] Chief among

these was Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, which required the Empire to protect

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[6]   Ibid.

[7]   Legation of the United States. Mr. Evarts to Mr. Heap. no. 628/278. Department of State, Washington, October 15, 1880.

[8]   Arman Kirakossian, *British Diplomacy and the Armenian Question: From the 1830s to 1914* (Princeton, NJ: Gomidas Institute Books, 2003), 79.

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Armenians against Kurds and Circassians and make administrative improvements known to the treaty signatories.[9]

In light of increasing foreign encroachment on domestic matters, the Istanbul press continued its criticism of Protestant missionary activities but did so in increasingly political terms. In 1882 the newspaper *Cerîde-i Havâdis* called on Muslims of the city and of the Ottoman Empire to unite in efforts to check the progress of Protestantism, what they perceived to be the necessary and bitter enemy of Islam and of the Ottoman government. The columnist wrote that foreign missionaries could not be touched by law nor by any military force because of restrictions on the Ottoman government. The missionaries had won the public's sympathy by "elevating" them through their schools and moral teachings. They unsettled the faith of Muslims who read their books or attended their schools. This was a dangerous situation for the religious faithful. The columnist concluded with an appeal to the ulema to check the advances of Protestantism.[10]

In this chapter I build on the concepts introduced in Chapter Two, namely the use of European scholarship as new sources of authority in Christian and Muslim religious polemics and the increasingly politicized nature of these debates. Both developments intensified in the early Hamidian era. At the same time, I explore how the influence of the Christian-Muslim religious debates in this period influenced Islamic theological precepts throughout the late Ottoman period and even into the Republican period. This is

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[9] J .C. Hurewitz. *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East A Documentary Record: Volume 1 1535 - 1914.* (D. Van Nostrand Company Inc, 1956), 190. Robert F. Zeidner "Britain and the Launching of the Armenian Question." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 7, No. 4 (October 1976), 474.

[10] Quoted in letter from H. O. Dwight to N.G. Clarck, April 21, 1882. Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

particularly apparent in the field of *tebşirât* ("glad tidings"), a branch of Islamic theology concerned with the continuity between the monotheist religions, which this chapter will give considerable attention. These issues will be framed through an analysis of the print debate between Ahmet Midhat and Henry Otis Dwight, arguably the most significant debate between a Christian and Muslim in late Ottoman history. Their dialogue consisted of thousands of journal pages and caught the attention of Muslims throughout the global Islamic print sphere. It is perhaps the clearest articulation of religious belief and defense of one's religion by use of modern sourcing in the final decades of the Empire.

Ahmet Midhat is a useful figure through which to explore the complex intellectual world of reformist Ottoman Muslims. He was a fierce admirer of Sultan Abdülhamit II and supported his authoritarian regime. Yet he also supported the first Ottoman constitution of 1876 and remained a voice of reform in Abdülhamit's circle. The apparent contradiction of supporting autocracy and constitutionalism is somewhat mirrored in Ahmet Midhat's defense of Islam. He argues for the historical superiority of Islam and its intellectual genius in science and theology, yet he rarely uses classical Islamic sources, instead favoring European philosophy or universal histories. A survey of his sources in his three polemics against Christianity reveal much about the moral currency among certain Ottoman Muslim reformers.

I also seek to analyze these polemics against the foreign and domestic political backdrop. We have already discussed increased European incursion following 1878, but perhaps a more important development that affected the content of Ottoman polemics was Hamidian press censorship laws. Much scholarship has been written on the

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autocratic nature of these security measures and their strictness. However, as other studies and the last chapter have shown, these developments did not begin with the Hamidian era. They began in the late Tanzimat era but became more institutionalized and far-reaching from 1878 onward. From the state perspective, censorship was not a reversion back to pre-Tanzimat authoritarianism, but rather a form of power consolidation and social disciplining for the modern state. It was a modern means of cementing loyalty to the Empire and curtailing opposition. Here I endeavor to analyze self-understandings of religion within this state climate, which consciously rallied Islamic identity while also importing aspects of Western governance.[11]

To examine these questions I will present the background of the polemicists, their intellectual formation, and reasons for writing. The contents of their polemics will be presented, along with their narrative strategies and reception in society. I then move to the aftermath of these debates, relying on private correspondence to determine whether the authors thought they influenced the readership. Of particular interest are author opinions of what constituted "orthodox" faith when religion became increasingly politicized.

Ahmet Midhat's Role in Ottoman Journalism

Ahmet Midhat is the most prominent and prolific Ottoman author of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between 1875 and 1910 he wrote more than 250 works. They include novels; plays; a memoir; travelogues; histories, philosophies;

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[11] Merih Erol, "Surveillance, urban governance and legitimacy in late Ottoman Istanbul," 708-709; F. Demirel, *II. Abdülhamid Döneminde Sansür* [Censorship during the Reign of Abdülhamid II] (Istanbul, 2007), 15. C. Kırlı, 'Surveillance and constituting the public in the Ottoman empire', in *Publics, Politics and Participation: Locating the Public Sphere in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York, 2009), 282–305.

translations of French books; and works of psychology, sociology, economics, and military science. He was the editor of the literary journal *Servet-i fünûn* (1896–1901; "The Wealth of Knowledge") and the leader of a literary circle that bore the same name. He was well-travelled, having visited France frequently in his youth, then working for Ahmet Midhat Pasha as a newspaper editor in the province of Danube *(Tuna*) in 1868 and Baghdad in 1869.

Ahmet Midhat gained his journalism experience while the Turkish-language printing and publishing industry was still in its infancy. He wrote for *Cerîde-i Havâdis*, the first non-official Turkish journal. It was founded by an Englishman in Istanbul in 1840. Ahmet Midhat worked alongside other future Ottoman luminaries such as Şair Ali, Münif Pasha and Ebüzziya Tevfik. *Cerîde-i Havâdis* played a significant role in the development of Turkish literature. It introduced readers to Western literary and nonliterary writings through translations from French. Its supplement *Rûznâme-i Cerîde-i Havâdis* was among the first to offer a serialized Turkish translation of European literature, which was an abridged version of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* in 1862. It also began the process of adapting Ottoman Turkish to modern terminology and more succinct expression as favored in European journals, a revolutionary process at a time when the language was still produced in a classical form mostly inaccessible to the non-elite.[12]

Ahmet Midhat's journalism experience also provided him the opportunity to

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[12]   Kendall, "Journals in Alexandria and Istanbul at the End of the Nineteenth Century," 331-332. Şinasi made a similar appeal in his opening editorial for the *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*. He proposed a purification of the Turkish language and eliminating excessive elements from the Arabic and Persian to create a simpler idiom that would be understood by the majority of the population. A written language more similar to the vernacular would promote reform in society. *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*, June 27, 1862. Hülya Yıldız, *Literature as Public Sphere: Gender and Sexuality in Ottoman Turkish Novels and Journals* (PhD Dissertation: University of Texas, 2008), 54.

obtain an informal education in classical Islamic history and theology. In 1869 he left his

position as the head column writer of *Tuna* and joined Midhat Pasha's entourage to

Baghdad, where he was appointed to publish a local newspaper. Here he came in contact

with Muhammed Feyzi ez-Zühafi, the former mufti of Baghdad, and Muhammed Bakır

Can Muattar, an eccentric dervish who had converted from Shi'ism to Protestantism while

in India through his contact with British missionaries before returning to Islam. He even

studied Judaism and Zoroastrianism. Muattar was a "walking library" *(ayaklı kütüphane)*

and provided Ahmet Midhat with numerous volumes on Islamic theology. He advised

him to read the Old and New Testaments to understand the Qur'an more fully. It is

perhaps here that Ahmet Midhat acquired his knowledge of Christianity, which aided him

a decade later when he undertook to write his anti-Christian polemics.[13]

Back in Istanbul, Ahmet Midhat was deeply influenced by Young Ottoman

intellectuals, particularly Namik Kemal for his knowledge of European civilization and

his critique of Grand Viziers Âli and Fuad Pasha for their co-option of Western

civilization without bothering to incorporate it into an Ottoman framework. Ahmet

Midhat was of a far more moderate disposition than these intellectuals and preferred a

slower, evolutionary reform movement in the Empire through the education and

enlightenment of the public rather than a revolution. Unlike other Young Ottoman

authors, who believed in an Islamic-Western intellectual synthesis and thought the ulema

as little more than roadblocks to progress, to him they were elements of social stability

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[13]   Orhan Okay, "Teşebbüse Sarfedilmiş Bir Hayatın Hikayesi," *Kitaplık: Vesikalık Ahmet Midhat Özel Sayısı*. 54 (2002), 132. See also, Fatma Betül Cihan, "The Image of Western Women in Ahmet Midhat's Discourse on Westernization" (Boğaziçi University: YÖK Unpublished Thesis, 2006), 43.

and order.[14] He pursued such reform efforts in the scientific magazine *Dağarcık* (The Pouch), which presented scientific discussion in a simple language but connected this information to the Qur'an and hadiths in order to combat materialist scientism.[15] Ironically, these articles caused him to run afoul with the ulema and local authorities. Certain officials, including Harputî İshak, considered his articles to be heretical, particularly in his attempts to combine Islamic thought with the writings of French naturalist Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (d. 1829), a proponent of the idea that evolution occurred in accordance with natural laws.[16] Whatever the influence that each of these articles had in his falling out with Ottoman officials, they most likely led to Ahmet Midhat's expulsion from Istanbul in the following month. In 1873 he was exiled to Rhodes for 38 months along with Ebüzziya Tevfik. He was convicted for his "harmful publication" (*muzır neşriyat*), owing to his association with Namik Kemal.[17]

Following his return to Istanbul, Ahmet Midhat resumed publishing. He abandoned any hint of political journalism that did not conform to the government's official line. A new stage of his career began, and he entered a highly prolific stage of his life in which he produced his hundreds of books, articles, plays, and tracts. The most memorable among them including *Üss-i İnkılab* (Base of Reform, 1878), *Avrupa'da bir*

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[14] *Menfâ* (Exile). *Sürgün Hatıraları,* 1876, ed. Handan İnci (Istanbul: Arma Yayınları, 2002), 50. Kemal Karpat, "Studies on Turkish Politics and Societies: Selected Articles and Essays," (Lieden: Brill, 2004), 420. For an analysis of Ahmet Midhat's life and works see Mustafa Baydar's *Ahmed Midhat Efendi: Hayatı, Sanatı, Eserleri* (Istanbul: Varlık Yayınları, 1954); Sabri Koz, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nin Eserleri" *Kitaplık* 54, (July/Auguast 2002):160-173; Carter Vaughn Findley, "An Ottoman Occidentalist in Europe: Ahmed Midhat Meets Madame Gulnar, 1889," *The American Historical Review* 103, No. 1 (Feb. 1998): 15-49; Nükhet Esen, *Karı Koca Masalı ve Ahmet Midhat Bibliyografyası* (Istanbul: Kaf Yayınları, 1999); and Orhan Okay, *Batı Medeniyeti Karşısında Ahmet Midhat Efendi* (Istanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2008).

[15] Cihan, 53.

[16] Ahmet Midhat, *Menfâ*, 175.

[17] *Menfâ*, 78.

Cevelan (A Tour in Europe, 1889), and *Jön Türk* (Young Turk) in 1908. He praises European civilization in these writings but is always quick to note the Ottoman Empire's moral superiority.

Due to state imposition of stronger press censorship laws during the Hamidian period, print journalism in Istanbul took on a more purely cultural form. The two most prominent among these journals was Ebüzziya Tevfik's *Memcû'a'-i Ebü'z-ziya* (1880-1887, 1894-1912) and Ahmet Midhat's *Tercümân-i Hakîkat*, which began in 1878. Ahmet Midhat made important contributions to forming a larger reading public in Istanbul and beyond, and influencing reforms in Ottoman education. The language was easily accessible through his clear writing style, and the topics covered were comprehensive in scope.[18] It is therefore ironic that he came to such loggerheads with Henry O. Dwight, who in his capacity as head of the ABCFM's Istanbul station and director of the Bible House oversaw the printing of thousands of books annually and likely had similar educational aims as Ahmet Midhat.

Ahmet Midhat targeted Protestant missionaries, but he did so though serialized articles that appeared in Ottoman journals. His polemics different from the classical polemical form and did not use Islamic theology as the primary vehicle for criticism of Christianity, nor did he extensively quote from Islamic authoritative sources. Rather, he argued almost exclusively from the standpoint of civilizational discourse, preferring Edward Gibbon or Cesare Cantù's nineteenth-century Enlightenment-obsessed universal history over classical Islamic chroniclers.

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[18]   Ibid., 340-341.

Ahmet Midhat's use of the journal to spread his polemics corresponded with the status of the journal as the primary reading matter for Ottoman intellectuals. Unlike in Europe, in which the book had nearly two centuries to take root through the establishment of printing presses, publishing houses, and distribution networks, the journal was the primary means through which Turkish-language ideas were transmitted. Many Ottoman books, including Ahmet Midhat's book-length polemics against Christianity, were initially a collection of serialized articles published in journals. By the end of the nineteenth century, journals were an important forum by which political, social, and cultural ideas could act as a mirror and catalyst for change.[19]

Parallel to this growth of Ottoman Turkish journals was the continued growth of missionary publishing. By the late 1870s the ABCFM printed millions of pages per year. The ABCFM still preferred books in Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, and Bulgarian, with Ottoman Turkish taking a small but growing role. According to the 1879 Report of the ABCFM's Ottoman Publication Department, they printed twenty eight Armenian publications and thousands of copies of each, including the weekly newspaper *Avedaper*[20]; twenty three works in Armeno-Turkish totaling four million pages; and

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[19]   Kendall, 341-342. While literacy rates were still quite low in Istanbul in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, journal production by such men as Ahmet Midhat and Ibrahim Şinasi did much to create the sense of an educated elite with a sense of cultural and literary responsibility. They wrote in a simplified Turkish style in order to diffuse their ideas in a larger cross-section of the public. It exposed their reading audience to Western writers and thinkers and helped develop a literary culture.

[20]   *The Jubilee of the Avedaper*. Joseph K. Greene (Istanbul: Feb. 3, 1905), Archives of the American Board, Ankara. *Avedaper*, which means "Bringer of Good News" in Armenian was the weekly religious newspaper published in Armenian from 1855 and Armeno-Turkish in 1860 by the American Board in Istanbul. It was also printed in Karamanlidika (Greco-Turkish) from 1872, under the name *Angeliaforos.* A companion publication to this paper was the monnthy illustrated paper in Armenian called *The Child's Avedaper*. By 1905 there were over 3,000 paying subscribers to the newspaper, which cost $1.25 per year. Each issue was 16 pages, except for the 24-page first issue of each month, and made up of three departments: religious, educational and family – such as health information for children, and a summary of domestic and foreign news, always within the boundaries allowed by

eleven works in Greco-Turkish totaling nearly two million pages. The report does not

give a page total of Ottoman Turkish works.[21] A report from three years earlier only

mentioned the Redhouse dictionary among its publications. In that year one thousand

copies of the 848-page lexicon were printed, totaling nearly a million pages, or slightly

more than 10 percent of its total output that year.[22]

Christian and Muslim print publications now flooded the Empire, but Ahmet

Midhat still stood out. His political and religious opinions had a dual character. He

supported traditionalism in the forms of the religious establishment and Abdülhamit's

authoritarian regime. He supported reform in the forms of Enlightenment-inspired

religious thought and constitutionalism. With these unique opinions and his publishing

influence, it is little surprise that Ahmet Midhat produced such an influential religious

polemic. This chapter will now examine his famous work, *Müdâfa'a*, and describe its

influence on the Ottoman print sphere.

Müdâfa'a

Ahmed Midhat published *Müdâfa'a* as a series of articles that later became a

stand-alone book in 1883, a landmark treatise that received attention throughout the

Turkish-speaking parts of the Empire. Its fame spread even beyond Ottoman domains,

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government censors. They often included overviews of Protestant education institutions in the Ottoman Empire, short excerpts of sermons, and reports on the progress of the 128 evangelical churches in the American Board's Western, Eastern, and Central Turkey Missions. Armenian pastors of these churches frequently wrote as guest columnists. It also included geographical news of interest, such as the 1903 British expedition to Tibet.

[21] *Report of the Publication Department of the Mission to Western Turkey for 1879: Tabular View of the Printing During the Year.* Edwin Bliss (Istanbul: May 18, 1880), Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

[22] *Report of the Publication Department of the Mission to Western Turkey for 1876.* Edwin Bliss (Istanbul, April 17, 1877), Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

particularly among Muslim Tatars who did not have access to anti-Christian polemics due to Russian press censorship laws. *Müdâfa'a* has been mostly neglected by scholars despite the rest of Ahmet Midhat's oeuvre receiving considerable attention from Ottoman literary and intellectual historians. Perhaps his non-literary efforts have been ignored due to the view that he was an obsequious defender of Abdülhamit II and his policies.[23] Whatever the reasons, his polemical writings occupy an important place within his corpus, and the neglect of historians today does not reflect the importance Ahmet Midhat attached to them.

Ahmet Midhat states in the opening lines that the purpose of *Müdâfa'a* is to write against those who are inviting the people of Islam to Christianity (*Ehl-i İslamî nasrâniyyete dâvet edenlere karşı kaleme alınmıştır*).[24] He desires to educate Muslims on their own religious values along with those of Christians in the face of a wave of Protestant missionary literature flooding the Ottoman Empire.[25] While Ottoman Christians are within their rights to practice the tenets of their religion, missionaries to the Ottoman

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[23] Abdülhamit Kirmizi, "Authoritarianism and Constitutionalism Combined: Ahmed Midhat Efendi Between the Sultan and the *Kanun-i Esasi*," in *The First Ottoman Experiment in Democracy,* eds. Christoph Herzog and Malek Sharif (Wurzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2010), 61. Ahmed Midhat Efendi was the director of the *Matbaa-i Amire* and sent by Abdülhamit II to international events in Stockholm and Paris. He was an autocratic loyalist who believed in "legal autocracy" in which the government problems emanated from corrupt bureaucrats who obstructed ruler's true intentions. Although he was the most popular Ottoman novelist and encyclopedist of the nineteenth century, this support of Hamidian political policy has made Ahmet Midhat a somewhat disliked figure Turkish historiography, particularly before 1980s, the heyday of Kemalist-influenced Ottoman historiography.

[24] Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Müdâfa'a*, 1.

[25] Ibid., 7-8. *Fazâ'il-i İslâmiye'yı be-hakk takdîr eylemiş olan ehl-i imânın her halde misyonerler tarafından edilen neşrıyâta nazar-ı nefretle bakacaklardı der-kâr ise de misyonerlerin İslâm üzerine rüchânını iddia eyledikleri nasrâniyetin mâhiyeti neden 'ibaret olduğunu görecek olsalar o misillü erbâb-ı imânın kendi dînlerine olan muhabbetleri bir kat daha artacağına şüphe edilemez. Şâyed faza'il-i dîniyesini be-hakk öğrenememiş olanlar bulunup da misyonerlerin neşriyât-ı gâfil-i ferîbânelerine kapılmak vartasına takarrub ederler ise bunların dahi mâhiyet-i nasrâniyeti meyilleri bi'l-âhare kendi fazâ'il-i dîniyelerini de öğrenmeğe vesîle olacağından her halde onları da ırşâde lüzum vardır.*

Empire have overstepped their bounds by distributing works that falsely attack Islam.

Such criticisms against the dominant religion of the state and criticisms against the

Ottoman Empire itself are unlawful because it secured the protection for its subjects'

"religion, property, and honor" (*din, mal, ve ırz*).[26] It was only through the Empire's

benevolence that the incendiary literature has not been prohibited. Nevertheless, the

attacks against the religion of Islam are so violent that "anyone other than us would make

haste to prohibit this abuse of permission in the face of this audacity."[27]

Ahmet Midhat references several volumes of philosophy, history, and theology

that were either written originally in French or translated into French from other

European languages. These works inform his rhetoric, written in a vein fashionable at the

time of nineteenth-century Enlightenment progressivism, which is dismissive of the

European medieval past, the Catholic Church, and the mutual incompatibility of science

and Christianity. He quotes Enlightenment scholarship such as Voltaire's "Dictionnaire

philosophique" and Edward Gibbon's "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman

Empire."[28] Through these writers he chronicles centuries of Christian European violence

committed by the Byzantine Empire, the Carolingians, and the Lombards. In all these

matters Christianity is the fundamental inhibitor of intellectual and social progress. Islam,

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[26] Property was an important discourse on the notion of honor in the Ottoman context back into at least the eighteenth century. See Başak Tuğ, "Gendered Subjects in Ottoman Constitutional Agreements, ca. 1740-1860," *European Journal of Turkish Studies* 18 (2014). URL: http://ejts.revues.org/4860.

[27] *Müdâfa'a,* 5-10. *Ancak Nasârâ işbu müsa'ade-i şer'iye ve kanûniyemizden istifadeyi sû-i isti'mâl derecesine vardırmışdır. Dîn-i İslâm 'aleyhine neşr eyledikleri kitaplarda, îrâd etdikleri makâlelerde ta'aruz meydânları açarak o kadar şiddetli hücûmlar gösteriyorlar ki bizden başka her kimler olsa bunların şu cür'etleri önüne set çekmeğe ve müsa'adeden bu sû-i istimâli men' eylemeğe müsara'ât gösterir.*

[28] Johann Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa:* Une controverse islamochrétienne dans la presse d´Istanbul (1883)," in *Querelles privées et contestations publiques. Le rôle de la presse dans la formation de l´opinion publique au Proche Orient, textes réunies et publiés* par Christoph Herzog, Raoul Motika et Michael Ursinus, (Istanbul, 2003), 82.

in contrast, does not impose an obstacle to progress or scientific advancement.[29]

Ahmet Midhat mentions the *Food for Reflections* in the introduction to *Müdâfa'a* and rebuts Koelle's claim that Christianity was spread by peaceful means and Islam violent ones. Whether it is a direct argument against Koelle or more generally against European Orientalist scholars who wrote on Muhammed's violent career as a prophet, the topic looms large in Ahmet Midhat's mind. He responds by spending a considerable amount of space within *Müdâfa'a* describing violence committed by Christian kings from the fourth century through the Renaissance and up to the nineteenth century. He describes this history as a rebuttal not only against Koelle and other European scholars but also a charge of hypocrisy against Christendom. Christians were less justified in their war-making than Muslims. The use of the sword in Islam is substantiated on account of holy war and used to battle the enemies of God, while the sword in Christianity is only used for political reasons and naked power grabs:

> Even if [Christians] deny that they smeared Christianity's innocent face with blood, history cannot deny it. We have established these facts, which show the strength of the sword of Constantine and how he used it against pagans. This contradicts those priests who claim that Christianity, not Islam, was spread only with the strength of the word, not with the power of the sword.[30]

Ahmet Midhat agrees with his Protestant interlocutors that the seed for the corruption of the church was planted in the time of Constantine, when Christianity wed with imperial power, but he states it reached full bloom centuries later in the establishment of the Carolingian Empire, not the medieval Roman Catholic Church. In

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[29] Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele ve Mukabele'ye Müdâfa'a*, 507.

[30] *Müdâfa'a*, 314-315. Hıristiyanlık *çehre-i ma'sûmuna kan lekeleri sürmüş olduğu kim inkâr etse tarih inkâr edemez. Bu aralık şu ma'lûmât-i mucmeleyi buraya sıkıştırmaklığımız Hıristiyanlığın öyle İslâm gibi kılıç kuvvetiyle teessüs edilmemiş ve belki yalnız kelam kuvvetiyle te'sîs olunmuş idi yani da'va eden papaslara karşu Konstantin'in kılıcında olan kuvveti putperestler 'aleyhinde nasıl sarf eylediğini gösterdikten sonra birde kendi kendilerine ne sûretle kılıç etmiş olduklarının dahî bir nümûneciğini göstermek içindir.*

the seventh and eighth centuries the papacy came under the political domination of the

Lombard dukes of northern and central Italy, along with the nobles of Rome. The papacy

sought relief from the powerful Frankish kingdom in the north, which had displaced the

Merovingians in France. Prior to rescuing the papacy, the Carolingian dynasty built a

church structure that opposed the papal line of Saint Peter by claiming themselves to be

the descendants of David and the true kings of Israel. With such an illustrious pedigree,

Pepin the Short (d. 768) claimed to hold both a religious and political office via his

emperorship, thus perfecting the imperial nature of Constantine's Roman papacy and

killing the church of Saint Peter. Ahmet Midhat, quoting from the eighth volume of

Cantù's *Universal History*, insults the church's use of spurious claims to authority in order

to substantiate its claims to speak on behalf of Christ:

> What do you say? … Even a zealous Christian like Cantù in this case takes Pepin into
> consideration as being the protector of the church of Christianity! [But]the original church and the
> gospels considered the protector to be the Messiah. [31]

Ahmed Midhat's criticism of the church's use of military force to substantiate its

rule raises questions as to the intended audience for this polemic. While he states in the

introduction that *Müdâfa'a* was written for the benefit of Muslims, such arguments would

likely not resonate with any but the most Europhilic, cosmopolitan of his readers.

Criticizing Christianity for merging religious and military authority is a valid

Enlightenment argument for a Western audience critical of the papacy's military and

political excesses. Such an argument would not resonate as well, however, with his

Muslim readership. Islam was established through Muhammed's military leadership and

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[31]   *Müdâfa'a, 380-385. Ne dersiniz? Katu gibi gayretli bir Hıristiyan bile bu halde Pepin Hıristiyanlık
       kilisesinin hâmîsı olduğunu kâle alıyor! Evvel kilisenin ki hâmîsi Mesih olduğunu İnciller va'd ediyor.*

the Râshidûn Caliphate's victories against the Persian and Byzantine Empires. He

addresses this matter by briefly providing a discourse on the lawful forms of Islamic

conquests as compared to the unlawful actions of the medieval papacy. This is one of

Müdâfa'a's few excursions into Islamic theology.

> Yes, Islam has an army because jihad is incumbent (*farz*) for us. However, it is not only in this [subject] alone that we do not accept any falsity. We will not do anything that is not in our religion. In fact, if there is such a thing, we do not distort or change it with false interpretations. We specifically condemn here in Christianity that they claim their religion is not an earthly one but a heavenly and spiritual one [even though] the apostolic see achieves its victories with executioners, prisons, and armies. This does not appear to be a supernatural thing.[32]

Ahmet Midhat argues that Christianity was dedicated to military conquest but did

so through exploitation of those they conquered. It projected its intolerance onto the

Muslim world, in contrast to the rise of Islam, in which under the pact of Omar Christians

secured freedom from Muslim interference in religion. Here Ahmed Midhat talks of the

Crusades, making use of recent scholarship that accounts the atrocities that Christian

knights afflicted on Muslims in the Holy Land. As the Crusaders traveled through

Istanbul and Anatolia, they were not content with merely killing the Muslims they

encountered on the way to Jerusalem. Through Ahmet Midhat's usage of such sources as

Müfredât-ı Tevârîh-i Husûsiye and other Enlightenment writers, he repeats the claim

among European historians that the Crusaders drank the blood of Muslims and ate their

flesh out of revenge for their predecesors' conquest of Jerusalem in 637.[33] Quoting Cantù,

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[32] Ibid., 389-390. *Evet! İslâm'ın da bir ordusu vardı. Cihad bize farzdır. Lâkin biz yalnız yalancılığı kabul edememekteyiz, dînimizde olmayan bir şey yapmayız. Olanı ise te'vîlât-ı kâzibe ile tâhrîf ve tebdîl etmeyiz. Hıristiyanlık içün 'ayb gördüğümüz şey hem kendi dînleri dünyevî olmayıp semâvî ve uhrevî olduğunu da'vâ etmek hemde papalık makâmının hapishâneler cellâdlar ordular!... te'sîsini muvâfık diyânet olmak üzere göstermek istemektir.*

[33] Ibid., 471-472. *Tevârîhin bi'l-ittifak haber verdikleri üzere yolda rast gösterdikleri müslümanları yalnız öldürmek ve kanını içmek sûretiyle teşeffi edemeyerek hatta etlerini dahî yerler idi!* The accusation of the crusaders cannibalizing their conquered foes is based on the historical event of the Siege of Ma'arra in 1098. Following its conquest, the crusaders were short of supplies as December progressed. The

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he notes that they burned the property of Muslims and Jews and slit their throats, all of which is "utter hypocrisy" in regards to the teachings of Christ: "The prudent person thinks, 'I wonder what Jesus would say if he saw the priests making innocent blood drip from windows.'"[34]

These episodes are used to demonstrate the contrast between Christian rule over Muslims and Muslim rule over Christians. Christian military victory displaced a peaceful, benevolent Islamic state with an intolerant Christian principality that repressed other forms of religious expression. Ahmet Midhat writes that in al-Anadulus, various histories have shown that all people lived in perfect felicity (*sa'âdet)* under Muslim rule. Then the Reconquiesta commenced and darkness fell. He quotes Ziya Pasha's Andalusian history, which will be examined in more detail later in this chapter, that describe how the Knights Templar and the Spanish Inquisition savagely repressed Islam.[35]

Along with physical repression came intellectual repression. Christian European monarchs restricted book production, literacy, and any form of non-theological instruction. Here is one of the primary motifs of *Müdâfa'a,* that Christianity had an antagonistic relationship with education and scientific advancement. This argument can also be seen as an answer to Koelle, who argued the strictures of the Islamic religion kept

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crusader leadership was bogged down in political infighting and distracting from providing adequate resources for the knights and foot soldiers. As a result, some of the starving crusaders at Ma'arra reportedly resorted to cannibalism of the dead bodies of Muslims. Edward Peters, *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), 84.

[34] Ibid., 477-478.

[35] Ibid., 488. "Muslims in this land in no way attacked the national and religious rights of the Spanish. Muslims committed their lives and struggles to establish their material and spiritual peace." *Bu millet-i mübâreke İspanyolların hiç bir gûne hukûk-i milliye ve dîniyelerine ta'âruz etmekten mâ'ada ikmâl-i sa'âdet-i maddiye ve ma'neviyeleri yolda 'ömürlerini bezl eyledikleri...*

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Muslims from the path of knowledge and science, putting them in a perpetual state of ignorance. To this Ahmet Midhat writes that powerful rulers emerged after 1000 C.E. who were under the patronage of the pope and spread the autocratic policies of the church. They repressed their subjects and restricted education to theological training or knowledge officially sanctioned by the church. Any dissenters were immediately executed – burned in blazing fires so massive that nobody could even make out their sounds – because literacy and education were a threat to these rulers. Even if there were monarchs that ruled with justice and compassion and were were not under the patronage of the pope, they were excommunicated, a sufficient reason for that ruler's subjects to rise up against them.[36]

> There is no doubt that the church's ability to commit actions that were this terrible was fundamentally rooted in the public's ignorance. Christians were forbidden to read books other than the gospels or writings concerning Christian warriors written by church historians. Additionally, those who did such things faced the threat of being burned alive in fire. No permission was given to promulgate knowledge that would result in the expansion of conscience. As a result, the people could find no way out of the darkness of ignorance and into the light of the illumination of knowledge.[37]

For all the attention Ahmet Midhat gives to the atrocities committed by the medieval church and its client states, he saves the harshest words for Protestantism. While acknowledging that Luther's reformation was a necessary step for Christianity, its origins were based on disobedience, with monks and nuns who had previously committed themselves to celibacy but married *en masse*, rejecting this oath along with renouncing Roman Catholicism. Whatever its positive merits, the Reformation unleashed massive

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[36] *Müdâfa'a*, 517.

[37] Ibid. *Kilisenin bu kadar kuvveti evvel emirde halkın cehalet-i tâmmesinden neş'et eylediğine şüphe yoktur. Zâten Hıristiyanlık'ta İncillerden ve kilise müelliflerinin mahâmid-i Nasrâniye'ye dâir yazdıkları kitablardan mâ'ada kitap okumak harâm ve hem de mürtekibleri ateşlere yakılacağı tehdidiyle harâm olduğundan Hıristiyanlarda vicdâna vüs'at verecek 'adetâ hiç bir ilmin intişâr... yine meydan verilmez idi ki halk zulmet-i cehaletinden nûr-u hidâyete yol bulabilsinler...*

inter-confessional violence on the European continent in the 30 Years War. The inherent

violence of Protestantism echoed down to the nineteenth century in the form of European

colonial exploitation of Muslim lands and missionary attacks on Islam.[38]

Ahmet Midhat argues that Protestantism's bloodthirsty nature owes to its lack of

an ecclesial authority structure to maintain order among its adherents, even though he

spent the previous three hundred pages criticizing the papacy's authoritarian nature. The

contradiction does not dawn on Ahmet Midhat, who quickly moves to an examination of

denominational battles that erupted within Protestantism shortly after its break from the

Roman Catholic Church. It fractured into different theological and confessional tribes

after its split from Rome. Luther believed the Eucharist to transubstantiate into the literal

flesh and blood of Christ, but others believed it to be the symbolic elements of his body.

Through Protestantism's divisions, theological arguments quickly fell into violence and

even warfare. Much blood was shed in its establishment, even more than the history of

Catholicism.[39]

Ahmet Midhat gives considerable space to the Jesuits in *Müdâfa'a*, although not

to describe their exploits in Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. He

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[38] Ibid., 543-547.

[39] Ibid*.,* 556-558. *Görüyorsunuz ki Protestanlık dahî ne kadar büyük cehâlet ne yaman ta'assup üzerine kurulmuş? Biz onun mâhiyetini dahî fıkıh ve fera'iz-i Hıristiyânıye'yi muhâkeme edecek olan maksadda muvâzane edeceğiz. Şimdilik şu kadarcık diyelim ki Protestanlık Hıristiyanlıktan gâyet en kaba ve çocukların bile görüp gülecekleri ma'yebi bir gaşye-i inkâr ve te'vil ile setr edebildi. Yoksa biraz ta'mîk-i nazar edilince buraya kadar vermiş olduğumuz ma'lûmât üzerine Hıristiyanlığın anlaşılabilecek olan rezâil-i kemâlile ve tamamıyla Protestanlarda dahî vardır. Zira defâ'âtle demiş olduğumuz vechile çürük esas üzerine sağlam binâ kurulmaz. Bir takım yalanların nâsıl cemi' dahî ne kadar te'vil edilecek olsa yine yalana müsâvi olur biraz da bu mezheb-i cedîd da'vasıyla dökülen kanlara bir nazar-i nefret fırlatalim. Zaten Hıristiyanlıkta hangi bina vardır ki çamuru kanla yoğrulmamış olsun? Mezheb-i cedîdîn nev'man Katolik mezhebinden ehveniyetini halk bir türlü inkâr ederemeyerek ba-husûs Katolik mezhebinde İncilin hilâfına olan bid'atleri dahî Katolik papasları muda'afa edemeyince Protestanlara galebeyi hîle ve hud'a ve mel'anette bulacaklarını derk etmişler ve ba'demâ bu yolda dâmen-i himmeti der-meyan eylemiştir.*

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describes their spread into the Levant during the Counter Reformation and their attempts to convert Ottoman Christians to Catholicism. In recent years, he notes, France has exerted considerable influence on Ottoman Catholics due to their private schools that were established in the Empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Their global construction of schools was not a benevolent project, but part of a long-term strategy to manipulate foreign governments by entering and infiltrating all the palaces in Europe under the guise of medical and educational missions. While their influence has abated in Europe due to Bismarck's expulsion of them from Germany, they still hold sway in China and Egypt.[40]

Ahmed Midhat discusses their effect on the Ottoman Empire and their influence on native Christian subjects. Much like Harputî İshak, he strikes a paternalistic chord when writing on the Jesuit proselytization efforts among Apostolic Armenians. To him they are the most loyal of non-Muslim subjects in the Empire and made significant contributions to Ottoman culture. They deserve protection from Jesuits who would try to convert them to Catholicism or American missionaries to Protestantism. The Jesuit mission to the Armenians was not merely an intra-Christian matter with no external

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[40] The Jesuit Society established itself in the Ottoman Empire prior to the 1622 establishment of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith (Propaganda Fide), which was created to coordinate Catholic missionary activity in the counter-Reformation. Through this program numerous Catholic orders, particularly the Jesuits, worked in the Ottoman provinces and established numerous schools. It experienced a brief decline in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries during its suspension by the papacy in 1773 and during the Napoleonic Wars. It was restored in 1814 and throughout the century came to compete with Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, particularly in the education arena. From the 1850s onward it established numerous schools that included instruction in the sciences and fine arts. They were particularly in high demand for their French language instruction. *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire: Missionary Schools,* ed. Gábor Ágoston, Bruce Masters (New York: Facts on File Publishing, 2008), 386. See Paul Shore, *Jesuits and the Politics of Religious Plurarlism in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2007); Charles Frazee, *Catholics and Sultans: The Church and the Ottoman Empire, 1453-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

repercussions. It was an insidious plot to undermine the empire and transform loyal

Ottoman subject populations into enemies. Armenian Catholics are already divided into

two groups torn apart by internal strife. The first is a Latinizing faction that desired direct

control by the Vatican; the second is a nationalistic faction that wanted stronger

autonomy. Ahmet Midhat and contemporary Ottoman historians referred to it as the anti-

Hasunist movement, named after Cardinal Anton Hasunean, or Hasun (d. 1884).

> When one examines the most recent periods in Ottoman history, the extent to which we have been
> plagued by trouble can be seen, particularly through the Jesuits' seducing the Armenians as well as
> the degree to which blood has been spilt. Ultimately, by splitting the nation through false ideas into
> two groups called the Hasunists and the anti-Hasunists, they have occupied many states.
> Significant deftness is seen [by the Jesuits] in these matters.[41]

In the final paragraphs of *Müdâfa'a*, Ahmet Midhat reflects on the state of

Christian-Muslim relations in the Empire and around the world. He laments the lack of

Muslim polemics responding to Protestant missionary challenges. This is all the more

unfortunate due to the great intellectual legacy of Islam. Christians would boast if they

had in their possession the same wisdom and philosophical truth as Islam, he writes, but

Christians are in an inferior position. They are the pupils while Islam is the teacher.

Christians may believe their religion to be superior due to the material superiority of

modern Western civilization. They are not only mistaken but ignorant of the classical

Islamic theologians and philosophers that make the Islamic intellectual traditional

unquestionably superior. Even if Muslims lag behind in areas of trade, industry and

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[41] See Kevork Bardakjian's *A Reference Guide to Modern Armenian Literature, 1500-1920: With an Introductory History* (Detroit: Wayne State University Presss, 2000), 124-125. *Müdâfa'a, 587-588. Osmanlı târihinin kısm-ı âhiri mütâla'a edilse işbu Cizvitlerin Ermenileri ne kadar iğfâl eyledikleri ve o yüzden ne kadar belâlar zuhûr edip ortada ne kadar kanlar dahî döküldüğü görülür. En sonra Hasunist/anti-Hasunist diye milleti iki kısım mütezâde taksim ve bir çok bâtıl da'vâlarla tür[lü] devleti işgal etmek husûslarında dahî bunların büyük mahâreti görülmüştur.*

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politics, modern science could have only developed due to the works of Ibn Sina, Al

Rashid, and al-Razi. Therefore, Christian civilization should not think itself rich and

Islamic civilization poor:

> You will be ashamed when you see our treasures pour forth. Why do you bring forth these
> indignities? Have we attacked your lies and superstitions? We say, 'your religion is yours, mine is
> mine.' Christians perceive such words as an indication of hopelessness and weakness. For us, it is
> necessary to issue a completely true reply to them. In this response we put forward their religion's
> establishment and promulgation. All will laugh when their foolishness becomes apparent.[42]

Ahmet Midhat believed his polemic would check the spread of Christianity in the

Middle East. It would reveal Islam's superior intellectual legacy and silence critics who

confused the West's technological superiority with Christianity's religious truth. His goal,

however, is undercut by his choice of sources. If the purpose of *Müdâfa'a* is to present

Western scholarship as inferior to Islam's intellectual history, Ahmet Midhat runs the risk

of disproving his own point with his dependence on European scholarship.

Sources of *Müdâfa'a*

Müdâfa'a is extensively sourced with European history, philosophy, theology, and

literature. The source to which Ahmet Midhat makes the most frequent reference is the

Storia universale ("Universal History"). It is the magnum opus of Cesare Cantù (d.

1895), a Milanese literary figure, political activist, and historian. He wrote the 35-volume

work in a six-year period and published it between 1838 and 1846 to great acclaim,

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[42] *Müdâfa'a,* 619-620. *Cebinizde dört buçuk şey görmekle kendînizi zengin ve İslâmı fakir zannediyor
iseniz kenz-i hazâin açıldığı zaman zûğûrt kaldığınızı görür mahçûb olursunuz. Bu rezâletlere sebebiyet
göstermekte ma'nâ ne der? "Biz sizin ona zib ta'arruz ediyor muyuz? (Leküm dînüküm ve liye dîn)
[Kafirun 104/7] diyorsunuz" denildiği cihetle Nasârâ şu sözleri bi 'acız me'yûsânîye haml ederek yine
bildiklerinden geri kalmadan binâen aleyh bunlara bi hakk bir mukâbeleye lüzum ... yinerek
mukâbelenin birinci tabakası olmak üzere dînlerinin sûret te'sîs ve intişâr yan gösterdik İslâmda
bunlara yakîn bir hal görülmüş ise ona ortaya koymalıdır. Herkesi güldürecek olan zevzeklikleri ile
vakit geçirilmemelidir.*

earning his publisher a fortune and financial independence for himself. The *Universal History* has gone through dozens of editions and been translated into many languages. Cantù wrote the work in a state of penury following the loss of his professorship due charges of conspiracy for his affiliation with members of the revolutionary society Young Italy. He was exiled to Piedmont and politically ostracized for supporting a federal union of the Italian states under the political protection of the Habsburg Empire and the Vatican.[43]

In the *Universal History*, Cantù traces the historical development of Christianity through its spread throughout the Roman Empire, the conversion of Constantine, the fall of the Western Roman Empire, and the growth of the medieval Catholic Church. His strong religious views and moralizing tendency colors his telling of history, which lacks critical scrutiny. For this reason, the history is seen more as popular history rather than a work of scholarship, even though it remained popular among intellectual and lay readers for decades.[44] He was a pious Catholic, strongly influenced by Romanticism, and sympathized with religious and cultural traditionalism. This can be seen in his writing of moralizing tracts such as the 1837 *Il giovinetto drizzato alla bontà, al sapere, all'industria* (The Young Man Educated to Goodness, Knowledge, and Industry). Later in his political career, Cantù challenged the views of reformist leaders. As a member of parliament from 1861 to 1867, he opposed the governing liberal class and was an

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[43] Charles Dudley Warner, *A Library of the World's Best Literature – Ancient and Modern*, *Volume VIII (45 Volumes); Calvin-Cervantes* (New York: Cosimo, 1896; reprinted 2008), 3199.

[44] A December 1892 issue of Popular Science notes that Jesuit priest Giuseppe Brunengo criticized Cantù's *Universal History* for being at variance with the doctrines of the Catholic Church, particularity for its complementary description of John Calvin and its"derogatory" descriptions of historical popes, particularly Sergius III, John X, and John XI. Prof. E.P. Evans. "Modern Instances of Demoniacal Possession" *The Popular Sciences Monthly* 42, No 10 (December 1892): 159-168.

unwavering supporter of the Catholic Church of Rome, sometimes against the interests of fellow conservatives and those of Italy.[45]

Ahmet Midhat references the *Universal History* on dozens of occasions, which he calls *Tarîh-i 'Umûmî*. It is a somewhat puzzling source for him to use. He draws on the *Universal History* to implicate Christianity and the Roman Catholic church, while Cantù uses the same information for the opposite purpose. Ahmet Midhat is aware of this apparent contradiction and acknowledges his liberal use of a historical source written by a pious Catholic. As Johann Strauss notes, he explains his reasons for doing so: His precursor Ziya Pasha (d. 1880) encountered a similar problem of quoting from European authors and absorbing Western authors into an Islamic narrative while writing his history on Al-Anadalus (*Endülus tarîhi*). Ziya Pasha arrived at a solution by quoting an author whom he believed to be the most objective, Louis Viardot (*müverrih Viyardo*), the author of the 1833 two-volume work *Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes et des mores d'Esapgne*.[46] Ahmet Midhat offers similar praise for Cantù's *Universal History* and its objective narrative:

> We have learned this way of choosing Cantù, among other historians, from the author of the *Endülus tarihi* because Cantù, although he is a jealous Christian and he boasts of religious zeal, is famous for his judgement, and judging the true as true and the false as false (even if done in a manner very delicate and metaphorical), and therefore it is acceptable by an intelligent individual.[47]

Cantù's *Universal History* provides the majority of *Müdâfa'a*'s factual raw

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45 Cassell Dictionary of Italian Literature, eds. Peter Bondanella, Julia Conway Bondanella, Jody Robin Shiffman (London: Cassell, 1996), 100.

46 Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa*, 86

47 *Müdâfa'a,* 492 *...hattâ biz dahî müverrihin-i sâire meyânında Kantü'yü Hristiyanlık gayretkeşi olmak ve asabiyet-i dîniyye ile müftehir bulunmakla beraber mücerred muhâkeme husûsunda doğruyu doğru ve yalanı yalan olmak üzere - ammâ gâyet zarîfâne ve mecazgûyâne olsun – muhâkeme etmek müştehîr ve binâen aleyh her âkıl indînde makbul olduğu için intihab etmek sûretini Endülüs Tarihi muharririnden öğrendik....*

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material, but Ahmet Midhat's theoretical narrative of history was more influenced by anti-

Catholic literature popular among Enlightenment Europeans in the nineteenth century.

Anecdotes of Christian violence and the ignorance of the Roman Catholic Church due to

its prohibition on scientific inquiry come from these books. To describe the atrocities

committed in the Crusades, Inquisition, and the European colonization of America,

Ahmet Midhat uses J.F. Michaud's renowned *l'Histoire des Croisades,* published between

1812 and 1822.[48] This work was translated to Turkish in 1871 by Ali Fuad, the son of the

Grand Vizier Fuad Pasha (d. 1869). The translation was incomplete, but it provided an

additional boost to the anti-Christian polemical project in the Ottoman Empire, and itself

inspired Namik Kemal's biography of Saladin, published in the *Evrâk-ı perişân* the same

year.[49]

    Other works that Ahmet Midhat quoted in *Müdâfa'a* included a French translation

of Alfonso de Castro's *Adverseos Omnes Haeresees Libri VIV* (Paris, 1534), an

encyclopedia of "heresies" that Spanish inquisitors charged the accused. It was translated

into French in 1712 and reprinted numerous times.[50] To describe European colonial

atrocities committed against the American Indians, Ahmet Midhat uses French

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[48] It had numerous reprints, including an illustrated version in Paris in 1877, which marked a high point of religious and national enthusiasm in France for the crusades. Giles Constanble, "The Historiography of the Crusades," in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, eds. Angeliki E. Laiou and Roy Parviz Mottahedeh, (Washington D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 2001), 9.

[49] The "History of the Crusades" was translated as *Emrü'l-acîb fî Tarih Ehli s-salîb* by the French translators and men of letters Ahmed Arıfı and Edhem Pertev, along with Ali Fuad. Namık Kemal published his biography of Saladin as the *Teracim-i ahval. Salâhaddin* in *Evrak-ı perişan,* 2nd edition, Istanbul, 1301 (1884), 36-37. See Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa,*" 66.

[50] He notes that these "crimes" were carried out and declared against Christians. *Hıristiyanlığa karşı işlenen suçlar ve bu suçları işleyen heretiklere uygulanan cazalar.* Mudafa'a, 521. For a more detailed description of this work in the context of the *Müdâfa'a,* see Hasan Özarslan's "Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nin "Müdafaa" (birinci kitap) adlı eserinin sadeleştirilmesi ve eserin dinler tarihi açısından değerlendirilmesi" (Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi Sosyal Blimler Enstitüsü: YÖK unpublished thesis, 2011), 25.

translations of Bartolomé de las Casas (d. 1566)' "History of the Indies," and "A Short

Account of the Destruction of the Indies," which were eye-witness accounts of the

Spanish conquest of the New World. A second account is a translation of the sixteenth-

century history by Antonia de Herrera y Tardesillas (d. 1625) and his *General History of

the deeds of the Castilians on the Islands and Mainland of the Ocean Sea*.[51] Other

European works quoted in the *Müdâfa'a* include Voltaire (d. 1778)'s *Dictionary of

Philosophy*, Edward Gibbon (d. 1794)'s *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman

Empir*e, published 1776-1788*;* and the 17-volume compendium of Enlightenment thought

*Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une

Société de Gens de lettres*, (*Kâmûs-u Ulûm-i Felsefiyye*), published 1751-1772.

Ahmet Midhat also saw fit to quote from reform figures within the Roman

Catholic Church. Other works of reference include those of the French cardinal and

theologian Thomas-Marie-Joseph Gousset (*Kardînâl Gose*) (d. 1866).[52] The professor of

moral theology was the author of the 1826 *Dictionnaire théologique*, of which he

published another edition in 1843 and argued that the original teachings of Christianity

were based on the law of the prophets as revealed by Adam, Abraham, and Moses. Jesus

himself confirmed the Old Testament law, which formed the cardinal virtues of

Christianity and the foundation of its moral teachings, which Ahmet Midhat takes to

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[51] *Müdâfa'a*, 604-605.

[52] Gousset was a famed dogmatic theologian, professor, and consummate caused that wrote a considerable number of important works in the early and mid-nineteenth centuries. His influence on theology in the French language is evidence by Ahmet Midhat's acquisition of his works. Among them are Conférences d'Angers (26 vols., 1823); *Doctrine de l'Église sur le prêt à intérêt* (1825); *Le Code civil commenté dans ses rapports avec la théologie morale* (1827); *Justification de la théologie du P. Liguori* (1829); and *Théologie morale a l'usage des curés et des confesseurs* (1844). Pierre Fournet, "Thomas-Marie-Joseph Gousset." The Catholic Encyclopedia, Vol. 6. (New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1909). Accessed online 25 October, 2013 at http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/06684b.htm.

mean that the original teachings of Christianity were *şeria't*. [53]

Ahmet Midhat courted the opinions of European intellectuals skeptical of dogmatic Christian faith, but such a polemical approach came with its own risks. Many of the most articulate Enlightenment philosophers and scholars who denounced Christianity also embraced agnosticism or atheism. Allying himself with such opinions would have been dangerous for Ahmet Midhat, who already had a troubled political relationship with the ulema. Anti-monotheistic arguments could also undercut Islam and expose his audience to extreme secularist thought, an unattractive proposition at a time when religious scholars battled the materialist scientism espoused by some members of the Ottoman intelligentsia. His strategy was to make use of these European writers' arguments while still warning his Muslim audience that to accept fully these philosophies would be to open up their beliefs to serious attack. Therefore Ahmet Midhat could embrace a religious figure such as Voltaire and accept his skepticism of the Catholic church, but he had to keep his atheistic admirers at arms' length.

Ahmet Midhat deliberately omits the most provocative European anti-Christian literature. He does not make use of the anticlerical literature circulating in France at the time, particularly the works by anti-Catholic writer Marie Joseph Gabriel Antoine Jogand-Pagès (d. 1907), known by his pen name as Léo Taxil. Ahmet Midhat notes that if he had truly wanted to attack Christianity in *Müdafa'a,* he could have used Taxil's *Bibliothèque Anticléricale*, a collection of anti-Catholic pamphlets. Taxil was an atheist and author of numerous anti-clerical works, such as *La Vie de Jesus,* in which he

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[53]   *Müdâfa'a*, 100-104.

sarcastically notes errors and inconsistencies in the New Testament, and the 1882 *La Bible amusante*, a tarnishing of the Old Testament. To ridicule its subject matter, the book contains approximately four thousand cartoons that contributed to its "amusante" form. He notes that the Scripture condones the actions of Abraham the "patriarch-pimp"; his wife-sister Sarah, "a common prostitute"; and Pharaoh's gratification in the company of Sarah, a "fair old lady" aged seventy-five. Ahmet Midhat says that a Muslim could not take these debased works into consideration, and they were rightly banned by the Ottoman state.[54]

Ahmet Midhat's relationship with Christianity was not wholly antagonistic. While he spared few kind words for Protestant missionaries within the Ottoman Empire, he was even less accommodating to scholars who would belittle the faith of Christians and Jews. Although his avoidance of Taxil's anti-clerical literature likely came more from fear of Hamidian censors than offending the feelings of Catholics, he showed paternalistic feelings toward Christians if it suited his argument. He praised the Apostolic Armenians as loyal subjects of the Empire, which is even more apparent in *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele,* his sequel to *Müdâfa'a*. He even showed interest in the Armenian print world of Istanbul. Ahmet Midhat is the only known Turkish Muslim author to publish his stories in the

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[54] Taxil is perhaps best known for an 1885 hoax in which he feigned conversion to Catholicism and wrote a series of outlandish pamphlets denouncing Freemasonry in the 1890s, claiming he had witnessed devil worship in their lodges. His writings were popular with Catholics. He revealed his writings and his conversion as false in an 1897 public lecture, which he said proved the anti-Masonic fanaticism among Catholics. See Cornelis Houtman, "Between Stigmatizing and Idolizing the Bible: On the Reception of Genesis 12:10-20; 20; 26:1-11" in *Tradition and Innovation in Biblical Interpretation: Studies Presented to Professor Eep Talstra on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday: Studia Semitica Neerlandica* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 163; Stefan-Ludwig Hoffman and Tom Lampert, *The Politics of Sociability: Freemasonry and German Civil Society, 1840-1918 (Social History, Popular Culture, and Politics in Germany)* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007); Ahmet Midhat Efendi, *Müdâfa'a,* 9. Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa,*" 84

Armenian press. In 1877 his stories were published in the Armeno-Turkish newspaper *Mamul.* It is unknown how much, if any, attention Muslim Turks paid to Armeno-Turkish books, but Ahmet Midhat's interest is notable in regards to his "defense" of Apostolic Armenians against foreign missionary attempts to convert them to Protestantism.[55]

Müdâfa'a was the most significant Ottoman Muslim religious polemic of the late nineteenth century. It is notable for its appeals to modern history and European Enlightenment authors as sources of authority. Even though Ahmet Midhat concludes the *Müdâfa'a* with a warning to Christian readers that the Islamic intellectual heritage far surpasses that of Christianity, he makes scant reference to any classical Islamic scholar. Except for a few few quotations from the Qur'an, *Müdâfa'a* is almost completely an Enlightenment-style, anti-clerical Western history. If the work had been translated to French or English, it would not have been out of place among European literary societies. In arguing for the supremacy of Islam in history, science, politics, and civilization, Ahmet Midhat's almost exclusive use of European sourcing goes far to undercut his thesis. Yet despite the book's neglecting Islamic scholarship, *Müdâfa'a* ironically had significant impact on *tebşîrât*, a specific branch of Islamic theology. This influence expanded through the end of the Empire and continued into the Republican period. Today, its influence can even be seen in the religious lessons of Turkish secondary schools.

Ahmet Midhat and *Tebşîrât*

A central theological idea within *Müdâfa'a* is *tebşîrât* ("glad tidings"), a branch of Islamic theology concerned with the continuity between the monotheist religions and

[55] Strauss, "Kütüp ve Resail-i Mevkute," 239.

defending Islam's legitimacy in light of the revelation of Judaism and Christianity.[56] This

was not a new concept in Muslim polemics. Medieval Islamic authors frequently talked

of Christian scripture prophesying Muhammed's coming. İbrâhîm Müteferrika wrote in

the *Risâle-i İslâmiye* of Christianity's origins and Islamic meaning within the scriptures.

Müteferrika devoted considerable space to describing the origin of the church and its

various confessional divisions. It is through this reconstruction of Christianity's beginning

that the religion's divergence from the true faith of God imbues *tebşîrât* with a scientific

historical character.[57] Hacı Abdi Bey and Harputî İshak repeated these themes in the

nineteenth century. Ahmet Midhat contributed to the field of *tebşîrât* by combining

Islamic authoritative sources with history and scientific discourse. His role in the

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[56] Scriptures of the Qur'an often present the Gospel as unique, divine messaged predestined by God to Jesus and proclaimed to Christians; not four separate, contradictory scriptures. It remains close to the Torah and Qur'an by its is origin, structure, and specifics. The holy books of monotheism are all interrelated, a manifestation of God's might, united in opposition to polytheism, and a result of God's intervention in human history. Ibid., 137. Two examples from the Qur'an are Surat Al-Baqarah (The Cow) 2:2-4, which reads, "This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allâh who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them, And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammed], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith]." The second, from the same surah, is 2:136, which reads "Say, [O believers], "We have believed in Allâh and what has been revealed to us and what has been revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Descendants and what was given to Moses and Jesus and what was given to the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and we are Muslims [in submission] to Him." Sahih International. From Quran.com Accessed October 21, 2013.

[57] Müteferrika, "Risâle-i İslâmiyye." Quoted in Ts. Kasnakova, H. Saldzhiev, "Zones of Ideological Conflict," 142. The book appears to have never achieved wide circulation and remained the only serious Ottoman contribution to *tebşîrât*. Other scholars confirm that the *Risâle-i İslâmiye* was preserved in only one manuscript and not widely read in eighteenth-century religious and literary societies of the Empire. However, it bears traces of his heritage as a Central European Protestant who converted to Islam. The central feature of his arguments from *tebşîrât* are criticisms of the ceremonialization of the church structure, the development of a church hierarchy, and belief in indulgences. In one example he describes the origin of the Syrian Monophysite church as being based on the superstition of Paul that Christianity offered the power of physical healing: And again he said to the Nazarenes: "Jesus came to me and cleaned my face and for that reason darkness (blindness) disappeared and my eyes got well. … So let it be known: The only one who resurrects the dead and gives the blind eyes to see and revives the bird made from clay can be only Allah. So Jesus is God (Allah)". That was what he told one tribe and they became followers of this superstition. This tribe was called Jacobites after their leader – Jacob el-Berdeani [the sixth-century founder of the Syrian Monophysic church Jacob el Baraday]."

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Ottoman journalistic world also made him look at the matter as a question of book production. He believed that Christians in Europe would change their views and possibly convert if they understood the connection between Christianity and Islam. To this he argued that classical Islamic books of *tebşîrât* should be translated to French and English.

The conventional understanding of *tebşîrât* within Islamic tradition and Qur'anic verses is the place of the Torah and the Gospel within Islamic history, the position of the People of the Book within Mohammed's prophetic career, and the revelation of the Qur'an. Some Muslim scholars believe that Christian and Jewish texts are not corrupted; others directly blame them for the distortion of the word of God.[58] *Tebşîrât* is a collection of orders, accusations, and brief judgements concerning the role of non-Muslims in society in the Medina period of Mohammed's ministry. They are characterized by the imperative nature of their speech, in contrast to long discourses of eschatology and general theology found in much of the Qur'an. This came when the articulation between the faith communities in early Islamic history had become clearer and more sharply defined than the Meccan period.[59]

[58] Regarding these *tebşîrât* passage concerning the distortion of the gospels human history, it is Jews who are charged with the conscious corruption of the scriptures (2:40-42, 2:44, 2:79, 5:41-44), although Christian participation in these acts is indicated. Christians are most implicated in believing false doctrines in concerning the doctrine of the Trinity and belief of Jesus as the son of God (5:72, 5:75, 5:116, 9:31). Al-Baqarah 2:40-2:42 reads "O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill your covenant [from Me], and be afraid of [only] Me. And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is [already] with you, and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price, and fear [only] Me. And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]. Ibid., 137-138.

[59] Ts. Kasnakova, H. Saldzhiev, "Zones of Ideological Conflict Between Christianity and Islam in the Balkans," *Trakia Journal of Sciences* 9, No. 2 (2011), 136-147. The use of the Bible in Qur'anic interpretation has a long history and useful means of inferring Muslim attitudes toward the Bible. The fifteenth-century Egyptian scholar Al-Biqa'i used the Biblical account whenever he could, comparing its authority to weak hadiths and claiming that knowledge of the Old and New Testaments were necessary to understand the story of Islam. This was a controversial stance at the time, when many other scholars developed their own narrative of Islam that simply ignored the Bible. Walid A. Saleh, "A Fifteenth-

As *tebşîrât* became more articulated in the Christian-Muslim disputes of the eighth century, when Arabization and Islamization took hold over the Christian community after the Râshidûn Caliphate's conquest of the Near East and the Arabian Peninsula, Islamic theologians, historians, and scholars attempted to solve a number of crucial theological questions: Could God's word be changed; if so, how; and who committed the act of distortion?[60] Three distinguishable trends in *tebşîrât* appear among early Islamic scholars. Buhârî in the eighth century and al-Tabarî in the ninth century argued that the holy books could not be changed, only the interpretation of the text is open to corruption. The second trend is that Christians concealed scripture that predicted the coming of Mohammed but preserved the original character of other sections of their holy texts. The third trend, elaborated by Abd al-Jabbar ibn Ahmad (tenth-eleventh centuries) and the Andalusian polymath Ibn Hazm (tenth-eleventh centuries), stated that the entirety of the gospels had been substituted and were completely unsuitable for use by believing Muslims. This is the most radical thesis of the three, and it was supported and used by nineteenth century Arab theologian ed-Dimashqi, who wrote that to glorify the distorted Qur'an would be to reject the real Qur'an.[61] It is this third view that became widely accepted among Islamic theological circles and shared by Ottoman polemicists, including Ahmet Midhat. While traces of the earlier views of *tebşîrât* can be seen in the polemics of the 1860s and 1870s, the third view dominated the late period of the Empire.

Century Muslim Hebraist: Al-Biqa'i and His Defense of Using the Bible to Interpret the Qur'an." *Speculum* 83, No. 3 (2008): 629-654.

[60] Ibid., 138. For more on the developments of Christian-Muslim disputes in the early years of Islam, see Samir Khalil Samir, *Christian Arabic Apologetics During the Abbasid Period* (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1994).

[61] Ibid., 138-139. H. Işık, "Müslüman-Hristiyan Polemiği ile İlgili XIX. YY. Ait Bir Eser," *Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 9 (2003), 486.

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In the nineteenth century *tebşîrât* became a central feature of Islamic polemical writing. Yet the matter was not as simple as scholars completely rejecting the Bible or considering it to be a distorted Qur'an. Even the most extreme anti-Christian polemics of this period thought portions of the Bible to be salvageable. Ahmet Midhat recognized the complexities of *tebşîrât.* He said that that due to the historical intricacies of the matter, only highly educated ulema should research the issue.[62] But despite its complexity, *tebşîrât* had uses beyond Muslims determining the extents to which they could appropriate the Bible. Understanding Islamic elements within Scripture could become an important tool in polemical encounters with Christians and educating Europeans ignorant of Islam. As was shown in Chapter Two, there were already strong sympathies for Islam among some circles of the European intelligentsia. Ahmet Midhat believed that an explanation of *tebşîrât* to them would make Islam even more palpable.[63]

Tebşîrât evolved in Ottoman religious polemics from İbrâhîm Müteferrika's source criticism to a sharper critique of Christian scriptures in the nineteenth century until Ahmet Midhat subsumed it completely into a modernist discourse framework. But for all his incendiary rhetoric against Christianity, he remained open to dialogue with Christians, as demonstrated with his lengthy debate with Henry Dwight and Armenian pastor Avedis Constantian. While he quoted European scholars at length on the corruption of the Bible, he also criticized his missionary opponents for ignorance of the Islamic meanings within

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[62] Süleyman Turan, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi Hz. Peygamber'in Tevrat'ta Müjdelenmesi," *Milel ve Nihal* 2, No. 2 (June 2005), 163-164.
[63] Ts. Kasnakova, H. Saldzhiev, 144.

these books. For this reason he maintains traces of the first characteristic of *tebşîrât,* that the Christian holy books in their original form were divinely inspired.

Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele ve Mukabele'ye Müdâfa'a

Following the 1883 publication of *Müdâfa'a*, Ahmet Midhat expected foreign missionaries to issue a response. Rather than wait for one to be written, he assumed an offensive position and invited American missionary Henry O. Dwight to reply. Dwight agreed, albeit with reservations, which he expressed to his superiors, questioning the effectiveness of such an approach to presenting Christianity to Muslim readers. Much like the first polemic, its sequel was published in a serialized form in the newspaper *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat.* It was printed in 1884, the same year as the stand-alone monograph of *Müdâfa'a* was released, in two volumes totaling 508 pages.[64]

Henry Dwight was uniquely suited to the task of answering Ahmet Midhat. As the son of a missionary to the Ottoman Empire, he had lived his entire life in Istanbul, with the exception of his education at Ohio Wesleyan University and military service in the Civil War. He was the editor of the Turkish publications of the ABCFM's Bible House and knew excellent literary Ottoman. He wrote several books in Turkish and English on religion and international affairs, particularly on the United States' emerging role as a colonial power in the twentieth century.[65] He was a member of the ABCFM committee to review the Turkish version of the Bible and committee member of the Redhouse Dictionary Committee. From 1875-1892 he was an Istanbul correspondent for *The New*

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[64] *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele ve Mukabele'ye Müdâfa'a: Mösyo Dwight'in Müdafaa'ya Mukabelesi'ne karşı Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nn Müdafaa'sı.* (Istanbul: Tercümân-ı Hakîkat, 1884).

[65] Henry O Dwight, "Our Mohammedan Wards," *Forum* No. 29 (March 1900): 15-30; Strauss, "*Müdafaá'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa*," 76, 89. Ahmet Midhat, *Müdâfa'aya Mukabele,* 13.

York Tribune but wrote under a pseudonym to evade censorship laws. He also had the ear of the U.S. State Department and had close ties to U.S. Minister to Turkey Alexander Terrell, who served 1893-1897. Dwight was so involved in journalistic affairs that in 1882 American Board Secretary N.G. Clark expressed concern. Clark enquired as to whether such activities had taken an inordinate amount of time away from his missionary duties. Dwight acknowledged that he wrote columns for *The New York Tribune*, but they only required two to four hours a month of his time. Other than that, his working hours were "filled to overflowing with strictly missionary work or preparation for it."[66]

As a publisher, Dwight believed in the power that Bible and religious tract production could have on Muslims in the Empire, whom he thought were beginning to open their minds to religious inquiry. In a private letter to Clark on January 16, 1882 he describes a "certain amount of intellectual movement of the Turks of this city," as shown by the number of Turkish-language works being published. Several Muslim authors demonstrated thoroughness regarding questions of religion and moral living. Dwight believed that bridging the broadest bases of common agreement between Islam and Christianity could overcome the chasm between these religions. He even inquired of Clark's opinion on using funds to publish Turkish books and periodicals that would be morally elevating but not of a distinctly proselytizing tendency in order to capitalize on this interest. These books would mention the moral duties of man, the nature of sin, and its inevitable punishment, books which Ottoman press censors would permit. Such work could "[remove] prejudices, informing men of the fact that godliness exists outside of

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[66] Henry Dwight to N.G. Clark, October 3, 1882. Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

Islam, and even perhaps forcing men to feel themselves to be helpless sinners, shut out from reconciliation with God as long as they cling to salvation by works."

To Dwight's disappointment, the American Board Prudential Committee rejected his idea for the proposed monthly because it was not a direct enough means of evangelism. Dwight agreed that a more direct means should be tried, although his experience had shown him that preaching to Muslims quickly drew state surveillance. Attracting undue scrutiny by the government would be damaging to their mission. Yet despite his differences in missionary strategy used by more provocative figures such as S.W. Koelle, Dwight shared his frustration for being rendered impotent in the Istanbul print sphere, unable to address possible Muslim readers, and watch this readership purchase Islamic books that spread "malicious lies" about Christianity. From his perspective, the foreign missionaries sat by passively, watching the public demand literature, only to have the devil supply the demand.[67]

Dwight's chance to address this readership came when Ahmed Midhat invited him to write a response to *Müdâfa'a*. In the introduction to its sequel, the Muslim author narrates the story of how it came into existence. When Ahmet Midhat heard that the director of the Bible House had already begun to write a response to *Müdâfa'a*, he requested that Dwight compile all his criticisms against his original polemic. Dwight's reasons for penning a response were identical to those reasons that originally compelled Ahmet Midhat to write *Müdâfa'a*: silence in the face of a provocative book that challenged his own religion could disturb the faith of his brethren and indicate weakness.

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[67] Letter from Henry O. Dwight to N.G. Clark, October 3, 1882. Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

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Ahmet Midhat sees his own polemic as masterfully persuasive work that shook the faith

of his adversaries to its foundations. He writes that other Protestants urged Dwight to

respond to Ahmet Midhat, because his historical account of Christianity would prevent

potential converts from accepting Christianity as a true religion.[68] Dwight agreed to send

his responses, with the understanding from Ahmet Midhat that they would be printed in

the *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat* in their entirety. Each statement from Dwight is followed by a

comment from Ahmet Midhat. This dialogue forms the contents of the book, entitled

Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele ve Mükâbele'ye Müdâfa'a (A Reply to the Defense and a Defense

of the Reply).

Dwight's primary contention is that Christianity is a true religion and that Ahmet

Midhat's historical, scientific, and theological claims are invalid. At the beginning of each

chapter Dwight criticizes an argument put forward by Ahmet Midhat. The Muslim author

then issues a much longer response, allowing him to have the last word. In none of

Dwight's short responses does he dismiss any of Ahmet Midhat's arguments out of hand.

He takes a more conciliatory approach and considers if the claim is also found within

Christianity. If so, then Dwight says Ahmet Midhat proves the truth of Christianity. If not,

then Dwight declares Ahmet Midhat's interpretation of history as false. Whether

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[68] *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele*, 9-10. *Hâlbuki 'Baybil Haus' namiyle Dersa'âdet'te bir şu'besi bulunan Amerika misyoner cem'iyetin re'isi(reîsi olcak) Mösyo Dvayt hazretleri Müdâfa'amızı sâir Nasârâdan daha başka türlü bir ehemmiyetle telakki buyurarak mudâfa'a-i mezkûreyi mukâbelesiz bırakırlar ise Nasârâdan pek çok kismelerin 'akâid-i dînîyelerine ve henuz olacağı bâzı ihtâr ile anladıklarından fen ve edeb dâiresinde br mukâbele yazmağa başladıkları taraf 'âcizanemızden istimâ' olunmakla birde şu mukabeleyi görmeğe merak hâsıl olmuştu. Hatta rivayet vaka'ıyı göre mezâhib-i Nasâranın en iyisi ve binaaleyhi sâ'irlerinden daha ziyade sahîh ve islâh dîdesi olan Protestanlığı neşri gayretinde bulunanların telakki ve irşâdlarıyla mezâhib-i sâ'irenin bir çok bid'atlarını terk eden bâzı Hıristiyanlar 'Müdâfa'anın beyan eylediği ahvâl-ı sahîh ve vâka'ı iseler Hıristyanlığı fi'l-vâka'ı dîn-i hâkk diye kabulunde terredüd olunur. Bina aleyhi bunu mutlaka bir reddiye yazmalıdır' diye mûma-i'leyh Mösyo Dvayt hazretlerini sûret-i mahsûsede teşvik dahî eylemişler imiş.*

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intentional or unintentional, he used a Christian form of *tebşîrât.*[69]

In his introduction, Dwight outlined the arguments of Ahmet Midhat that he used to critique the foundations and spread of Christianity: the apostles were traitors or ignorant; Christianity spread slowly in the first three centuries and only spread across the Roman Empire upon Constantine's conversion and his use of the sword against pagans; and the basis of Christianity is a fabrication. *Müdâfa'a,* Dwight says, is not trustworthy on any of these points. Furthermore, he indirectly criticizes Ahmet Midhat's rhetorical style by noting that he "will not respond to insults with insults, out of respect for decency and civility."[70]

Dwight writes in his first rebuttal that *Müdafa'a* presents strange illusions disguised as new information and was not worth the time to read. Since the residents of the Empire all knew the history of the foundation and spread of Christianity, some could regard Ahmet Midhat's historical interpretation as a joke. But since the tome was written in a serious manner, some could mistake it as a true chronology (*sahîhân 'ılm-ı târîh*), which could cause worsen relations between religious communities in the Ottoman Empire. Dwight therefore considers it his duty to demonstrate to what degree *Müdâfa'a* can be considered a proper work of history.[71] He makes frequent reference to the positive

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[69] Hasan Özarslan, "Ahmet Midhat Efendi'nin "Müdafaa" (Birinci Kitap) Adlı Eserinin Sadeleştirilmesi ve Eserin Dinler Tarihi Aısından Değerlendirilmesi" (Sivas: YÖK Unpublished Thesis, Cumhuriyet Üniverstesi Sosyal Bilimler Entitüsü, 2011), 13-14.

[70] *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele,* 15-16. *Müdâfa'anın beyânat târihine husunda î'tîmâde şâyan olmadığını ve Hıristiyanların kendi ecdâdlarının dînine muhabbetle sarılmalarına kâfî sebeb bulunduğunu göstermek için bilâd-i mezkûre noktaların her birinden bahis etmek niyetindeyiz. İmdi edeb ve nezâkete hürmeten hakarete hakaretle mukabele etmeyeceğimizden âtîde ki fıkrâyı müdâfa'a muharriri efendînin dav'et eylediği cevablardan cuz'î bir şey olmak üzere gazetelerde derc eylenizi 'adâlet ve hakkânıyyetinize atıf ederiz.*

[71] Ibid*.,* 13. *Hıristiyanlığın te'sîs ve intişârı târihi umûm seknesine ma'lûm olan bir memleketinde müdâfa'a mubâhisâtı belki latîfe gibi telakki olunabiliyor idi. Fakat Müdâfa'anın pek ciddi zan olunacak tarzda yazılmış olmasıyla bu memleketinde sahîhân 'ilm-i târih diye bulunan muhtelif*

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contributions that Christianity had made to civilization, such as the softening of manners and popularizing the moral behavior of monogamy. Dwight notes the early church suffered significant persecution, a response to Ahmet Midhat's contention that Christianity was established via political power during the reigns of Constantine and Justinian.[72]

In response, Ahmet Midhat advances the themes he first presented in *Müdâfa'a*. Primary among them is the station of Islamic civilization vis-a-vis European civilization. He argues that the former was not inferior to the latter but had merely lagged behind in recent years for reasons not owing to any deficiency in Islam.[73] In this vein he explores themes that at first seem to give Europe the upper hand in arguments concerning the level of civilizational development – although he cannot resist giving a backhanded compliment in regards to the Anti-Semitism on the continent – but upon closer inspection prove Islamic civilization to be superior. One such example is in gender relations. Many Europeans have criticized Islam for polygamy, a practice that they believe subjugates and oppresses women. The opposite is true, he argues. In Europe there is a considerable level of prostitution, which has resulted in a increased rate of divorce:

> Due to Christianity, women have not secured new rights and have even lost old rights they enjoyed when they were Jews. Women who cannot go to another husband or completely separate from men who cannot get used to this find it necessary to commit prostitution. Because [men] are satisfied with polygamy and there are many more women than men in the population, women who remain without a husband must engage in prostitution. Men prohibit them from being able to separate, especially when they marry, and the danger of this is an increase in infidelity, which

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milletlerin münâsebatında sui' tesiri mûcib olabiliyor. Bu sebebten der ki Müdâfa'anın târih husûsunda ne derecede i'timâde şayan olduğunu muhtesaran göstermeğe kendimize vazife daima addeteriz.

[72] Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele et Mukabele'ye Müdafaa*,", 89.

[73] Ahmet Midhat*, Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele ve Mukabele'ye Müdâfa'a,* 561-562. *Avrupa teceddüdât ve terakkıyât-ı ilmiyye ve kalemiyyesin takdîr etmemek muhâl olup biz kendimiz bu şehrâh-ı terakkîde Avrupalıların peyrev ve âdeta şâkirdi addeylediğimizi nimet-şinâsâne bir teslimiyetle teslim ederek...*

today has become the biggest problem in Europe. Assemblies for women's issues [...] have defended and protected them from the church in the process of securing liberty for women.[74]

The issue of religion and civilization runs through *Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele*, as it does in Ahmet Midhat's other writings.[75] The two concepts are closely united together but they are not interchangeable nor always complementary. In the case of Europe, he argues its civilization set itself up against the precepts of true religion for the sake of material advancement. Islam is integrated with true religion, even though it is at a lower material station than Europe. Civilization is responsible for society's material progress, while religion is responsible for society's moral progress, thus countering the opinion that Christianity was requisite for both material and moral progress. Ahmet Midhat writes that the progress in Europe is not Christian, as throughout the Middle Ages it was the Catholic Church that opposed progress and scientific advancement. Through his historical narrative, he mentions examples similar to those in *Müdâfa'a* in which European civilization opposed intellectual innovation.[76]

He recommends that the Ottoman Empire import beneficial technologies and

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[74] Ibid., 324-325. *Hıristiyanlık sâyesinde kadınlar yeni bir hak kazanmadıktan mâ'ada yahudilikteki hakları dahî kaybetmişlerdir. Geçinemedikleri adamdan mufârekât-i kat'iye ile başka bir kocaya varmak imkânı olmadığından mecbûr-i fuhş olurlar. Ta'addüd-i zevcâtın memnûiyeti ve bir de kadın nüfusunun erkekten ziyâdeliği hasebiyle birçok kadînlar kocasız kalarak fuhşa mecbur olurlar. Hele bir kere teehhül edînce bir daha ayrılamamak tehlikesi erkeklerin en çoğunu teehhülden men' eylediği cihetle fuhuş arttıkça artarak bugün Avrupa'da kadînlar meselesi en büyük mesâil ve mecâlis işgale başlamış ve herkes kadınların hürriyetini kazanmak için az-çok onları kiliseye karşı müdafa'a ve himâyeye kalkışmıştır.*

[75] Orhan Okay, *Batı Medenyeti Karşısında Ahmet Midhat Efendi* (Ankara: Dergah Yayınları, 1975), 251. Other works of Ahmet Midhat concerned with this theme include *İstibşar* (1892) and *Avrupa'da Bir Cevelan* (1890).

[76] Ahmet Midhat*, Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele*, 506-507. *Biz ki hamden sümme şükren müslüman ve Osmanlılarız. Biz Avrupa'da gördümüz âsâr-ı terakkiyeyi kemâl-i hayretle tahsin-hân olarak kudretimiz yettiği mertebede terakkıyât-ı mezkûreyi memleketimize idhâle dahî çalışırız. Fakat terakkıyât-ı mezkûre Hristyanlığın mahsûl-i maddi veya mâ'nevisidir diye bizi iğfal için söylenen sözlerle asla aldanmayız. Zira diyânet-i mevcûde-i nasrâniyeye dâir ettiğimiz tetkîkât o dînde teşvikak-ı terakki-i pervâniyeye dâir hiçbir şey bulunmadığına bizi iknâ eylediği gibi târih sahifelerinde ettiğimiz tetebbu'ât dahî Avrupa'da dînce kayıtsızlık meydan almadıkça şeref-i hikmet olamadığını dahî bize gösterir.*

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philosophies from Europe, but it should not do so out of a spirit of inferiority to the West's technological developments, or from a misconstrued belief that Islam and progress are contradictory. While Muslim youth have the false belief that progress is possible to the degree that one is indifferent to religion ,they should not be subject to this error. On the contrary, Islam is not an impediment to true progress but a catalyst, he writes. The degree to which the doctors of Islam make progress in wisdom (*hikmet*) is the extent to which it is strengthened by the Islamic faith:

> Even in the progress of intellectualism, our religious doctors should hold firm by rejecting the claim of the European experts of error that religion and wisdom cannot co-exist by saying that one cannot have wisdom without religion. As their words authentically conform to the religion of Christianity, may our words authentically conform to the religion of Islam.[77]

The manner of debate in which the two sides argued against each other contributed to Ahmet Midhat's sharp polemical tone. Henry Dwight admits some of the failings of the Catholic Church in history, considering Protestantism to be a separate entity and not culpable for the papacy's moral failings that occurred centuries earlier. Ahmet Midhat seizes upon any admission of failure as the failure of Christianity. His framework for debate was a high-stakes contest modeled on a *münâzara* (disputation)*,* a public religious debate that traditionally took place in a monarch's court and has a long tradition within Islam. In the classical form of a Christian-Muslim *münâzara*, the losing side admitted defeat and converted to the religion of the winner. These were the stakes in

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[77]   Ibid., 507-508. *Gençlerimiz, Avrupa'da dîne kayıtsız ve âdetâ dînsizlik meydan almadıkça terakkî mümkün olamadığı hakkındaki Hakîkat-i târihiyeyi bize dahî tatbîk mümkün bir itîkâd-ı bâtıl ile kendilerini dûçâr-ı dalâlet etmemelidirler. Bil'akis diyânet-i celîle-i islâmiye, terakkıyât-ı sahîhânın mâni'i değil müşevvik-i tâmmı olup hükemây-ı islâmiye hikemiyatta ne derecelerde ileriye varmışlarsa akîde-i İslâmiyelerini dahî o kadar takviye etmişlerdi. Terakkıyât-i zihniye dahî hükemâmıza peyrev olarak Avrupa erbâb-ı dalâletinin 'dîn ile hikmet bir yere sığmaz' sözünü reddile 'dîn olmayınca hikmet dahî olmaz' iddi'asında sebât edelim. Onların sözleri kendi diyânet-i nâsraniyetlerine tatbîkan sahih ise bizim sözümüz dahî kendi diyânet-i islâmiyemize tatbîkan sahih olsun.*

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1854 between Pfander and al-Kairânawî. Ahmet Midhat occasionally taunts his opponent with such an outcome.[78]

One such exchange involves Dwight admitting the failings of the church in its oppression of religious minorities in the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition:

> We do not defend the acts committed in the name of Christianity that are contrary to the teachings of the Gospel. Some frivolous manners introduced into Christianity in the Middle Ages and wicked morals by those who called themselves Christians – things contrary to the essence of Christianity such as the Crusades and the Inquisition, were reprimanded and refuted by the Gospel as well as by the majority of Christians in our time.[79]

Ahmet Midhat responds to this admission as total capitulation and admission of surrender. Had Dwight only admitted to the corruption of the church in the Middle Ages in the beginning of his work, he writes, then the missionary could have saved himself hundreds of pages of argument by admitting the failings of Christianity in the past at the beginning of their discussion.[80] Here Ahmet Midhat presses his advantage:

> With about seven lines, the honorable Mr. Dwight has condemned the Christian world in general and without exception, for a period when it reigned for centuries [...] In short, this means that Mr. Dwight has confirmed with these seven lines everything we have said to refute the Christians. We say "Praise God" that the light of truth shines in this manner.[81]

Half way through *Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele*, Dwight leaves the discussion entirely,

[78] As discussed in the introduction, such debates occurred in early-nineteenth-century India between Muslim scholars and Protestant missionary Henry Martyn, sixteenth-century debates between Jesuit missionaries and representatives of other religions inf the court of Emperor Akbar of Agra, and stretching back to debates of *kelâm* in Syria in the seventh and eight centuries, such as those between Nestorian Catholicos Mar Timothy (r. 780-823) and Caliph Al-Mahdi (r. 755-785). Bennet, "The Legacy of Karl Gottlieb Pfander," 78-80. Powell, "Muslims and Missionaries," 263.

[79] Ahmet Midhat, *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele*, 240. *Hıristiyanlik nâmı ile icra olunup İncilin t'alimâtına muhâlıf bulunan hareketler biz müdâfa'a etmekte değiliz. Kurûn-ı vüstâ esnasında Hıristiyanlığa idhâl edilen 'ifâdat bâtıle ve Hıristiyanlar namını almış olan kimselerin ahlâl-ı kabîhası ve ehl-i salîb ve inkizisyon gibi Hıristiyanlığın mâhiyetine muğâyır bulunan ahvâl hem İncil ahkâmına göre hem bu asırdakı Hıristiyanların esker kısmının hükmüne göre tebliğ varıd olunurlar.*

[80] Ibid., 274. See Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele*, 88.

[81] Ibid., 274, 300. *İşte bu sebebe mebnîdir ki Mösyo Dvayt hazretleri yedi satırlık bir lâkırdı ile alem-i Nasârâniyeti fermân fırma olduğu asırlarca muddet için ala'l-umûm ve bilâ-istisnâ mahkum eylemiştir... Netice-i kelâm Mösyö Dvayt hazretleri şu yedi satırlık sözüyle redd-i Nasârâ yolundaki ifadâtımız kâffesini tasdîk etmiş demekdirler. Nûr-i Hakîkatin bu sûretle temâşâ olduğundan dolayı Cenab-ı Allâh'a hamd ü senâ ederiz.*

perhaps having nothing else to say to his interlocutor. He was not interested in answering Ahmet Midhat's insulting rhetoric, or he may have not been able to do so. Writing strong words against an Ottoman official with close ties to the Hamidian regime could quickly undermine the ABCFM's missionary enterprise. The case of Dwight shows that Protestant missionaries were often less interested in arguing religious history in their writings on Islam then they were in criticizing their Muslim opponents for stirring up religious discord among the confessional groups of the Ottoman Empire.

While such a line of argument could have been based on sympathies for Muslim feelings, missionaries just as likely considered that a provocative line of attack against Islam could bring grave harm to their missionary enterprise. As an American, Dwight may have been more accommodating to Muslim sensitives than the British CMS because his home country lacked the diplomatic power of Great Britain in the Middle East and other parts of the world. George F. Herrick, a longtime ABCFM missionary to the Ottoman Empire who published Turkish works in education reform and theology under the pen name "Muallim Herrick," published the work *Christian and Mohammedan: A Plea for Bridging the Chasm* and the apologetic of Protestantism *İ'tikâd ve Îbadât: Protestanların İ'tikâdine Göre Mesihî* (Faith and Worship: The Messiah According to the Faith of the Protestants).[82] While he still believed that Muslims required spiritual regeneration and the superiority of Western states over the Ottoman Empire, Herrick

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[82] Muallim Herrik, *İ'tikâd ve Îbadât: Protestanların İ'tikâdine Göre Mesihî* (Istanbul: 1884). Herrick wrote and translated numerous books into Turkish and Greco-Turkish, including a church history *Tarîhi dîn ve kilisesi Mesîhi* in 1871, the '*Ilmi Ilâh-i Tabi-i Hristiyan İlâhiyat* in 1885, and a biography on Abraham Lincoln, *Re'is-i Sadîk,* the same year. In the *İtikad ve İbadet* he describes the development of Protestantism as a cure to the excesses of the papacy and a return to the fundamental tenants of Christianity. In recent centuries Protestant faith and worship has provided a moral framework that allowed arts and science to flourish in Western nations. See 3-7, 218-222.

called for social unity between the two religions and for their spiritual and material progress via the enlightening power of "Christian civilization."[83]

Dwight turns over the debate in *Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele* to his colleague Avedis Constantian, an Armenian Protestant pastor. The Ottoman Christian was deeply involved with the ABCFM's publishing efforts and was a member of the committee responsible for Bible. translation[84] In Constantian's introduction he ignores Ahmed Midhat's attacks against Dwight and returns the debate to a more purely theological discussion. He begins in a similar manner as Dwight, criticizing Ahmet Midhat for his aggressive writing style that threatens to increase inter-religious tensions in the Empire. The Muslim writer, he says, claims that he is writing the polemic only for the purposes of defending Islam against Christianity, but it is he in fact who is the aggressor. While a Muslim has the right to initiate such a debate against the gospels, it is contrary to the principles of a disputation (*münâzara*) that an author ignores legitimate Christian criticisms of the Islamic religion and attacks his religion under the pretense of defending Islam.

> Everyone who read the articles published under the title "*Müdâfa'a*" in the *Tercümân-i Hakîkat* will understand that their true intention is not to defend the Islamic religion against the attacks of Christians but it is merely against the religion of the Messiah, and they will definitely be understood as an attack.[85]

As Johann Strauss notes, Ahmet Midhat once again reveals his paternalistic attitude toward the Apostolic Armenian Church in his discourse with Avedis Constantian.

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83 George F. Herrick. *Christian and Mohammedan: A Plea for Bridging the Chasm* (New York: 1912), 17-18. For a broader historical outline of his missionary work in the Ottoman capita, see Thomas S. Kidd's *American Christians and Islam: Evangelical Culture and Muslims from the Colonial Period to the Age of Terrorism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 65-66.

84 Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele,* 90.

85 Ahmet Midhat, *Müdâfa'a'ya Mukabele*, 362-363. *Yani Tercümân-ı Hakîkatın Müdâfa'a serlevhasıyla neşr etmiş olduğu bendleri mutâlaa etmiş olan her sâhıb ınsâf mezkür-i bendlerden asıl maksad Hıristiyanlar tarafından dîn-i İslâm aleyhinde edilen ta'arruz karşı dîn-i İslâmi müdâfa'a etmek olmayıp mahza dîn-i Mesih aleyhinde ve sûret-i mahsûsede bir ta'arruz ettiğini derk etmiş olacaklardır.*

He takes the Armenian Protestant to task for abandoning the religion of his ancestors for the sake of the foreign missionaries. In this regard, Ahmet Midhat's critique echoes Lebanese Maronite and Apostolic Armenian patriarchates threatening excommunication in the early nineteenth century against members of their sect who fraternized with the ABCFM. Here he uses the same sarcastic rhetoric in his debate with Constantian as he does with Dwight. One such example is his dismissal of the Armenian pastor's attempt to defend the textual authority of the Bible by referring to certain ancient manuscripts:

> When the ideas of Avedis Efendi are read, [the readers] say that the aforementioned man is either a very naïve man or he is one who thinks everyone in the world a fool. If he actually believes his own words, then there is no question about his naivete. However, if he thinks everyone in the world a fool, then we request that he abandon this idea."[86]

Ahmet Midhat also responds to Constantian's charge that *Müdâfa'a* constituted an attack against Christianity by noting that it is the Ottoman Christian community that is truly under attack by American missionaries. They publish in Ottoman Turkish even thought there is no Ottoman Christian community, whose original language or alphabet is in Turkish. They freely distribute the Bible, which is clearly an invitation to Protestantism. If Ahmet Midhat had truly wanted to issue an attack on Christianity, he would have written in the style of the missionaries, called on them to read the Qur'an and diffused it among Christians in their own languages and alphabets.[87]

Aftermath of the Debate

No further print debates took place between Dwight and Ahmet Midhat following

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86 Ibid., 473-474. *İnsan Avedis Efendînin şu fıkrasını okulduğu zaman ya mûma'i-leyhin pek safdil bir adam olduğuna veyahud bütün cihânı ahmak zann eylediğine kâil olacağı geliyor. Eğer kendi söyledikleri lakırdıya kendileri dahî inanıyorlar ise safdilliklerinde şübhe yokdur. Yok âlemi ahmak zann ediyorlar ise bu fikrden vaz geçmelerin rica ederiz.* Quoted in Strauss, "*Müdafaa'ya Mukabele,*" 92.
87 Ibid., 397-398; 402-403.

Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele, nor do ABCFM records indicate that any other correspondence continued between them. Dwight made scant mention of this whole affair in his books on the history of Istanbul and his private letters to the American Board secretariat. In what little he did mention, Dwight wrote off the whole affair as being unfruitful. Unlike Pfander and Koelle, Dwight thought direct attacks on Islam hurt his mission. In the 1884 ABCFM Constantinople station report, the author commented on the increased circulation of Scriptures among Turks and discussions concerning Christianity in which Christian writers were allowed to take part in a "prominent Turkish newspaper." It indicated that an impression was beginning to be made among Muslims in Istanbul, but the report writer said little else, perhaps underplaying the small influence that Dwight ultimately had on *Tercümân-i Hakîkat*'s readership.[88]

Dwight entertained thoughts of engaging with Muslim polemical writers in the Turkish press in the years before his debate with Ahmet Midhat. He discussed with Clark the utility of engaging Muslim polemicists but ultimately decided that such a discussion would be of little value in light of their larger goal of changing Muslim public opinion in Istanbul. Yet such dialogue taking place at all convinced him that religious discussions of a more temperate nature could be beneficial. Dwight watched the Turkish press closely and examined religious news. He did not regard the present situation of Istanbul's Muslim population to be "by any means entirely discouraging from a missionary point of view." To Dwight, their focus on religious matters originated in a certain class of Muslims who understood that their religious lives were not what they should be and could be open to

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[88]   Report of the Constantinople Station, 1884. Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

enquiry of other religions.[89]

Dwight nevertheless lamented that such inquiry would be thwarted by the Islamic public's ignorance of Christian doctrine and Western culture. Ottoman newspapers took great pains to mention the high rates of crime, divorce, alcohol consumption, and general lawlessness in Europe to suggest that Christianity was responsible for public and private immorality. In return, he thought it ridiculous to think "Islamism" as anything but a failure. Dwight was most bothered by official government support of polemical writings such that spread ignorance of Christianity. Here he criticizes newspapers "which take their inspiration from the government," most likely *Tercümân-i Hakîkat*, due to Ahmet Midhat having close connections to the imperial bureaucracy and the sultan himself. These newspapers took pains to publish everything that conveys an idea of moral corruption among Christian nations but take equal pains to avoid mention of charities, or the educational, commercial, and artistic growth of Christian nations.

> Foreigners are constantly referred to in terms calculated to foster distrust and positive hatred of them and their principles. By this means the people of Turkey are prevented from having any adequate idea of the fact that Christianity is a success and Islamism a failure from a purely worldly point of view. Ignorant of the wealth of help to growth which Christianity has showered upon the Western nations, the Turks hug with the obstinate pride of the ignorant their bastard learning and their exploded Arabian philosophy.[90]

Yet public debates with these figures did not correct this "ignorance." Dwight discusses the fruitless task of arguing with an "educated" Muslim about these matters. Such an effort leads the Christian to find himself entangled at the outset in the labyrinth of "outlying defense with which Islam has surrounded its doctrines." A conversion with Muslims instantly becomes hampered by religious axioms which defy scientific facts and

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[89] Henry O. Dwight to Rev. A.W. Clark, Constantinople, June 9, 1882. ABCFM Archives, Reel 600.
[90] Ibid., 7-8.

stand solely on the dictum of the ancients, he writes. Even if a Muslim can break through the chains and investigate for himself the facts of his own beliefs, he learns through the study of European literature that their whole system of philosophy was tied up centuries ago with the medieval scientific ideas of the time. When such an inquirer understands the worthlessness of Islam, he trades it for an equally destructive philosophy: the materialism that he finds in French scientific works. This, to Dwight, is much worse:

> To this he quickly attributes the pleasing freedom of the atmosphere of Europe and America, and he is more strongly fortified in his infidelity than he was in his Islamism. In fact he is doubly fortified. He retains his nominal faith in Islam, and is therefore protected from Christian aggression both by his watchful Government and by his own consciousness that religion has been to him a terrible incubus and should be resisted as a tyranny is resisted.[91]

Ahmet Midhat fared much better after his debate with Dwight. *Müdâfa'a* and *Müdâfa'aya Mükâbele* were praised throughout the Muslim world. Theodore Ion writes in the preface of Edward Gibb's 1901 "Ottoman Literature" that Ahmet Midhat's defense of Islam carried his fame beyond the confines of the Ottoman Empire, earning him praise him for his influence on the literary aspects of Turkish.[92] Strauss notes that although Ahmet Midhat's polemics did not find a wide readership in the Arabic, Iranian, or Indian world, Ottoman scholars referenced it frequently, such as Namik Kemal's use of it to write his refutation of Renan. It became a particularly popular work in areas in which Muslims were in a politically inferior position, such as Crete. Ahmet Midhat was most

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[91] Ibid., 9-10. At the conclusion of his letter Dwight notified Clark that in order to avoid this double dilemma, the Constantinople station had voted to allocate funds to establish an educational and scientific monthly in Turkish in order to enlighten the religious members of society with reason, but point them to Christianity lest they abandon all religious sentiment for materialist scientisim. However, he lamented, for it to be published they relied on the "permission to issue the magazine upon the ignorance of Government officials as to the ultimate becoming of the class of articles which we propose to publish."

[92] Theodore P. Ion, preface, E.J.W. Gibb, *Ottoman Literature. The Poets and Poetry of Turkey* (London: M. Walter Dunne, 1901).

celebrated among the Muslim Tatars of Kazan in Imperial Russia. Tatar Journalist Fatikh

Karimi claimed that all classes of Muslims of Russia would profit from his polemical

writings, and they were highly popular among the doctors of Islam for the defense of

their religion against Christianity. For this reason, Ahmet Midhat came to the attention of

the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Russian Empire censored anti-Christian

publications in something of a mirror image of Ottoman censorship of anti-Muslim

writings. On December 7, 1892, A.M Osipov, the professor of civil law at the University

of Kazan, wrote to the tsar's censors that a number of harmful publications had become

popular among the Tatars, notably extracts of *Tercümân-i Hakîkat*, *Müdâfa'a* and the

writings of al-Kairânawî.[93]

Ahmet Midhat continued writing other religious polemics in the forthcoming

decades. The object of his attack shifted away from foreign missionaries to influential

European intellectuals, but the themes in his polemics remained the same. In 1885 he

published *Müdâfa'a III: Hıristiyanlığın Dünü, Bügünü, ve Yarını* (Christianity Yesterday,

Today, and Tomorrow). This time his interlocutor was François-René de Chateaubriand

(d. 1848), a French writer and historian considered to be the founder of French

Romanticism. He was the author of "The Genius of Christianity" in the 1790s, which

defended the Catholic Church as it was under attack during the French Revolution. He

was a figure influential in the post-revolutionary religious revival in France.[94]

In the book's prologue, Ahmet Midhat claims that an unsigned letter from France

came to him by post one day. It dismissed his first two installments of *Müdâfa'a* as futile,

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93   Strauss, "Müdafaa'ya Mukabele," 93-94.
94   See Richard Switzer's *Chateaubriand* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1971).

and said Christianity would overcome Islam in the future. The letter writer quotes from

the words of Chateaubriand on the particular characteristics of Christianity that will

enable it to overcome all other religions, social systems, and legal systems:

> In the world of the future, we will not see a future other than a Christian one from the Catholic sect, because Christianity is encapsulated within three important legal structures that are prevailing in the world. They are the divine law (*ilâhî kânûn*), the moral law (*ahlâkî kânûn*), and the political law (*siyâsî kânûn*). The divine law is settled upon the unity of three persons, the moral law is a law of compassion and loyalty, and the political law is a law of freedom, equality, and fraternity.[95]

Never one to allow his intellectual sparring partner to have the last word, Ahmet

Midhat took up his pen once again to prove the letter writer incorrect by attacking

Chateaubriand. He argues that none of the above-mentioned virtues are found within

Christianity but instead within Islam. The work is divided into three parts, using the same

three topics in Chateaubriand's "Genius of Christianity": the divine law and Christianity,

moral law and Christianity, and and politics and Christianity.[96]

Perhaps Ahmet Midhat's most interesting polemic in the wake of his dispute with

Henry Dwight is *İstibşâr* ("Proclamation of Good News"), written with the expressed

intention of spreading Islam in the United States. He considered the Western world rife

for conversion due to its moral poverty and dangerous ideologies such as anarchism,

socialism, and nihilism.[97] His intention in writing this work can be seen from two

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[95] Ahmet Midhat, *Müdafaa III Hıristiyanlığın Dünü, Bügünü, ve Yarını* (Istanbul: Tercümân-ı Hakîkat, 1885), 6. *Geleceğin dünyâsında, Hıristiyanlık ve onun Katolik mezhebinden başka bir şeyde istikbâl görmüyörüm. Zira Hıristiyanlık dünyâ üzerinde geçerli olan üç önemli kânunu bünyesinde barındırmaktadır. Bu kânunlar ilâhî kânun, ahlâki kânun ve siyasi kânundur. İlâhî kânun, üç şahısta birliğin karar kılınması, ahlâki kânun şefkat ve sadaka kânunu, siyasi kânun da hürriyet, eşitlik ve kardeşlik kânunudur.*

[96] Ibid., 3-4.

[97] Ibid., 3. *Vâkıâ Avrupa'nın bir kısım ahâlisinde hıyle-i tedeyyünden tecerrüd gayreti de görülüyorsa da bulundukları yerlere göre anarşist, sosyalist, nihilist gibi namlarla yâd olunan bu adamlardaki o gayretin kendilerini kâffe-i kavânîn-i hasene-i medeniyenin hâricine çıkartarak hukûk-ı hayre adem-i riâyet ve kendi ednâ menfa'atleri yolunda bütün cihânı fedâ sûretindeki teşebbüsleri bunların Hakîkat-i vahşete tekarüplerini isbât etmez mi? Hapishâneler eskeriyâ bunlarlar dolu ve siyâsetgâh ekserya bunların yolu olduğu kendi gazetelerinde her zaman görülüp duruyor.*

perspectives. First, it is an extension of his plan to use *tebşîrât* to instruct American

Christians on the Islamic theological elements within Christian scriptures and reduce

their ignorance of Islam. Second, it is notable that the purpose of *İstibşâr* is to convert

Christians to Islam in the homeland of Dwight and the ABCFM. While Ahmet Midhat

never mentions if Dwight inspired him to compose this particular work, one cannot help

but speculate if he sought to return the favor to the Protestant missionaries and their

ceaseless attempts at converting the Muslims and Ottoman Christians of the Empire to

their sect of Christianity.[98]

Ahmet Midhat followed up this work with *Niza-ı 'İlm ü Dîn*, a translation of J.W.

Draper's 1875 "History of the Conflict Between Religion and Science," authored by the

American scientist in English but translated into French, the edition which Ahmet Midhat

used for his own translation into Turkish. Draper's book accused the Catholic church of

bigotry but also slanders Islam as an impediment to science. Ahmet Midhat's translation

includes significant commentary on the text. He strongly agrees with the attacks on

Catholicism, noting his own attempts to limit its spread, but rebuts the attacks on Islam

line-by-line, with similar arguments as those found in his earlier works.[99]

Conclusion

The debate between Ahmet Midhat and Henry Dwight left its mark on future

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[98] Ahmet Midhat, *İstibşâr: Amerika'da neşr-i İslâm teşebbüsü* ("Proclamation of the Good News: An Initiative to Spread Islam in America"). *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat gazetesine derc edildikten sonra Ma'ârıf-ı Nezareti Celilesinin ruhsatıyla ayrica kitap şeklinde dahi tab' olunmuştu* (after being serialized in the *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat* newspaper, published in book form by the permission of the Ministry of Instruction). (Istanbul: 1892).

[99] Ahmet Midhat, *Niza-ı 'İlm ü'l-Dîn*: *Muharrer New York dar u'l-ma'ârıfı m'alûmlarından J. V. Draper. İslam ve 'Ulûm. Muharrer Ahmet Mıdhat. Ma'arif-ı Nezareti Celilesinin ruhsatıyla (Tercümân-ı Hakîkat) matb'aasında tab' olunmuştur* (Islam and Science, *Ahmet Midhat,* printed by the permission of the Ministry of Instruction at the *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat* press). (Istanbul: 1895).

Ottoman polemical writings. The original *Müdâfa'a* was regarded as a landmark work in answering attacks on Islam. It remained a work of critical importance among Ottoman literati the early twentieth century. Ottoman statesman and scholar Giritli Sırrı Pasha quoted from *Müdâfa'a* at considerable length in his own polemical writings and challenged his Christian opponents to respond to these arguments. The legal scholar and jurist Mahmud Es'ad considered *Müdâfa'a*, along with *İzhâr al-Hakk,* to be the greatest polemic in recent times. He heaped praise upon it in the first installment of his own polemical series *Kelimetu'llâh-ı Te'âlâ'ya Dâ'ir Hütbe* (Sermons concerning the word of God), a published collection of sermons in the periodical *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*, whose goal was also to refute foreign missionaries.

The debate between Ahmet Midhat and Henry Dwight had two other important features. First, it further developed Ottoman Muslim understanding of *tebşîrât* and the role of the Torah and gospels for Muslims today. One camp believed that Christians concealed the texts that predicted the coming of Mohammed but preserved the original character of other sections of their holy texts. This view became more popular with al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk* in the 1860s, but Ahmet Midhat's polemical writings in the 1880s to the 1900s sealed its dominance. It even became the official view of the Ottoman religious class and continued into the Republican period. Today, this understanding of *tebşîrât* has received official sanction by the Turkish Republic and is now taught in its public schools. A textbook used by tenth grade students today entitled "Religious Culture and Morals" mentions that some divine books sent by God have been lost, or distorted by human interference and therefore lost their originality. The divine books, which humans

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still have in their possession, sent by God are the Psalter, the Torah, Gospel, and the Qur'an, the final one of which was give to Mohammed and preserved to today without change.[100]

Ahmet Midhat's second important influence was the further devaluation of traditional authoritative Islamic sources in religious debates. While he argues within the classical Islamic idiom of *tahrîf* and *bâtıl,* his arguments were predominantly influenced by anti-Catholic, anti-clerical Western scholarship. Rather than argue over whether his opponent correctly interpreted a verse from the Qur'an, Ahmet Midhat takes Henry Dwight to task for quoting the then-famed American historian William Prescott to prove that the Spanish were not altogether cruel in their conquest of the New World. He asks how his opponent could believe a "liar like Prescott," and if he did so, then it was purely out of naivete.[101] Ahmet Midhat preferred the historical and philosophical works of European scholars, not works from classical or modern Muslim authors. Such an approach to sources impacted on Ottoman Muslim polemicists in the early twentieth century. Chapter 5 will show that authors such as Halil Hâlid debated almost purely within the intellectual world of the English and French print sphere, as did Fatma Aliye, among the few authors who bested Ahmet Midhat in her predilection for French culture. The Qur'an, hadith collections, or commentaries by classical Islamic scholars are almost nowhere to be found in any of these works.

The early years of the Hamidian era saw the boundary lines of confessional

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[100] Ts. Kasnakova, H. Saldzhiev, "Zones of Ideological Conflict," 146.

[101] Ahmet Midhat, *Müdâfa'aya Mukabele*, 307. *Eğer Preskot'un bu ifadelerine Mösyö Dvayt hazretleri gerçekten inanmışlar ise safderunluk etmiş olurlar.* See Strauss, "Müdafaa'ya Mukabele," 90.

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identity harden in the polemical sphere, but more importantly, the defense of religion was drawn into the intellectual arena in which forms of Ottoman modernity were continually contested, formed, and re-formed. Rather than being a retrograde reaction to intellectual reformist movements such as textual criticism and positivism, Ahmet Midhat and Henry Dwight embraced aspects of these reformist tropes and incorporated them into their defense of the true faith. While neither side succeeded in their objective – Ahmet Midhat decisively ending the influence of foreign missionaries in the Ottoman educational and print spheres or Henry Dwight successfully answering intellectual objections to Christianity and Protestantism – the two were involved in perhaps the highest and most critical dialectical argument between a Muslim and Christian in the late Ottoman period.

The next chapter will show that Hamidian-era polemicists took their cues from these authors. They moved outside the arena of theological debates and the historical foundations of holy books and into a purely political approach to religion. They applied these religious reformists tropes to major social issues of the time, such as polygamy, European colonialism, capitulation agreements, and international trade agreements. By arguing these issues within the integrated field of religion, these authors were intentionally or unintentionally part of the Hamidian government's wider program of legitimizing their rule by consciously producing an Islam compatible with forms of modernity. Ahmet Midhat and Henry Dwight desired to leave an impact in the Ottoman print sphere, but they could have never imagined the impact they would have on religion and conceptualizations of modernity in the early twentieth century.

Chapter Five

Narrating Religion in the Hamidian Period: Piety, Civilization, and Modernity (1884-1908)

In June 1887 a report that was issued at the annual meeting of the Turkish Missions' Aid Society for the Promotion of Evangelical Missions in Bible Lands described a strange phenomena in a mountainous region near Marash. An Armenian priest had launched a religious revival in his village of Yarpuz among his congregation. He did away with the church's traditional eucharistic celebrations and decided to compose hymns in Turkish, the vernacular language of his congregation, disregarding the classical Armenian liturgies. Other priests and brethren joined him, chanting songs night after night until the morning, proclaiming that the essence of Christianity was love. They sang hymns together and used Turkish or Armeno-Turkish Bibles instead of classical Armenian. Some participants were even reported to have fainted during their worship while in ecstatic states. The movement gained momentum as the priests traveled among nearby villages, preaching their message to fellow Armenians. Soon there were "converts" of the movement in a dozen nearby congregations.[1]

In many ways the story was unremarkable for the audience of the Turkish Missions Aid Society. Western missionaries were used to hearing reports from *The Missionary Herald* or *The Church Missionary Intelligencer* prone to the euphemistic language of religious revival.[2] They were filled with Anglo-Protestant tropes of America's

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[1] "Turkish Missions' Aid Society For the Promotion of Evangelical Missions in Foreign Lands, 31st Annual Report." June 1887: Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

[2] Such reports were written for fundraising purposes of Protestant missionary agencies and oftentimes

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Second Great Awakening, featuring traveling preachers, local revivals, and the Holy Spirit filling congregations. It was in the same spirit of revivalism inspired by American evangelist D.L. Moody (d. 1899) that this Armenian movement found its religious source. What was unexpected in the report was the religion of the priest. Although he had come under Western evangelical religious influence, the priest chose to remain within the Apostolic Armenian church rather than convert to Protestantism. Other missionaries expressed a mixture of optimism and confusion to this revelation. Why would a priest and his congregation adopt the outward forms of Protestant worship yet not embrace its simple theology, unencumbered by the unnecessary dogmas and rituals of their ancient church?

Apostolic Armenian ecclesial authorities expressed similar confusion, if not outright worry. They were concerned that their congregants would abandon their church for a Protestant congregation, pastored by a graduate of an American secondary school. After all, this priest had shared close relations with foreign Protestant missionaries for years. He frequently invited them to preach at his church, and expressed approval of them to his congregation for their theological knowledge and spread of educational institutions. This was in contrast to their own Apostolic Armenian congregations, the report quoted him as saying, whose uneducated clergy were responsible for the prevailing ignorance in most of their congregations. To assuage the concerns of his bishops over these reforms,

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portrayed the Ottoman Empire as on the verge of mass conversion. In 1883 Missionary Edwin Bliss even posed the question of whether or not the missionaries could leave the Ottoman Empire and let the native Protestant church guide its own destiny. He admitted that withdrawal was not currently possible on an extensive scale, but even to entertain such a question suggested growing confidence among the ABCFM and other mission agencies that religious revival had spread from America to the Ottoman Empire. Edwin Bliss, "Has the Time Come for Missionaries to Withdrawal from Turkey?" 1883. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul.

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the priest agreed to preserve the ancient rites while maintaining their new worship style.[3]

This story, however much exaggerated by the report writer, is not an outlier among missionary reports that describe Christian inter-confessional dialectics in late Ottoman Anatolia. Other missionary and foreign consular accounts intended for internal use reveal many cases of Apostolic Armenian and American Protestant cooperation. They are replete with instances of the two confessional groups attending the same primary schools, Sunday schools, and church services. In certain occasions Greek Orthodox and Apostolic Armenian clergy even showed approval to one of their co-religionists becoming a Protestant. An 1886 ABCFM Marsovan station report recounts a Greek Orthodox priest allowing the baptism of a Greek Protestant's child at a Marsovan outstation to take place in his own church, and he approved of the child's testimony. American missionary J.L. Smith noted that Greek Orthodox priests even invited him to perform the baptism in their church. At the close of their own service, they themselves and the whole congregation remained, with one of the priests nodding approval during his baptism.[4]

This chapter will examine polemical and autobiographical writings that narrate such Hamidian-era inter-confessional encounters. While the above story is an intra-confessional Christian story and did not concern Ottoman Muslim officials or Muslim intellectuals, it is a useful example of the porous boundaries of identity that could exist between confessional groups, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when

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[3]   Turkish Missions' Aid Society.

[4]   J.L. Smith, Report of Marsovan Station, 1886, Archives of the American Board, Istanbul. That is not to say that relations between Protestants and native Christian congregations were always amiable in Anatolia. Even up to 1897, the widely successful Sunday school ministry at Marsovan station, which taught 1200 students on a Sunday morning, was restricted in its movement due to opposition from Catholic and Apostolic Armenian clergy. Report of Marsovan Station, 1897.

sectarian lines hardened and the Ottoman imperial center promulgated increasingly politicized forms of Islamic identity centered on Sunnism. Due to this official discourse, essentialized understandings of these figures remain in historiography of this period, which allows the view from Istanbul to separate sharply the categories of Muslim/Christian and orthodox/heterodox. In contrast, some religious clergy drew the line between true belief and heresy according to levels of education attainment in scientific and theological instruction, not Protestantism versus Eastern Orthodoxy. To other writers, such as Fatma Aliye and Halil Hâlid, education was an issue of division; the ignorant, specifically European scholars, colonial administrators, or missionaries ignorant of Islamic civilization, were practitioners of a false religion.

In the previous chapter I drew from Ottoman books, newspapers, and missionary archives to frame their polemical disputes within the larger context of state reform and discussions of Ottoman modernity. These sources showed that both sides of the debate agreed that their religion was validated by the cultural capital of progress, rationalism, and civilization. In this chapter, I draw on similar sources from Ottoman newspapers, particularly *Malûmât*, and published monographs. However, I widen the use of sourcing from works explicitly written as polemics, and include books and articles from other genres that contain polemical elements, such as Armenian Protesant Harutune Jenaniyan's autobiography, and a published debate on the topic of polygamy between Fatma Aliye, Ismail Gasprinski, and Mahmud Es'ad. I use non-polemical works that contain polemical elements to demonstrate the level to which religion was integrated into discussions of political, social, educational, and public policy reform.

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This chapter will explore the polemical and historical writings of Halil Hâlid, Ottoman governor Giritli Sırrı Pasha, Harutune Jenaniyan, Fatma Aliye, and Mahmud Es'ad. These figures were widely traveled, received an education abroad or had extensive contact with Westerners in the Empire, and were well versed in international affairs. All were defensive of their respective ethno-religious groups and sought to protect them in the face of European global hegemony. All believed that their religion would only persevere through the process of education, lest their ignorant brethren be seduced by false teachings from other religions. The Muslim authors perceived inter-imperial relations as a Muslim-Christian clash and sought to create alternative discourses of modernity combined with Muslim unity to protect themselves against the threat of Western imperialism. This all took place against the backdrop of Hamidian political and educational reform, in which the imperial center sought to shore up its political power against colonialism and frantically worked to construct a primary and secondary school system in the provinces.

Another factor taken into consideration in this chapter is the use of religious polemics as a tool of cultural reproduction. Muslim writers made innovative use of Western sources and European scholarship in these polemics: some sparingly so, such as the case of Sırrı Pasha's theology-focused writings; others exclusively so, such as Halil Hâlid's use of British and French primary sources to critique colonialism. This embodies the struggles of Hamidian-era Muslims to strengthen "non-Western" modernity and an authentic identity in a global system primarily defined by the West. I will view this struggle with Anthony Giddens's concept of structuration and Pierre Bourdieu's definition

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of the social reproduction of culture, which contends that with a specific logic of the social world, "reality" is the site of a permanent struggle to define reality. Bourdieu defines a reflexive sociology to describe how social agents understand their world and plot strategies of social action within possibilities and constraints of the world. Within these constrains, Ottoman Christian and Muslim polemicists struggled over the possession of what Bourdieu called "cultural capital" and sought to define the culture Ottoman society should value, bringing to the debate concepts of moral and material progress. They accepted European modernist discourse but couched it in a classical Islamic idiom or within Islamic history. They also sought to reshape their spheres of influence, whether Halil Hâlid's calling for the creation of a global Muslim community united against European imperialism, or Harutune Jenanyan's labors to unite all Ottoman Armenians regardless of confessional identity.[5]

Harutune Jenanyan: An Armenian-Protestant 'Exemplar'

As shown in the previous two chapters, ABCFM missionaries in Istanbul took great pains to avoid the appearance of hostility toward Islam, preferring polite discussions of religious virtues over direct attacks on Islam. They exercised caution in order to protect their massive operational infrastructure, which was much larger than the Church Mission Society's due to their dozens of mission stations and hundreds of schools. To take the example of their field in Northwest Anatolia, which included Merzifon, Sivas, and approximately two dozen towns and villages, the number of

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[5]   Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984). Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*, trans. Gino Raymond and Matthew Adamson (Cambridge, Mass., 1991), 224. Adeeb Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 6.

missionary stations grew from one to nineteen from the 1860s to the 1880s. At Merzifon's

Anatolia College alone, 101 Armenian students and 29 Greeks were enrolled in 1888.[6]

Such a large education system meant thousands of Ottoman Christians learned

English, converted to Protestantism, and some continued their theological studies in

Europe or America, all the while absorbing the Protestant missionaries' religious and

social outlook. They learned the post-millenialist social gospel and often joined the

Americans' crusades to eliminate slavery and alcohol abuse and bring women into public

life. The foundation for this social gospel was the spread of education, which the ABCFM

believed would spread the light of Christianity. So strong was their faith in social reform

and progress that by the late nineteenth century most missionaries saw the building of

schools as nearly as close in importance to the saving of souls.[7]

The ABCFM perhaps had no graduate of its schools as passionate in articulating

the connection between education and faith as Harutune Jenanyan. To the Armenian

Protestant pastor and educator, the divisions in Christianity were not between Protestant

and Orthodox or Catholic, but rather, between ignorance and education. This outlook

influences his views of Islam, which he discusses in his 1898 autobiography "Harutune,

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[6]   Report of Marsovan Station, 1891-1892. Archives of the American Board, Istanbul. From the 1860s to 1886 Marsovan station shot out roots and leaves, spreading its influence to nearby cities and villages via the construction of satellite stations, or outstations, which consisted of a small congregation, a school, and possibly a chapel, full-time pastor, and their accompanying civil organizations. If there were a pocket of Armenian Protestants located in another city, or a graduate of an American Board school willing to work as a teacher, then the ABCFM would attempt to establish an outstation there. Through this expansion method the American Board established Amasya outstation in 1862, followed by Samsun, Avkat, and Çarşamba in the same year; Hacıköy and Vezirköprü (1863); Ünye (1866); Çorum (1867); Kapıkaya (1869); Herek (1873); Zile (1876); Gümüş and Azaboğlu (1878); Bafra (1880); Dereköy (1884); Kastamonu and Ulu Pınar (1885); and Fatsa and Alaçam (1886). Marsovan supported nineteen outstations by 1886, providing them seminary students during their winter vacation to act as teachers and preachers, financial support for their schools and churches, and annual visits by the missionaries themselves. Gülbadi Alan, "Amerikan Board'in Merzifon'daki Faaliyetleri ve Anadolu Koleji" (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 2008), 41.

[7]   Paul Varg, "Motives in Protestant Missions," 78.

or Lights and Shadows of the Orient."

Jenanyan was born in Marash in 1858 into a Protestant Armenian family and educated at Union Theological Seminary in New York. He worked as an instructor in the ABCFM's Aintab schools and later founded the St. Paul's Institute at Tarsus in 1888, a private secondary school in the province of Mersin. Along with his educational efforts, he attempted to bridge Armenian confessional divides through the secular prism of ethnic unification. Jenanyan was a major figure in the Armenian Protestant church and rose to high education and leadership levels. Yet he was still a product of his time, plainly spoke the language of nationalism, and called for an ecumenical unity among the Armenian Catholic, Apostolic, and Protestant churches.

Jenanyan's 1898 autobiography is a comprehensive work that explores these issues in great detail. It includes his family's history, an account of his studies at ABCFM schools in Anatolia and his seminary studies in New York, and his rise to the presidency of St. Paul's Institute. It also includes a history of foreign missions in the Ottoman Empire, a chapter on modern-day Islam entitled "A Great People," and a description of Armenia's history entitled "A Martyr Race." He also includes accounts of the 1894-1896 Armenian massacres in order to raise funds for the Asia Minor Apostolic Institute, a relief organization for "widows and orphans of devastated regions," to which he dedicated the proceeds of the book. He wrote the book in English for the benefit of Christians interested in missions, making it suitable for the library of a Sunday School or YMCA. He targeted the book for the massive American Christian book and tract publishing industry.[8]

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[8]   Harutune S. Jenanyan, *Harutune, or Lights and Shadows in the Orient* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1898),

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As a Protestant Armenian, Jenanyan speaks with affection of the Armenian race as the first Christian nation in the world, avoiding condescending descriptions of the Apostolic Armenian church's religious rituals and modern-day resignation to Muslim political dominance often used by American missionaries against Ottoman Orthodox Christians.[9] In his historical chronology, Jenanyan repeats apocryphal tales of Armenia's ancient heritage, such as Eusebius's story of the King Abgarus corresponding with Jesus during his earthy ministry. Jenanyan boasts of their civilizational attainment in antiquity and the early medieval ages. While Europe languished in darkness and ignorance, Armenian literature flourished from the fourth to fourteenth century with its beautiful prose and rich theological content. It was the Armenians who held the Christian light as Europe dwelt in heathendom, and they helped to re-convert the continent after it fell into the Dark Ages. Armenians still have held this pre-eminent position were it not for their persecution over the centuries. Despite lacking schools, books, and teachers in the modern era, Jenanyan commends under-educated Armenian clergy for their clever means of preaching to their congregations, despite most of them also lacking an education. Speaking somewhat humorously, he quotes a village priest who expounded on God's goodness in establishing an orderly creation in a sermon illustration: "How grateful we should be that God has not given wings to the ox, the horse, or the camel, for, while flying, they might have lighted upon our dwellings and broken them in."[10]

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preface.

[9] An 1839 report from *The Missionary Herald* describes the Empire's ancient churches in the following manner: "To think of exerting much influence upon the Mohammedan mind, while the native Christian Churches remain as they are, is out of the question [...] The ignorance, idolatry and scandalous lives of their members preach louder and more effectually against Christianity than the united voices of all Protestant missionaries in its favor *Missionary Herald* 40, 1839.

[10] Jenanyan, 32, 242.

Yet at the heart of this anecdote is his main critique of the current state of the Apostolic Armenian Church: The priests are little more than members of the laboring class who learned scattered bits of ancient Armenian for liturgical purposes and were unqualified to lead their congregation. At a time when education and secondary schools had begun a flowering in the Armenian *millet* – which in addition to missionary schools included those administered by the lay community, due to the Tanzimat reforms creating institutions of internal governance – Apostolic Armenian congregations required a more substantial explanation of their faith. Vague references to scripture or an appeal to tradition are no longer sufficient. The priests' lack of knowledge and inability to answer their congregations' theological questions are a source of shame and reason for derision from outsiders, causing "mocking and laughter."[11]

Jenanyan's solution is not a mass conversion out of the Apostolic Armenian Church to Protestantism. He does not trail off into post-millenialist prose in his writings, imagining Protestantism covering the whole globe, as foreign missionaries often did in their letters and reports. Rather, he calls on the Enlightenment to redeem the Armenian race and offer its fruit of religious and educational progress. He does not fault the theology of the Apostolic Armenian Church for this predicament but rather the incomparable persecution the church faced in its 1500-year history, with its bishops and priests led away in chains by pagan or Muslim captors. Education, he believes, will return the Armenian people to their high status and rich cultural heritage. After all, they are greater than the Roman Empire and especially loyal to God, for they endured long after

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[11] Ibid., 34.

more powerful civilizations disappeared.[12]

To raise the educational level among fellow Armenians, Jenanyan founded St. Paul's Institute in Tarsus in November 1888 with seventeen students. Starting as an elementary school, he raised it to a collegiate program before his resignation as president in 1893. He served as the principal of the school for the next eight years, then founded and ran the Apostolic Institute of Iconium, which established orphanages that fed students to St. Paul's Institute. While his institute did have an evangelical emphasis (where he claims that of the 94 students in the school, "three-fourths of whom were converted to Christ, and forty-two received into the churches on confession of faith"), Jenanyan used secular terminology to describe his intention of founding the school as a place where the orphan and poor could be gathered and trained for useful lives. Most important to him, the president was a native Ottoman Christian, not a foreign missionary. While some ABCFM workers feared his institution could clash with existing missionary forces, Jenanyan believed that his school defied the long-held notion that native Ottomans were incapable of running such an operation.[13]

Other Armenians agreed that distinctions in their ethnic group were not between Catholics, Apostolic Armenians, and Protestants, but between the educated and uneducated. A columnist for *Arvelik,* the Istanbul-based Armenian newspaper published by the ABCFM, argued that the goal for all Armenians should not be ecumenical reunification, but the end of ignorance. To make his point he referred to a visiting Scottish preacher to Istanbul named Dr. Somerville, whose simple sermons showed that

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[12]   Ibid., 241.
[13]   Ibid., 115.

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points of agreement between the different Christian sects were more numerous than the points of disagreement. The writer used this analysis as a launching point to criticize the clerical class of the Apostolic Armenian Church with the same crimes of ignorance that Jenanyan had indicted them.

> "Their sermons are always the same. No wonder church attendance decreases each year. The people are becoming educated, the rising generation is growing, and cannot be contented in the simple words which satisfied our fathers […] It is a national necessity therefore to pay attention to the production among our Vartabeds and Bishops of learned and elegant preachers, in order to give a healthy moral and religious education to the people, and in order to drive out religious indifference from the rising generation."[14]

As an educator concerned with instructing Armenians in the surroundings of Tarsus, Jenanyan was not involved in Christian-Muslim debates occurring in the Istanbul or Ottoman print spheres. However, his anti-Muslim rhetoric became sharpened when he left the Empire. Jenanyan moved to Philadelphia in the early twentieth century and began traveling to religious conventions in America. He spoke to Protestant congregations, telling stories of the 1894-1896 massacres. For the rest of his life he stayed in the United States, and led religious services for all Armenian confessions in New York, being the only Armenian priest in the city.[15]

Jenanyan's opinions on Ottoman ecumenism soured during the final years of his life, but his earlier views as expressed in his autobiography were shaped by his ABCFM education and the growing cosmopolitan outlook of socially mobile Armenians. Jenanyan's work as a pastor and secular educator is an example of Ottoman Christian and Muslim literati negotiating their religious beliefs with the challenges of modernist intellectual movements. His nationalistic rhetoric combined with Christian spirituality

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14 Anonymous, "The Priesthood and the Spiritual and Moral State of the Nation," *Arvelik,* undated, PABCFM.
15 *"A Box for the Destitute to Help Armenian Sufferers," Bridgeton Evening News*, January 6, 1897.

show that the synthesis of evangelical and intellectual reformists tropes were not isolated to American missionaries in Istanbul but widespread among their network of influence. Most of all, he used his position as an educator and author to influence the social reproduction of culture in his part of the Ottoman Empire. In a Bourdieuian sense, he sought to use education as a cultural reproducer to create an Ottoman Christianity in which its various confessional groups were united but still loyal to the Empire. Yet Jenanyan's struggle to educate young Ottoman subjects and inform them of the superiority of their religion while reminding them of their duties to remain loyal to the state were not unique. As we will see below, Ottoman Governor Giritli Sırrı Pasha had the same difficulties in arguing for the superiority of Islam while at the same time administering non-Muslims in unruly parts of Anatolia.

Ottoman Governor Giritli Sırrı Pasha

During the time Harutune Jenanyan engaged other confessional groups, another Anatolian intellectual did the same. Unlike the Armenian pastor, Giritli Sırrı Pasha (d. 1895) did so from a position of state endorsement. The nineteenth century Ottoman administrator and religious scholar served as governor (*valî*) of the districts of Trabzon, Kastamonu, Ankara, Sivas, and Baghdad. While serving in this capacity he published a collection of Qur'anic commentaries (*tefsîr*), including *Sırr-ı Kur'an, Sırr-ı insân, Sırr-ı Tenzîl, Sırr-ı Meryem*, and *Ahsenü'l-Kasas*, the last of which concerns the theme of the stories of the Old Testament figures Joseph and Jacob. It is the work for which he is best remembered.[16]

Sırrı Pasha is less remembered for his polemic *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ Li Men İstehdâ* (Light

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[16]   İsmet Parmaksızoğlu, "Sırrı Paşa," *Türk Ansiklopedisi* XXVIII (Ankara 1980), 534.

of God for Those Seeking Guidance), published in 1893, which features a dialogue with

the Chaldean Patriarch of Diyarbakir and contains many similar themes as contemporary

works critical of Christianity. Like other polemicists, Sırrı Pasha claimed that his purpose

in writing is to respond to foreign missionaries in order to nullify their false beliefs of the

Incarnation, the textual perfection of the Bible, and the Trinity. He does so through a

survey of Christian theology, a description of the Christological disputes of the religion's

early centuries, and an analysis of the relationship between Jesus and God.[17] His use of

sourcing is similar to that of Ahmet Midhat. Throughout the work he makes frequent

recourse to "church histories," or European histories of the early church skeptical of its

divine origins.[18]

Yet there are a number of distinguishing features that set this polemic apart from

Sırrı Pasha's contemporaries. First, his opinion of non-Muslims was formed through

extensive contact with prominent members of the Christian religious and political

community. As the governor of numerous Anatolian provinces, he corresponded with

high-level ecclesial figures in the Armenian and Syriac millets and monitored the growth

of missionary schools – which he noted during his posting as the governor of the Sivas

Vilâyet that the instruction of the Turkish language at Anatolia College in Merzifon was

superior to the Turkish lessons in their provincial school.[19] The governorship of

Diyarbakir province was a difficult posting in the 1880s-1890s, as inter-religious violence

in the Anatolian provinces threatened to flare up, and eventually did so in 1894-1896.

Sırrı Pasha was tasked with protecting the welfare of these non-Muslim subjects in a

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[17] Sırrı Pasha, *Nüru'l-Hüda Li Men İstehdâ* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Vilâyet Matbaası, 1893), 25, 59-60.
[18] Aydın, *Müslümanların Hristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları*, 86.
[19] Gülbadi Alan, "Amerikan Board'in Merzifon'daki Faaliyetleri ve Anadolu Koleji" (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 2008), 386-387.

sultanic administration whose rhetoric decreasingly supported non-Muslim political and social integration. In his polemic he argues with Christians on the tenets of their religion, even though he was simultaneously tasked with their administration and securing their rights of religious practice, which were scrutinized very closely by British consular officials following the 1878 Treaty of Berlin. His close contact with Ottoman Christians and personal dialogue with them contrasts sharply with Hacı Abdi Bey or Harputî İshak, who in their polemics appeared to shadowbox a composite image of a Christian stitched together by centuries of Islamic polemics and French-language Enlightenment books rather than a real practitioner of the faith.

Sırrı Pasha's references to contemporary political concerns are more articulate than other polemics due to his administrative responsibilities, such as overseeing the settlement and provision of Muslims migrants from the Russian Empire and the Balkans, fleeing wars and religio-ethnic violence. Along with settling these refugees, he contended with nascent Armenian revolutionary groups. In the late nineteenth century, Armenian intellectuals dreamed of political alternatives to the Empire. The Hnchack revolutionary group called for an independent socialist republic to form in Ottoman Armenia. The Dashnaks also worked for an independent Armenia but sometimes set aside this goal in favor of a more realistic autonomous republic within the Ottoman Empire instead. Both groups found support among Armenian subjects for the independence of the six northeastern provinces of Van, Bitlis, Diyarbakir, Erzurum, Mamuret el-Aziz, and Sivas. Sırrı Pasha had to subdue these threats while not curtailing Armenians' rights as Ottoman subjects to practice their religion.[20] The tension of creating a satisfying solution between

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[20]   A. Hâlim Koçkuzu, "Giritli Sırrı Paşa ve Tefsirdeki Metodu" (Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler

these contradictory aims is reflected in his polemic.

Sırrı Pasha's *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ Li Men İstehdâ*

Befitting Sırrı Pasha's direct contact with Christians in his province, he does not

open his polemic with the familiar trope of Protestant missionaries raining down anti-

Islamic writings throughout the Ottoman Empire. Rather, he states that in order to

understand properly other religious beliefs, one must consider them on their own terms

and hear from the mouth of a practitioner himself. Not indulging another's views brings

more harm than it does good:

> In order to be able to have a discussion with those holding an opposing view in the matter of
> religion, I believe it is not necessary for us to state the need to hear the person's critical
> perspective, because however many people there are that want to serve religion, [if] they do not
> have this view, they bring injury instead of service, and these wretched ones do not even know
> this.[21]

While some are compelled to enter this discussion due to religious sentiments,

Sırrı Pasha writes, it is necessary to approach the other side with understanding. Because

of these convictions, he requested the Chaldean Archbishop of Diyarbakir Abdu Yesu' to

engage in a *münâzara* (public dispute) in front of the public on a Friday. He and the

archbishop came together many subsequent Fridays to describe their beliefs to each other

and the audience. These meetings always ended in a debate, whether an amiable

discussion or a more direct argument. The content of their debates involved various

theological matters, but it centered on two main issues: the prophethood of Muhammed

and the Trinity. Sırrı Pasha believed the upshot of these long discussions is that rank-and-

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Enstitüsü: Basılmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Konya 1992), 8; "Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire,"
Armenia.

[21] Sırrı Pasha, *Nüru'l-Hüda Li Men İstehdâ* (Diyarbakır: Diyarbakır Vilâyet Matbaası, 1893), 2. *Muhâlefet
eylediğine dâir münâzara edilmek içün insan ne kadar nikad bâzır olmak lazım kalacağı beyandan
müstağni. Cünkü bazen haram-i dîn olmak isteyen sa'ka kıllet basıretle neuzu billâh mâdem dîn oluyor
da bîçârenin haberi bile olmuyor.*

file Christians, and even educated figures such as Abdi Yesu', completely lack knowledge of Islam. But to a certain point it is necessary to excuse Christians for their ignorance on the intricacies of the religion.[22]

Sırrı Pasha describes the literary impetus for his writing of *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ* by recounting the current state of religious Turkish literature with the Ottoman Empire. He is well acquainted with contemporary anti-Christian polemics. Those he names specifically, and quotes at length, including al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk,* Ahmet Midhat's *Müdâfa'a*, and the translation of *Resâ'il-i Hamidiyye*, an Arabic work written by a Syrian ulema member. While these works are highly estimable in their own right, he writes that they are not sufficient to answer the sheer volume of Christian books translated to Turkish. His purpose, therefore, is not to write a treatise "like the Jesuits" to invite people to his religion but to explain the truths of the Qur'an to those whose minds have been poisoned by the writings of pernicious groups because he also desires to fill the lacuna of Turkish-language polemics.[23] He writes that most anti-Christian polemics are only available in Arabic. If these remain untranslated, then those who do not know Arabic cannot learn of their arguments. The name of God cannot be exalted in such a situation in which the intellectual theatre of war is abandoned because Muslims believe their homeland can be defended through the force of arms instead of rational arguments. This is a foolish perspective, as the pen is more effective than the sword, and "from God's perspective, the ink coming forth from pens of scholars is equal to blood flowing from the bodies of martyrs."[24]

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[22] Ibid., 4.
[23] Ibid., 8-9.
[24] Ibid., 5-10. *Midad-i aklam-i 'ulema, sayf-i mücâhidîn-i dînden akan kan ile mîzân-i 'adl-i hakkta yeğandir derler.*

In Sırrı Pasha's first extended discussion with Abdu Yesu', he quotes from Ahmet Midhat's *Müdâfa'a* to examine the historical development of Christianity and its abandonment of the original teaching of monotheism in favor of Neo-Platonic-inspired trinitarianism. Sırrı Pasha asks the Chaldean archbishop about early sects such as the Arians who did not believe Jesus to be divine and if this indicates that the earliest Christians did not actually believe in the Trinity. Abdu Yesu' responds that in Church history groups there is a group within Christianity that rejected the divinity of Jesus called the "Nazarenes" (*Nâsiriyun*), and this is the group against which Ahmet Midhat is writing. It is not to be confused with the word "Christian" (*Nasâra*) but the heretical "Nazarenes" that held such views.[25] This group was a fourth century sect whom Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis described in his *Panarion as* Jewish converts of the Apostles. They lived during the early centuries of the Christian era, insisted on the need to follow Jewish rites and traditions, and much like the Ebionites accepted Jesus as the Messiah and his immaculate conception but rejected his divinity. They only used the Aramaic Gospel and rejected the canonical Gospels.[26] Sırrı Pasha responds that Abdu Yesu' previously argued that the earliest and most recent Christians believed in Jesus's divinity. The Nazarenes are the exception that proves the rule to be false.[27]

The polemic then moves to a discussion on the life of Muhammed among Abdu Yesu', Sırrı Pasha and author and theologian Sehbenderzâde Filibeli Ahmet Hilmi (d. 1914) .[28] Abdu Yesu' walks a very careful line in this discussion. He cannot call

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[25] Ibid., 74.
[26] Samuel Krauss, *Nazarenes*. Jewish Encyclopedia, 1906.
[27] *Nûru'l-Hüdâ*, 75.
[28] Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi (1865-1914) wrote dozens of historical, theological, philosophical and political works, along with novels, plays, and poems. He was an interesting addition to the discussion due to his background as an intellectual in Islamic modernist reform circles. Ahmet Hilmi supported the aims of

Muhammed *the* prophet, lest he stray from orthodox Christian teachings on Islam and

lose the respect of his flock as an ecclesial figure. Yet he also cannot impugn the

character of Muhammed himself and dismiss his claims to prophethood, an equally

dangerous prospect. Within their discussion is a parsing of Islamic terminology, a

Christian apologetic, and a good-faith attempt to reconcile their misunderstandings. Their

dialogue is worth quoting at length.

> Sırrı Pasha: Because Christians believe in the divinity of Jesus, let us not speak on this. However, let us compare the lives of the noble prophets accepted by members of both religions with the life of Muhammed. According to you, is Muhammed greater than them? Their equal? If not, is he less than them? How do you see it?
>
> After thinking a while he said it like this: I am among the leading Christian scholars and my research is not insignificant. According to my knowledge I can define a clear view on this topic. And I can say with assurance that Muhammed's life was greater than the lives of the other prophets.
>
> After thanking him in a friendly way for this reasonable answer, I said this to Abdu Yesu': "A person who does not have the honor of being selected by God, however much they work, however much they know, and however beautiful their qualities they possess, it is impossible for them to reach the level of a prophet. We are like this and I think that Christianity is like this. However, you say "Muhammed's life is greater than all the prophets." Since you confess this truth, why don't you accept him as prophet?"
>
> He gave this answer to me: "I should confess this, that Muhammed was undoubtedly one supported by God. However, I do not accept that he was a prophet charged with doing away with Christianity and building a new religion. He was a prophet sent to lead Arabs on the straight path and abolish idolatry.
>
> It is interesting that despite Abdu Yesu' knowing proper Arabic and researching it, he does not know that "Resul" is a more comprehensive term than "Nebi," and in this situation a messenger is greater.[29] I explained this to him but he insisted on continuing.
>
> He asked, "Was Nebuchadnezzar not a messenger? Was it not God who sent him to Jerusalem in order to stop the Jews' excess?

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the Young Turk Revolution and was a major critic of religious traditionalism but rejected his contemporaries' materialist scientism and anti-religious radical reform. He was a pious Sufi with a strong modernist bent and intellectual engaged in European modernist discourse but rejected materialism and positivism. As a support of the Young Turk reform movement, he supported Turkish cultural primacy among the movement but rejected its anti-religious inclinations. He is today a prominent example of Islamic modernism that accepts piety but is uninterested in scripturalist forms of religious revival. Amit Bein "A 'Young Turk' Islamic Intellectual: Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi and the Diverse Intellectual Legacies of the Late Ottoman Empire" *IJMES* 39 (2007): 607-625.

[29] A *resûl*, according to Islam is a prophet that brings a new law. A *nebi* is a messenger who follows and enforces the law proclaimed by a *resûl*.

I answered him like this: "Are you serious with this answer or are you joking? You are comparing Muhammed with the infidel Nebuchadnezzar and comparing two things that have nothing to do with each other. To the degree that Nebuchadnezzar's life can be compared with the lives of the prophets you are showing an example of him as one who resembles Muhammed in the subject of being a messenger. Denying the prophethood of one whom you accept as greater than all the prophets and presenting examples like this is not suitable for one of your reasoning and character.

Here he gave this response to me: Similar to this, sometimes people come along whom God has created with supernatural characteristics; for example, Greek scholars, or those who possess much superior knowledge.

I said this as an answer: Your comparison is not complete. First, there is no resemblance between the life of Muhammed and the lives of the Greek scientists you mentioned, because these Greek scientists were idolators. Although they possessed much knowledge and wisdom, they did not attain belief in monotheism. However, for this belief a normal intelligence is sufficient. Second, they were raised in centers of science and obtained education there. However, because Muhammed lived and was raised in a place where people were illiterate, they were called ignorant (*ümmi*). Muhammed was raised among a people ignorant like this, never saw a school throughout his life, and never sat in front of a teacher for a lesson. However, despite this, as you confessed earlier, even the famous Greek scientists did not reach his level in knowledge, wisdom, and politics.[30]

Several important themes emerge in this discussion between the Muslim intellectuals and the Christian archbishop. The first is a disagreement as to whether Muhammed was a messenger who brought a new law (*resûl*) or reinforced an old law proclaimed by a *resûl* (*nebî*). Abdu' Yesu, who spoke fluent Arabic, describes Muhammed with the latter term which is more restrictive in meaning than the former, according to Sırrı Pasha. Whether this was due to ignorance or an intentional strategy, the Christian patriarch is using an Islamic idiom to praise the religion of his interlocutor but not acknowledging that the teachings of Muhammed abrogate those of Christianity. If Muhammed is merely a *nebî*, as Abdu' Yesu attempts to argue subtly in this passage, then he can agree that his mission was supported by God to correct Arabs and rebuke them of idolatry. His attempts at having it both ways fall apart when he extends the category of *nebî* to Nebuchadnezzar, a comparison to Muhammed that Sırrı Pasha will not accept.

Second, Abdu' Yesu uses a strategy of comparing Muhammed to those blessed

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[30] *Nüru'l-Hüda*, 77-80.

with superior knowledge and education such as the Greek philosophers, but Sırrı Pasha also rejects this attempt. The patriarch's strategy of praising the prophet as attaining a high level of wisdom and knowledge corresponds well with Muslim polemics that argued for the scientific and educational superiority of Islam. Interestingly it falls flat here. Sırrı Pasha rebuffs any comparison with the prophet and Greek scientists, whom he notes were idolators. He argues the opposite: Muhammed never had any formal schooling or learned to read. He was raised among tribesmen considered to be ignorant. But his lack of education only *confirms* the divine origin of his revelation. Muhammed never had the education of the Greek scholars yet passed them in the areas of knowledge, wisdom, and politics.

The arguments used by the two sides reveals much about their polemical strategies. Abdu' Yesu argues in the framework of a discussion, in which religious differences are the result of a mistake in understanding. He attempts to reconcile them using Islamic terms that allow for the praise of Muhammed but do not undercut his Christian theological beliefs. His delicate treatment of Islam resembles that of other Ottoman Christian polemicists and authors, such as Harutune Jenanyan and the twentieth-century Armenian Protestant Pastor Ohannes Kirkoryan, who will appear in Chapter 6. Abdu' Yesu is aware of his dual role as the spiritual leader of his flock and the defender of their faith, but also his political role as *millet* leader responsible for their welfare and safety. *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ Li Men İstehdâ* was published in 1893, on the eve of massacres against Ottoman Armenians in the Empire's eastern Anatolian provinces, ready to erupt in violence. Sırrı Pasha writes in a framework of a dispute, in which he sought to

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demonstrate the opponents' arguments as irredeemably false and convince his audience so. He does not allow Abdu' Yesu to escape with platitudes about the greatness of Muhammed without a definite answer as to whether he was a prophet. Nor does the patriarch's praise of him as a great teacher or reformer satisfy Sırrı Pasha, even his admission that Muhammed was greater than all the prophets.

Sırrı Pasha is set apart from other Muslim polemicists for another reason. He is perhaps the only polemicist to engage with a non-Protestant Christian in his writings. He is also the only writer to connect native Ottoman Christians with the writings of Protestant missionaries, holding them to answer for their books. As a statesman and theologian, the issues of Ottoman Christian-Muslim social relations and trans-imperial polemical debates appear intertwined. Other issues in his polemic include religious reform, which form a substantial part of *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ*. An issue of less importance is Islamic theology, but understanding his approach to classical scholarship sheds important light on his approach to religious polemics. Sırrı Pasha's wider scholarly intent will be considered below with an examination of his important theological works.

Sırrı Pasha and *Kelâm*

Sırrı Pasha's *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ* contains a sophisticated historically critical analysis of Christian theology. Due to his wide intellectual interests, he engages numerous fields of inquiry in his polemic beyond a mere refutation of Christianity. *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ* is as much of a work of *kelâm* – a philosophically-oriented structure within the general structures of Islamic thought – than a critical refutation of Christianity. In this polemic Sırrı Pasha intersects the issues of classical Islamic scholarship, modernist intellectual reform, and

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engagement of non-Muslims. Much of *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ* is a translation of the classical *kelâm* book *Şeru'l-'A'kâîd li't-Taftazanî* from Arabic to Turkish. In another work of his, Sırrı Pasha changed the structure and edited the contents of *Şeru'l-'A'kâîd*, adding his own commentary, calling it *Nakdü'l-Kelâm fî A'kâîdi'l-İslâm* (Support of *Kelâm* in the Doctrines of Islam). He dedicated it to Sultan Abdülhamit, "who illuminates the entire Islamic world and its defenses."[31]

The philosophical tradition of *kelâm* is deeply imbedded in Ottoman intellectual history, as its earliest scholars inherited it from the classical Islamic tradition. It was an idiom in which Muslims and Christians challenged each others beliefs, even dating back to the ninth-century writings of Theodore Abu Qurrah, the Melkite bishop of Harran (d. 825). In this time Muslims developed a form of *kelâm* influenced by the infusion of Greek texts into the Abbasid Caliphate. It became a speculative, rational science and a Neo-Platonic intellectual scheme.[32] In the early Ottoman period, the field of *kelâm* stagnated, as *şerh*s (commentaries), *haşıya*s (glosses), and *ta'lik*s took the place of independent works of *kelâm*. Primary works in Ottoman *medrese*s that taught this science included *Şeru'l-'A'kâîd* by Sadaddin Taftazanî (d. 1390), and *Şeru'l-Makâsıd* and *Şeru'l-*

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[31] *Nûrü'l-Hüdâ gibi, bütün 'alem-i İslâmiyyet ve ihsâniyyeti ziyalandıran...* Quoted in A. Halim Koçkuzu, "Osmanlının Son Dönemde Bir İlim ve Devlet Adamı Giritli Sırrı Paşa," *Selçuk Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 14 (2002), 207.

[32] Sidney Griffith, "Faith and Reason in Christian kelâm: Theodore Abu Qurrah on Discerning the True religion," in *Christian Arab Apologetics During the Abbasid Period*, ed. Samir Khalil Samir (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 1994), 1-4. The Christian participation in *mutakallimun* took place in the first century of the Abbasid period, at a time in which Islamic religious thought saw the definitive development of *'ilm al-kalam*, what Griffith describes as "the intellectual discipline that is devoted to the reasoned justification of the truths of the divine revelation and to the exploration of the implications of revealed truth for human thought in general." The growth of kelâm also coincides with the reign of Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (d. 861), the reinvigoration of the Pact of 'Umar, and its transformation into a field of rational inquiry through the translation of classical Greek works of logic and philosophy works into Arabic. The Christian *mutakâllimun* were apologists for their religion, defending their religion in an Islamicizing society, while the Muslim *mutakâllimun* were originally apologists and polemicists, but later used the idiom of *kelâm* as a speculative science, or a rational, conceptual, and logically regulated mode of discourse.

Mûvâkkıf by Sharif al-Jurcanci (d. 1423). These scholars were Asharites, even though the

Ottomans predominantly follow the Hanafi school of *fiqh*, due to the Selçuk legacy in the

Ottoman religious sciences. Students also studied the texts of theologians and

philosophers Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) and Fahr al-Din ar-Razi (d. 1209), whose

influence extended down to nineteenth century Ottoman scholars. But few innovations

occurred in the field of *kelâm* until the modern era.[33]

In the nineteenth century, religious scholars made significant contributions to late

Ottoman intellectual history. They established a connection between European modernist

discourse and reform tropes within Ottoman religious circles. Sırrı Pasha had input on

this matter among influential scholars, but he was not as explicit in his appropriation of

Western scholarship as *kelâm*-oriented scholars of the next generation, particularly Izmirli

Ismail Hakki, a prolific publisher and religious scholar of the late Hamidian and Young

Turk period. He did much to examine traditional Islamic thought in regards to the

challenges presented by modernization. Ismail Hakki developed *kelâm* as its own

independent science and did not ignore it or merely subsume it into political categories.

Rather, he opposed traditional Islamic scholars who thought that *kelâm* was a mistake of

ninth-century Abbasids who introduced Greek philosophy into Arabic.[34]

Through this reformist framework of *kelâm,* Sırrı Pasha was influenced by other

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[33]   Aydin, 104-105.

[34]   M. Sait Özervarli, "Alternative Approaches to Modernization in the Late Ottoman Period: Izmirli Ismail Hakki's Religious Thought Against Materialist Scientism."*International Journal of Middle East Studies* 39, No. 1 (2007): 77-90. Sırrı Pasha also argued through his research in *kelâm* that modernistic notions do not lead to a decline of religion. He argues as such in his treatise *Nakdü'l-kelâm fi Akaidi'l-İslam* ("A Examination of Kelâm in the Doctrines of Islam," 1324/1906) in the following way: "This is a work of truth, that demonstrates with Islamic doctrine of the verses of the Noble Qur'an, the sayings of the Prophet, the consensus of the 'ummah, the opinions from the authors on expounders of Islamic laws, and the works of the great Qur'anic commentators, expounding and explaining in a philosophical form like the sophists and the Mutaliza school etc., proving with strong rational evidence that opinion and beliefs that reject the aforementioned doctrines are worthless."

Islamic sects, particularly Mu'tazila, an Islamic theological school that developed during the eighth to tenth centuries, based on the premise that the commands of God derived from rational thought and inquiry, and reason was the final arbiter in moral or legal matters.[35] It is within this understanding of *kelâm* as a middle road between Ottoman intellectuals who supported Western developments in nearly all respects, such as the positivist and naturalist-inclined scholars Riza Tevfik and Mehmed Cavid, and opponents of integrating modern science and philosophy with Islamic theology. Sırrı Pasha's arguments were in line with other scholars such as Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi, his debate partner in the *Nüru'l-Hüda* against Abdu' Yesu. Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi maintained the necessity of modernizing Islamic theology. His works *'Üss-i İslâm* ("The Foundation of Islam") and '*Ilm-i Tevhîd* ("The Science of the Unity of God") dwelt on the relations between science and religion. Filibeli Ahmed Hilmi realized the necessity of science for social improvement, but recognized that to disregard religion was to disregard an essential part of human existence.[36]

Sırrı Pasha engaged in Ottoman scholarly controversies concerning Western philosophy and traditional Islamic theology, but as a governor he avoided writing of political controversies. Other Muslim polemicists were far more willing to engage Christianity with an eye to international political disputes and cultural controversies. Journalists talked of the treatment of women in the Ottoman Empire compared to the West, polygamy, European colonial violence, and other politically-tinged topics. Their

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[35] Koçkuzu, 205.

[36] Ömer Aydın, "Kalam between Tradition and Change: The Emphasis on Understanding of Classical Islamic Theology in Relation to Western Intellectual Effects," in *Change and Essence: Dialectical Relations Between Change and Continuity in the Turkish Intellectual Tradition*, eds. Sinasi Gunduz and Cafer Yaran. Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change. Series Iia, Islam, 18 (San Antonio, TX: Council for Research in Values & Philosophy, 2005), 111-112.

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writings indicate a trend in the Hamidian period, when the defense of Islam became intertwined with the defense of the Ottoman Empire against Western political encroachment. Fatma Aliye's books and articles on these topics is one of the clearest of such voices to emerge in this period.

Fatma Aliye's *İsti'lâ-yı İslâm* and French Christian Progressivism

Sırrı Pasha used polemics as an arena to discuss the contours of theological debate and modernity, but his polemic shares characteristics with the writings of famed novelist Fatma Aliye despite their different literary goals. She is similarly concerned with foreign incursion into Ottoman domestic affairs and criticisms of Islamic civilization's inferior stage of development, but her polemical strategy is offensive rather than defensive. Due to her interest in French culture and contemporary affairs, she writes at length of French clergy disaffected with the Catholic church for its bigotry and backward policies in the wake of the first Vatican Council: independent thinkers who desired to return to a purer form of Christianity that resembled Islam. Fatma Aliye also defends Islam against Western criticisms in the topic of which she had received the most inquiries from European women with whom she befriended: the subject of polygamy. In an extensive published correspondence with Mahmud Es'ad and Ismail Gasprinski, she argues over its merits in the twentieth century. Fatma Aliye defends the historical practice of polygamy in Islam as superior to widespread adultery and fornication in Europe but believes it has no place in modern society. Through this discussion she articulates the humane and civilized characteristics of Islam, which constructs a moral society contra the social anarchy of Europe.

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Fatma Aliye was the daughter of Ahmet Cevdet Pasha (d. 1895), a prominent historian, philologist, social theorist, and statesman of the Tanzimat period. Her father provided her with tutors in the secular sciences, literature, and French and Arabic, a rare educational opportunity for young Muslim women. She married the military officer Mehmet Faik Bey (d. 1928) at the age of 17. He delayed her education for eight years, insisting that she abandon her studies and even withdrawal from reading novels. At this time she gave birth to four daughters and lived in different parts of the Empire according to Faik Bey's postings. He lifted his prohibition on her education when the family returned to Istanbul in 1887. She soon began her career as a translator, journalist, and novelist.

Fatma Aliye's first publication was a translation of George Ohnet's *Volonté* into Turkish as *Merâm* (Aspiration). Following its success, which revealed her literary potential, Ahmet Cevdet Pasha tutored his daughter himself. She soon caught the attention of Ahmet Midhat, who became her literary patron and later her biographer. His writing style of simplified Turkish influenced her writing style, which she also crafted in an accessible manner. She penned numerous articles in *Tercümân-ı Hakîkat, Hanımlara Mahsûs Gazete* (The Ladies' Own Gazette), *Mehâsin, 'Ümmet* (The Muslim Community) and *İnkılâp* (Reform). Fatma Aliye published her first novel *Hayâl ve Hakîkat* (Dream and Reality) together with Ahmet Midhat in serialized form in *Tercümân-i Hakîkat* in 1891, followed by *Mühadarât* (Stories to Remember) and *Nisvân-ı İslâm* in 1892. She wrote many other novels in the following years on the themes of music, literature, married life, and women's education. In 1914 Fatma Aliye published *Ahmed Cevdet Paşa*

ve Zamanı (Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and his Time) to defend her father from political attacks. But following the end of the Empire and the Turkish language reform her influence waned. By 1928 she was mostly forgotten and considered a relic of a bygone era due to her inability to write in the new Latin alphabet. Her works soon became inaccessible to younger generations and not transliterated into modern Turkish until the eighties.[37]

Fatma Aliye's polemic *İsti'lâ-yı İslâm* appeared from March to May 1900 in the journal *Musavver Fen ve Edeb* (Science and Education Illustrated). Her anti-Christian work is based on two contentions: First, Western scholars of the Middle East who have a fundamental misunderstanding of Islam shaped missionary views of Islamic civilization. Because of their ignorance they have made minimal impact in Africa, the Middle East, and India. She specifically criticizes Anglican priest Isaac Taylor, who despite raising millions of pounds and commissioning thousands of missionaries to the Ottoman Empire, has only overseen one Muslim girl in Anatolia become a Christian. Meanwhile, millions of Africans have accepted Islam due to its spiritual strength and culture. Regardless of his stature as a philologist and sympathizer of Islam (in 1887 Taylor credited Islam with doing more than Christianity in ridding Africa of cannibalism and infanticide), Fatma Aliye faults him for intense jealousy of Islam's spread in Christian missionary fields.[38] She measures missionary success in terms of number of converts, ignoring social works such as establishing schools or printing presses. Her omission is notable in that she was the benefactor of Western education, an opportunities foreign missionaries were

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[37] Hülya Adak, "Gender-in(g) Biography: Ahmet Mithat (on Fatma Aliye) or the Canonization of an Ottoman Male Writer" in *Querelles* 10 (Jan. 2005), 4-6.
[38] Fatma Aliye, "İsti'lâ-yı İslâm," *Musavver Fen ve Edeb,* No. 30 (March 29, 1900), 118.

providing to hundreds of Ottoman females.

Her second contention is that the inter-confessional and intra-confessional battles in Europe between Christian modernists, atheists, and Catholic dogmatists have led to religious cynicism among the Western public. They see these battles as political bickering, which has caused many to abandon religion altogether. However, there are independent thinkers attempting to return to a true Christianity that existed before its corruption, which she optimistically believes resembles Islam. In this article Fatma Aliye makes lengthy reference to the speeches of Fr. Hyacinthe Loyson (d. 1912), a controversial and charismatic French Catholic priest. He was excommunicated in 1870 for his ecumenical attitudes towards Protestants and Jews and his public disagreement with the First Vatican Council's declaration of the doctrine of infallible papal authority. Through his speeches, Fatma Aliye presents him as an honest enquirer, who after seeing the lies of Christianity, is attracted to Islam for its temperate character and inclusive spirit.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Loyson preached in various European churches, including the American Episcopal Church, along with the Italian Methodist Church and the Waldenses, an Italian evangelical denomination. Loyson was the leader of French clergy associated with the Old Catholic movement, a reform movement that separated from the Roman Catholic Church and spread across Europe in the 1870s. It arose over specific doctrines of the Vatican Council of 1869-1870, particularly papal authority and its handling of rationalism, liberalism, and materialism. The Old Catholic movement viewed Eucharistic celebrations as the core of the church but tolerated a

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diversity of beliefs among its congregations. Loyson had been a Carmelite monk and popular preacher who drew many in Paris to his Advent sermons in Notre-Dame between 1865 and 1869. He left the order in 1872 and married the American Emilie Meriman, a controversial move even among Old Catholics. Loyson was briefly in charge of the parish in Geneva, long considered to be the extreme left wing of the movement but departed due to its political radicalism.[39]

According to Fatma Aliye's description of Loyson's influence in Europe, which likely comes from his biography or journal accounts of his influence in late-nineteenth century France, Loyson attracts throngs to his public speeches that are held in Protestant churches. Although he could no longer speak in the capacity of a Catholic priest, his sermons on ecumenical unity impact the crowds, especially the irreligious who are too disenfranchised to listen to another priest. Audiences hang on every word of the articulate, charismatic clergyman. Fatma Aliye describes him as the opposite of the Catholic church's narrow-minded, dogmatic clergy, unable to answer the objections of skeptical atheists. They listen to him because he can articulate a religion compatible with the modern sciences, reason, and wisdom ('*ulûm-ı cedîde'ye ve 'akıl ve hikmet'e tevâfük eden bir dîn*).[40] Most important for Fatma Aliye is his embrace of science and logic coupled with an open mind toward Islam. Although he confesses himself to be a Christian priest and among the disciples that truly believe in Jesus (*İsa'ya hakikî vechle imân eden*

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[39] See C.B. Moss, *The Old Catholic Movement: Its Origins and History* (Berkeley, CA: Apocryphile Press, 2005); Hyacinthe Loyson, Charles Jean Marie Loyson, John Bigelow, *Father Hyacinthe: Orations on Civil Society, With a Sketch of His Life and Portrait of Steel* (London: Morgan, Chase & Scott, 1871); *Biographical Sketches of Père Hyacinthe and his Wife* (San Francisco: Payot, Upham & Co, 1884); Charles Jean Marie Loyson, tr. Leonard Woosley Bacon, *Discourses on Various Occasions* (New York: G.P. Putnam & Son, 1869); Andre Queen, *Old Catholic: History, Ministry, Faith, and Mission* (Seattle: iUniverse, 2003).

[40] Ibid., 29 (March 9, 1900), 113.

şâkırdânındanım), he finds no contradiction between his faith and the prophethood of Muhammad or that Islam was based on the revelation of God.[41]

Fatma Aliye is accurate in her description of Loyson's oratorical abilities and popularity, but she inflated his influence in the religious and intellectual life of France. Loyson did gather throngs of religious dissidents and sympathizers when he began to work independently in Paris from 1879, but he was not a capable organizer, and the crowds that heard his preaching rarely joined his small congregation. Loyson would have benefited from ecclesial oversight, but the Old Catholic movement, which was centered in Utrecht, did not place him under its episcopal jurisdiction, as they refused involvement with him over a previous falling out. Furthermore, the French wing of the movement could not be placed under its Swiss leadership, as Switzerland forbade the denomination's bishops to exercise jurisdiction outside of the nation.[42]

Fatma Aliye is also correct in her description of Loyson's interest in Islam and its compatibility with Christianity, although his positive statements regarding Islam typically occurred in the context of his dialogue with a Muslim religious scholar, not through independent analysis of Islam or a theoretical appreciation of its merits, as is the case with Enlightenment writers such as Voltaire and Goethe.[43] Although Loyson and his wife Emilie Loyson showed openness and intellectual curiosity toward Islam while traveling in the Middle East, their interests in the religion remained mostly confined to their

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[41] Ibid., 32 (May 10, 1900), 142.
[42] Moss, 283.
[43] Ziad Elmarsafy, *The Enlightenment Qur'an: The Politics of Translation and the Construction of Islam* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2009), 119, 179-180. Voltaire wrote praise of the Qur'an and the historical figure of Mohammed for his religious expression of initiative over passive reliance on divine intervention. To him, the God of Islam was the Enlightenment's "invisible hand." To Goethe, the translated Qur'an was a text part of the world literary canon and central to the understanding of what links nations and cultures together.

foreign adventures.[44] In a collection of his sermons and public speeches published in

English in 1869 entitled "Discourses on various occasions," he addresses many topics of

social, political and religious importance but makes no reference to Islam.[45]

Once such incident that Fatma Aliye references in *İsti'lâ-yı İslâm* is a speech

Loyson gave in Algeria called "The station of religion" (*takdir-i dîn*) in March 1895,

organized by local "Protestants and Catholics, Freethinkers, and Mussulmans." In this

speech Loyson claims that universal religion bolsters all morals, all civilizations, and all

true progress, which includes and implies all worship of the Creator of the Universe,

under whatever name or form that might be. Unfortunately, he notes, Christians take few

pains to study Islam or become acquainted with its inner life. They provoke distrust and

hatred between Christians and Muslims, both of whom have much in common and are

both subject to the same divine law revealed by Moses.[46] Emilie finishes the account of

their travels through the Middle East with comparisons between Christianity and Islam.

She makes comments on polygamy that would have resonated well with Fatma Aliye and

Ahmet Midhat: Islam still sanctioned the "deplorable" practice of polygamy, which she

notes is rapidly disappearing, but it was less deplorable than the sexual licentiousness that

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[44] Mary Mills Parker, *A Bosporus Adventure: A History of Istanbul Woman's College, 1871-1924* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 104-105. The two are presented as such in the account of Mary Mills Patrick (d. 1940), an American educator and head of Istanbul Women's College. She received them in 1900-1901 and invited Loyson to present a public lecture at their school on the topic of religious unity, despite protests from the Catholic Church. Patrick described him as "one of the world's distinguished orators" in her 1934 history as "one of the few clericals at the time to fraternize consistently with all religious creeds and to become a pioneer in religious freedom": "From the moment of his arrival at the college people from all parts of the city came up the walk of our front entrance in crowds to visit him. The Turks, the Jews, and representatives of all different forms of religion felt that this remarkable man belonged to them... In the lecture of Père Hyacinthe we had a wonderful illustration of the finest French oratory. He spoke more than an hour without any notes whatever, and we all listened, entranced. Among other things, he referred to the universal religion in which Turks, Jews, and Christians could unite."

[45] Hyacinthe Loyson, *Discourses on Various Occassions*, tr. Leonard Woolsey Bacon (New York: G. P. Putnam & Son, 1869).

[46] Emilie Loyson, *To Jerusalem through the Lands of Islam* (Chicago: The Open Court Publishing, 1905), 25.

is all but legal across the Western world: "We have everywhere illicit polygamy, and in some of our foremost Christian nations we have legal polyandry – patented prostitution – and both are on the increase. If polygamy is a black spot on Islam – and it certainly is – prostitution is a blacker one on Christianity!"[47]

Fatma Aliye, Polygamy and *Ta'addüd-ı Zevcât'a Zeyl*

Fatma Aliye has received considerable attention in recent years for her writings on women's rights on social reform, religion, and Islamic gender identity.[48] She was only the second female novelist in the Ottoman Empire, and the subject of a biography by her mentor Ahmet Midhat, which as a genre in the nineteenth century rarely bestowed praise on a female subject beyond the clichés of a "good daughter, good wife" or considers her personal motivations or ambition.[49] Due to her interest in philosophy she wrote *Terâcim-i Ahvâl-i Felâsife* (Biographies of Philosophers) in 1900 in order to criticize European writers for their ignorance of Eastern societies, Muslim women, and the religion of Islam. Fatma Aliye kept up correspondence with European Orientalists such as author Emile Julyar, debating her in French newspapers on the rights of women and Islamic society vis-a-vis Western European nations. Her 1891 work *Nisvân-ı İslâm* (The Women of Islam), further explores these themes. She wrote for European readers to alter their false perceptions of Islam in general and Turkish women in particular. Such false perceptions,

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47 Ibid., 321.
48 Research concerning her writings within the field of Turkish literature is voluminous, but a few select works on the wider issue of women's rights in the Middle East and Central Asia include Deniz Kandiyoti, "End of Empire: Islam, Nationalism and Women in Turkey," in *Women, Islam and the State,* ed. Deniz Kandiyoti (London: Macmillan, 1991); Nikki Keddie, *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); Mary Fleming Zirin, *Women and Gender in Central and Eastern Europe, Russia, and Eurasia* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2007); Carter V. Findley, "Fatma Aliye: First Ottoman Women Novelist, Pioneer Feminist," in *Histoire Économique Et Sociale De L'empire Ottoman Et De La Turquie 1326-1960* (Paris: Peeters, 1995).
49 Adak, 2.

she writes, come from encounters among the Francophile, French-speaking residents of Pera, the cosmopolitan center in which most Europeans resided or visited. Here Fatma Aliye enjoins her female readers to understand French and Islamic law in order to converse with their European guests and correct misperceptions that they held regarding Islam and its impact on women, particularly on the issues of veiling, polygamy, and other religious forms of gender differentiation and subordination.[50]

While these articles do not assume the form of an explicit polemic as does *İsti'lâ-yı İslâm*, Fatma Aliye's discussions on politics, society, and religion adopted many Islamic apologetical and anti-Christian polemical elements. As discussed in the previous chapter, religious polemics in the 1880s-1900s moved outside the theological arena of their predecessors. They increasingly addressed social concerns such as European colonialism, the treatment of women, marriage and divorce, and education. Thus, it becomes difficult to categorize a work as belonging clearly in the genre of polemics. Similarly, it is equally unhelpful to ignore clearly polemical elements within non-

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[50] Fatma Aliye, *Nisvân-ı İslâm* (İstanbul: Tercüman-ı Hakîkat Matbaası, 1309/1891-1892), Elizabeth Paulson Marvel, *Ottoman Feminism and Republican Reform: Fatma Aliye's Nisvân-ı İslâm* (Ohio State University: Unpublished MA Thesis, 2011), 37-40. Serpil Çakır, "Fatma Aliye," in *Biographical Dictionary of Women's Movements and Feminists: Central, Eastern, and South Eastern Europe, 19th and 20th Centuries*, eds. Francisca De Hann, Krasimira Daskalova, Anna Loutfi (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 22. The book contains three novelistic-style conversations *(muhavere)* between European female visitors to the Ottoman Empire and a narrated version of herself in which they discuss and dispute issues of religion, Islam, and women's rights. The points of content come from a religious and civilizational discourse, but the two issues often blend together, as they do in many other writings of Fatma Aliye. In the second *muhavere*, the narrator discusses polygamy with a cosmopolitan Englishwoman, Madame R. She has come to observe the *iftar* meal. She is highly educated, and able to converse in French and is learning Turkish. The Englishwoman then scans the room, hoping to catch jealous glances between the women, and asks which women in the household are co-wives. The discussion then turns to women's rights in Islam and veiling. The work was widely distributed and read in Ottoman literary circles and quickly translated to Arabic and French. Fatma Aliye also published research under the title *Ünlü İslam Kadınları* (Famous Muslim Women) in 1895 to give profiles of "Eastern" female public intellectuals and make her readers aware of the socially active role that women played throughout Islamic history. Beyond her publishing work, Fatma Aliye also founded the first women's association in the Ottoman Empire, the *Cemiyet-i İmdadiye* (Charity Society) in 1897 to provide material assistance to war veterans or bereaved wives and children.

polemical works. Fatma Aliye's *Ta'addüd-i Zevcât'a Zeyl* is primarily a discussion on

marriage, but within it are embedded numerous criticisms of Christianity, church history,

and European civilization. It is for this reason that her discussion with Mahmud Es'ad and

Ismail Gasprinski on this matter will be considered.

In the nineteenth century polygamy became a critical topic in the Ottoman print

sphere. European surveys of the Ottoman Empire and its culture and customs contained,

with few exceptions, harsh criticisms of the practice as an example of Oriental despotism

and Islamic civilization as a second-tier member of civilized nations. Fatma Aliye

manages the difficult task of criticizing the practice while not implicating Islamic law in

the process. She approaches this practice in her numerous treatises, books, novels, and

newspaper articles. Her best-known treatment on this issue is through a series of

published correspondence with religious scholar Mahmud Es'ad.[51]

Mahmud Es'ad constituted part of a shrinking faction within the religious class

that unequivocally defended the practice along religious lines. He approaches polygamy

as an ulema member and considered it a cure for moral depravity in society. He also

approaches the issue as a legal scholar, admitting the growing complexity of polygamy,

divorce, and the general legal rights of women in the Hamidian period, when discourses

of women's rights grew.[52] Mahmud Es'ad defends the practice according to classical

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[51] Mahmud Es'ad, *Ta'addüd-i Zevcât* (Istanbul: Tahir Bey Matbaasi, 1316/1898); *Çok Eşlilik: Taaddüd-i Zevcât*, ed. Firdevs Canbaz (Ankara Hece Yayınları, 2007).

[52] Prominent authors of the late nineteenth century, many of whom wrote religious polemics as well, engaged in the discussion of women's rights in the Ottoman Empire vis-a-vis the Young Ottoman attempts at political Westernization in the Tanzimat and Hamidian period. Ahmet Mithat, Namik Kemal, Şemsettin Sami, Şinasi, Celal Nuri, and other authors held positions influenced by Islamic legal discourse, the reform edicts, the post-Tanzimat Ottoman legal landscape, and the intersections of these positions. See *Çok Eşlilik*, 13-30 and Rıza Savaş, "Modernleşme Sürecinde İki Osmanlı Aydını Fatma Aliyye-Mahmud Es'ad Tartışması" in *Kutlu Doğum 2004: Din Kültür ve Çağdaşlık* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları 2007).

Islamic legal precepts and the accumulation of centuries of Ottoman marriage law. He argues, however, from a naturalist position, the latest version of the ulema point of view, that polygamy was not enjoined nor did it originate with Islam, but instead originates in natural law. As a "natural law, it has only been recognized and legitimized by God's law... No positive law can deny this right given to the male by nature and confirmed by *şeria't*."[53] Like other critics of European culture, he uses examples of Western vice and sexual immorality to argue of the natural polygamous instinct in man and the social harms that results whenever it is outlawed.

Fatma Aliye answers him in the published correspondence *Ta'addüd-i Zevcât'a Zeyl* (A Postscript to "Polygamy"), printed in the weekly newspaper *Malûmât* and published as a single volume in 1898. She argues that Mahmud Es'ad's defense of polygamy is an insufficient reply to Europeans who denounce the practice or find it immoral, an assertion based on her direct contact with Western females visiting her household.[54] The practice of polygamy can no longer be defended in the modern age. Islam does not even order polygamy, and when it is permitted it must be considered the social context in which this permission is offered, she writes. Fatma Aliye concludes that Islam cannot violate universally valid principles.

> If we believe that Islam has universally valid principles, we ought to declare that the monogamous marriage is the one enjoined by Islam and that the verse of the Qur'an enjoining men to remain with one wife is in accordance with civilization. It is only then that we can justify our position.[55]

Fatma Aliye explores the historical and moral complexity of polygamy with more

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[53] Mahmud Es'ad, *Ta'addüd-i Zevcât.* Quoted in Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 286.

[54] *Fatma Aliye, Fatma Aliye Hanım yahud Bir Muharrire-i Osmaniye'nin Neşeti* (Lady Fatma Aliye or the Birth of An Ottoman Writer) (Istanbul: Kirk Anbar Matbaasi, 1893/1894).

[55] Fatma Aliye*, Mahmud Es'ad, Ta'addüd-i Zevcât'a Zeyl* (Istanbul: Tahir Bey Matbaası ,1316/1898). Quoted in Berkes, 287.

nuance in her other books. In the second *muhavere* (conversation) in *Nisvân-ı İslâm,* the

Turkish narrator explains polygamy to her English interlocutor in negative terms, yet

does not call for its abolition. She first tells the English character "Madame R" that

polygamy is not the norm in Turkish society and is in fact a cause for Muslim women to

pity those caught in the institution. She states, "You will find that not only I but the rest

of Turkish women agree with you in feeling pity for women who are married along with

other women."[56] It is only sanctioned in cases of necessity and rarely practiced among

Muslim leaders. When her English interlocutor asks why the institution has not been

prohibited, her Turkish protagonist argues along similar lines as Mahmud Es'ad and other

traditional defenders of the practice: it prevents adultery and reduces out-of-wedlock

births or the proliferation of mistresses in the Ottoman Empire. It also protected women

that would otherwise be left destitute in the case of divorce, particularly barren or

unhealthy wives no longer desired by their husbands. She does not approve of the

practice but tolerated it if women in dire circumstances ultimately benefitted and the

husbands follow the provisions of Islamic marriage law. Polygamy is still preferable to

the alternatives of destitution, infidelity, or prostitution.[57]

Mahmud Es'ad does not issue a strong rebuttal to this charge or mount a point-by-

point defense of polygamy but rather argues that both he and Fatma Aliye struggle with

the common question of integrating Islamic law and traditions with the universalizing

discourse of progress, enlightenment, human rights, and natural law. He admits that it is

not required in Islam and engages in a long discourse on appropriating Western

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[56] …*zevcleri kendi üzerine diğer bir kadınla tezevvüc eden kadınlara acımak için yalnız beni değil, bütün Türk kadınlarını sizinle müttefik bulursunuz. Nisvân-ı İslâm*, 89. Quoted in Marvel, 46.
[57] *Nisvân-ı İslâm*, 93.

civilization without capitulating their values to Europeans who think polygamy to be a defect within Islam. Mahmud Es'ad acknowledges that various camps of Muslims consider polygamy to exploit women and be out of step with contemporary social norms:

> It is not unprecedented for those who are aware of European sciences and manners, including those among our youth that are unaware of these sectarian matters, to believe that polygamy is a deficient aspect of Islam. Among these is one group, who come across poetic verses in the works of European writers, who say 'A woman's business is a man's business. They fall and rise together. They progress and regress together. Whether a woman is a slave or free, a man is always found with her. He is always together with her.' Another group among Muslims who, due to their blind obedience to Europeans, as they see troublesome events in the abuse of women, become inclined to the idea that polygamy violates universal morals and corrupts social life.[58]

The work concludes with a rejoinder to the Turkish authors' criticisms of polygamy by Ismail Gasprinski, a Crimean Tatar intellectual that published newspapers and books in the Russian Empire and worked for social and religious reform among the Muslim people of Russia. Gasprinski was well-acquainted with the Istanbul Turkish-language media and significantly involved in the intellectual life of the late Ottoman Empire. He and other Tatar intellectuals in the Kazan Governorate of the Russian Empire respected Ottoman writers such as Ahmet Midhat, particularly for *Müdâfa'a* and for translating Western and scientific works into Turkish.[59] Ottoman Turkish intellectuals were similarly familiar with Ismail Gasprinski's newspaper *Tercümân*, published in the Crimea and widely read throughout the Turkic world due to its simplified language that was intelligible to Turkic-language speakers across Eurasia.[60]

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[58] *Fatma Aliye, Mahmud Es'ad, Ta'addüd-i Zevcat'a Zeyl, 95-96. Avrupa 'ulûm ve ma'arifine, ahvâl-ı içtimâiye ve siyâsiyesine vâkıf olup da, mesâil-i mezhebiyelerinden gâfil bulunan gençlerimiz içinde dahî , ta'addüd-i zevcât İslâmiyet'in zayıf ciheti olduğuna kâni' olanlar görülmemiş değildir. Bunlar bir taraftan Avrupa muharrirlerinin âsârında "Kadın işi erkeklerin de işidir. Beraber düşer kalkarlar. Beraber terakkî ve tedennî ederler. Kadın esir de olsa âzâd da olsa, erkek dâima onunla beraber bulunur. Onunla hemhâl olur" meâlinde şâirâne fıkralara tesâdüf ettikçe, diğer taraftan beynel-İslâm kadınlar hakkında bâzı suistimâlât vukûa geldiğini gördükçe Avrupalılara taklîden ta'addüd-i zevcâtın ahlâk-ı umûmiyeyi ihlâl, hayât-ı içtimâiyeyi ifsât eylediğine zâhib olurlar.*

[59] Strauss, *Müdafaa'ya Mukabele*, 93.

[60] Ismail Gasprinski held a traditional view of polygamy but actively engaged the discourse of women's rights in the modern era. His relationship to his daughter and support of her education resembles that of

Gasprinski criticizes Mahmud Es'ad's condemnation of polygamy through modernist discourse. He argues that the advance of progress in the Muslim and Turkish world is not proportional to the reduction of polygamy. God enjoined Adam to fill the earth, and polygamy was a reasonable means to fulfill this mandate. The practice has not lost its relevance in the modern age, as both Fatma Aliye and Mahmud Es'ad argue. They as Muslim intellectuals should not be so craven to Western opinions, he writes, whose authors have misunderstood Islam for centuries, with some Americans even believing Muhammed to be a Greek prophet. The Islamic world should not look to Europe for moral and legal guidance, as the continent itself is still maturing, with some nations having only recently rescinded the death penalty for adultery. Gasprinski turns Mahmud Es'ad's argument on its head and suggests that as Europe's civilization advances it will come to resemble Muslim law on matters of marriage and divorce.[61]

> If Europe continues on this path of progress, however much until now as they have accepted the statutes of Muslim law and in essence the fundamentals of divorce, soon polygamy will not be an offense or crime, and they will give up, and they will be required to accept the fundamentals of its legality. Our proof is comparing their future to their past.[62]

Ahmet Cevdet Pasha and Fatma Aliye, as he established a journal for women Â*lem-i Nisvân* (The World of Women), which was edited by his daughter Şefiqa. Ismail Gasprinski's involvement in the discussion of *Ta'addüd-i Zevcat'a Zeyl* derives from his activist efforts to unite members of the global Muslim intelligensia. He was among the initial founders of the Union of Muslims (*İttifaq-i Müslimin*), a liberal-democratic party of Muslims in the Russian Empire that brought together scholars, educations, and religious figures from Muslim Turkic groups. See Firouzeh Mostashari *On the Religious Frontier: Tsarist Russia and Islam in the Caucasus* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006); Robert Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia" in *The American Historical Review,* Vol. 108, No. 1 (Feb., 2003): 50-83; Wayne Dowler. "The Politics of Language in Non-Russian Elementary Schools in the Eastern Empire, 1865-1914," *Russian Review* 54, No. 4 (Oct., 1995): 516-538; Robert Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Niyazi Berkes, *The Development of Secularism in Turkey*, 286; Holly Shissler, *Between Two Empires: Ahmet Agaoğlu and the New Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

61 *Mahmud Es'ad, Ta'addüd-i Zevcat'a Zeyl,* 99.

62 Ibid. *Avrupalılar şu tarîk-i terakkîde devam ederlerse şimdiye kadar nice ahkâm-ı şer'iyeyi ve ezcümle esâsen talâkı kabûl ettikleri gibi karîben ta'addüd-i zevcâtın bir cürüm, bir cinayet olmadığını da teslîm edecekler ve onun meşrû'iyeti usûlünü kabûle mecbur olacaklardır. Delîlimiz müstakbelin mâziye mukâyesesidir.*

Ismail Gasprinski underlines this point at the end of the article series – that to *outlaw* polygamy is its own form of ignorance. Such a prohibition is worse than what European society accuses Muslim society of committing by engaging in the practice in the first place. Permitting polygamy conforms to logic and wisdom, and it benefits human society. It is a matter of sheer stupidity and foolishness to count it as an offense or crime.[63]

The discussion between these three intellectuals in *Ta'addüd-i Zevcat'a Zeyl* includes moral and reform elements that permeated social commentary in the Ottoman press. Despite their differences of opinion, the writers believed European culture had abandoned moral values in its search for political, economic, and material gain. They advocated Islam as a remedy and rejected the idea that religion was inherently opposed to rational thought or social progress. Islam, when correctly practiced, protected women's rights. It strengthened the institution of marriage and protected women from divorce, which could leave them destitute. To them, a rational intellectual approach based on the observation of facts showed Islam to be true, and if other Muslims could embrace the logical elements of their religion, the Islamic world could properly respond to the threat of Western cultural hegemony.

These writers favored using current events and social commentary over theological arguments in their religious polemics, but other authors went even further with the political nature of their polemics. I will now turn to Halil Hâlid, an exiled Ottoman writer who responded with such a single-minded focus on the threat of Western

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63   Ibid., 102. *Ta'addüd-i zevcâta müsa'ade vermek akıl ve hikmete muvâfık ve cem'iyet-i beşeriyenin menfa'atine mutâbıktır; bunu bir cürüm, bir cinâyet 'addetmek ise sırf eser-i humk ve belâhettir. Ben şu iddi'âmı edille-i 'akliye ve tarihiye ile ispat ettim zannediyorum.*

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imperialism that his anti-Christian polemic is almost completely an anti-imperialist treatise. It contains almost no discussion of theology or the historical differences between Christianity and Islam. Yet its importance as a polemic remains. His book was part of an international genre of political writings produced by Muslim intellectuals that reified the concept of a global Muslim community. Halil Hâlid articulated this concept for Ottoman Muslims as a community with rights, privileges, and territory defined by the threat of European colonialism.

Halil Hâlid's *The Crescent vs. The Cross*

Other Muslim intellectuals wrote outside the Ottoman Empire but participated vigorously in its print sphere. During the Hamidian period this category of writers included Ottomans exiled for running afoul of censorship laws or disagreeing too strongly with the state's policies. One such figure is Çerkeşli Şeyhizâde Halil Hâlid (d. 1931), an exile to England. He did more than any other polemicist to integrate his critique of Christianity with a critique of Western imperialism, arguing that wrong-headed international politics were informed by wrong-headed theological notions. He benefited from direct contact with English defenders of colonialism and had first-hand knowledge of their attacks on the Islamic religion and civilization. Unlike other Turkish intellectuals, he did not rely on the filter of European works that were selectively translated into Turkish and appeared in small numbers in Turkish newspapers, or like Ahmed Midhat or Fatma Aliye, depended exclusively on French literature, novels and newspapers; which were informative to be sure but contained a partisan filter.

Halil Hâlid's polemic *The Crescent vs. the Cross* features ideas similar to other

Young Turks in exile. He uses Pan-Islamist language to address what he supposes to be

international public opinion and conventional wisdom among European intellectuals. He

attempts to resolve an intellectual problem in the Muslim world, which emulates

universal aspects of Western civilization while at the same time attempting to attain

equality in international society. He believes imperialism to be the principle source of

Christian-Muslim religious division in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

During his time in England, he condemned European colonialism and imperialism, in

particular the British occupation of Egypt and the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and

Herzegovina. [64]

Hâlid was an author, journalist, diplomatic assistant, lecturer, language instructor,

and social commentator. He was born in Ankara in 1869. His studies continued at the

Beyazit Medrese and the law faculty of Istanbul University, where he graduated in 1893.

Due to civil unrest in the Ottoman Empire he went to England in 1894. According to his

memoirs, he worked in a publishing house in the 1890s under the directorship of

Ebüzziya Tevfik, who himself was exiled to Konya and Rhodes for his opposition to the

sultan. Hâlid opposed what he perceived to be the despotic rule of Abdülhamit, all the

while filing suit for the restoration of his family's lands in the Anatolian city of Çerkeş,

which were granted to his family by Mahmud II but confiscated by the Hamidian

government. Hâlid believed he would be soon exiled himself and traveled abroad

voluntarily rather than forcibly. In May 1894 he escaped to England through the

assistance of a *Times of London* correspondent stationed in Istanbul. There he worked as a

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[64] Cemal Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 63-64.

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journalist and wrote articles concerning social and cultural issues of Turkey, eking out a meager living.

In 1897 Hâlid became Vice-Consul at the Ottoman Embassy in London and then began a respectable academic career. From 1902 to 1911 he was appointed lecturer of Turkish at Cambridge University by the Special Board of Indian Civil Service Studies. He obtained a master's degree from the University of Pembroke and taught his native tongue to other interested parties. His knowledge of Turkish made him a valuable contributor to Orientalist scholars and their research projects in the early twentieth century, specifically those of Elias John Wilkinson Gibb and Edward Grainville Brown. Hâlid wrote the *Mukaddeme* of Gibb's six-volume "History of Ottoman Poetry.*"* He became a member of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and struck up a friendship with the poet Abdülhak Hamid. He returned to the Ottoman Empire in 1912 and served as a state deputy until he was appointed to India as the consul-general of Bombay. He traveled to Germany upon the outbreak of World War I and stayed there for its duration. In 1922 he was appointed to Istanbul University's department of theology and remained as a member of its faculty until his death in 1931.[65]

Hâlid's linguistic abilities are evidenced by the numerous languages in which he wrote and published. His works appeared in English, Arabic, German, and French. Among his well-known works are "A Diary of a Turk" (1903), "A Study in English Turcophobia" (1904), *Cezayir Hatiratindan* (Reminiscences of Algeria, 1906), *Türk Hakimiyeti ve İngiliz Cihangirliği* (Turkish Sovereignty and English Imperialism, 1925)

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[65] Halil Hâlid, Hilal ve Haç Çekişmesi" tr. Mehmet Şeker, A. Baloğlu (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, 1997). See Meryem Üke, "Emperyalizm Karşıtı Bir İsim: Halil Hâlid Bey," *Bülten* No. 57 (2005): 74-87; İbrahim Şirin-Musa Kılıç, "Halil Hâlid Efendi ve Osmanlı Londra Sefarerine Dair Bir Layiha" *Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi* No. 18 (2005): 395-411.

and "The Crescent versus the Cross" (1907). The Egyptian publisher *Hindiyye Matbaasi* released a Turkish version of the same book, *Hilal ve Salîb Münaza'asi,* the next year.

Hâlid was a fierce anti-Hamidian partisan and frequently criticized his regime. Among his complaints were that the sultan refuses to defend the Empire and accepts its inferior status vis-a-vis Europe in exchange for consolidating his own rule. Abdülhamit weakened the state's domestic affairs by dismantling the bureaucracy and surrounding himself with sycophants. Hâlid writes in his memoirs "The Diary of a Turk," that the imperial grounds at Yildiz Palace are filled with a secretive, corrupt, and excessive staff. Through Abdülhamit's complex apparatus of personal control he has bypassed official state channels by replicating each civil service position with a functionary that reports directly to him. By means of this system he has seized control of state functions that rightfully belong to other branches of government. An espionage and police bureau is maintained in the palace even though the old Ministry of the Police is still in existence. In the palace resides advisers to the sultan whose business is to attend to matters connected with Muslim affairs, yet the old office of the *şeyhü'l-islâm*, which theoretically should be in charge of such religious matters, is still in existence.[66]

Hâlid's sharpest criticism against Abdülhamit is for allowing colonial powers to poach his domains. Abdülhamit was blind to his weak position due to his close connection to European powers that seek to exploit the Ottoman Empire's weak position and political troubles. The Kaiser of Germany praises the sultan and prays that God might preserve his rule but only so that they might exploit the Ottoman Empire's position through his misgovernment – "doubtless that the Teutonic concession-hunters and

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[66]   Halil Hâlid, *The Diary of a Turk* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1903), 159-160.

fortune-seekers in Turkey might continue to reap the harvests his life assures to them."[67]

Abdülhamit was bought off by these European powers, allowing Muslims to suffer in the Balkans and North Africa, ignoring them all while he keeps to himself in private luxury on the Yildiz Palace grounds. He insulates himself against criticism through his isolated life and only cares of his personal greatness being made known in Europe. To do so, Hâlid argues, Abdülhamit dispatches journalists to improve his reputation abroad. He tolerates European exploitation of Muslim lands as long as they speak highly of him in the Western court of public opinion. His genius, however, is convincing his Muslim subjects that Europe is responsible for their humble condition, while at the same time convincing European statesman that his autocratic measures are necessary to rule a subject population loathe to progress.[68]

Halil Hâlid writes in the preface of "The Crescent vs. the Cross" that he undertook this project to reply to unjust Western criticisms of Islamic civilization. He describes himself as a Turk by race, a "Mussulman" by faith, and that the honor of the Ottoman people in particular has been assailed by many persons in England. While anti-Muslim polemics are characterized by coarse invective, he will refrain from slander and only criticize institutions or political actions.[69] He argues in the first chapter that Europe has undertaken a "civilizing mission" upon the Orient and considers it a humanitarian work. Such a notion comes from their hierarchy of material and moral progress, in which

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[67] Hâlid, *The Diary of a Turk*, 177.

[68] "His phenomenal shrewdness is shown by his making the Mussulmans believe that the misfortunes endured by Turkey under his caliphate are entirely due to the hostile interference of grasping Europe with Turkish affairs. To Europeans, on the other hand, he often succeeds in conveying the impression that the people in whose name he rules are incapable of appreciate the value of progressive and constitutional government, and in order to justify this, he puts every obstacle in the way of their making progress in industry, science, and literature." Ibid., 183-184.

[69] Halil Hâlid, *The Crescent vs. The Cross* (London: 1907), 2.

Europe sits upon the top of the pyramid while the East is at best semi-civilized and at worst barbarous. But such discourse is actually window dressing for the exploitative practices that occur under colonialism. To Europe the Middle East is a convenient testing ground for the "civilizing process" and its practices are portrayed as barbaric so that European powers could "civilize" it, a polite way to describe Europe imposing its will on Eastern nations. This has been accomplished exclusively through superior weapons and military strength.[70]

In a later chapter Hâlid spends considerable time critiquing the Christian evangelization of Islam, which he also considers to be part of the larger program of European colonialism and nationalism, not an independent program with its own goals outside of state interests. Christian missionaries have the force of national armies and colonial administrators behind them to coerce native populations to convert. English missionary efforts in China, for example, spread their religion by the same forceful means in which they criticized Islam of doing in Christian lands. Despite these asymmetrical power relations, Muslim missionaries have been far more successful in converting native populations in Africa and Asia than Christians. Islam has spread among 20 million people of China without any means of military might, while Christianity has made insignificant inroads. The reason for the spread of Islam is its inherent beauty, sincerity, and moral superiority of its worshippers, not moral laxity in matters such as polygamy. After all, he writes, brothels operating in Muslim lands such as in northern Indian are owned by non-Muslims and receive British protection.[71]

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[70]   Ibid., 16.
[71]   Ibid., 72-76.

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Halid Hâlid devotes considerable attention to Pan-Islamism, a concept with which he has a complicated relationship. It is tempting to label him a Pan-Islamist, considering the frequency with which he offers his sympathies to Muslims in Algeria or India under the colonial yoke.[72] This would be an inaccurate label. To Hâlid, Pan-Islamism is a political discourse created by Europe and projected onto the Islamic world to justify its political and economic expansion into Asia and Africa. European powers depicted themselves as victims in the course of their domination of these Muslim lands by claiming that the tenets of Pan-Islamism called for unified Islamic attack upon Europe, thus necessitating a pre-emptive move against the East. Hâlid takes careful pains in his other writings to distinguish between Pan-Islamism and the "Union of Islam" (*ittihâd-ı İslâm*). He explains the difference between the two in a February 1908 newspaper article that appeared in the periodical *Sırât-ı Müstakîm* (The Upright Path).

> The Union of Islam and Pan-Islamism are different things. The first helps unite the hearts of various peoples who revere the banner of Muhammed. Therefore, a humane intention is contained within its nature. Whereas Pan-Islamism was created in Europe with a political purpose: that in the eyes of Westerners who fail to understand that Islam is a holy institution based on reason, it was created by a civilized people contra pious traditions, regarded as advancing past a fanatical and superstitious sect, being on the brink of a harmful political arrangement.[73]

Hâlid's focuses on the xenophobic anti-Muslim biases of Western Christianity has earned him the distinction from at least one scholar of being among of the first writers against "Orientalism." As a shrewd cultural observer who was widely traveled, multilingual, and well-read, Hâlid articulated many anti-colonial and anti-imperialist

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[72] Ibid., 14, 27.

[73] *İttihâd-ı İslâm ile panislamizm ayrı gayrı şeylerdir. Birincisi livâ-yı Muhammedîyi takdis eden akvâm-ı muhtelifenin tevhîd-i kulûbuna hâdim olur. Binâenaleyh mâhiyetinde maksâd-ı insaniyetkârâne mündemicdir. Halbuki panislâmizm bir maksad-ı siyasî ile Avrupa'da îcâd olunmuştur ki İslâmiyetin ma'kulâta müstenit bir müesse-i mukaddese olduğunu anlayamayan garbiyyûn nazarında medeniyet-i hâzıra âsâr-ı hasenesine karşı ihdâs edilmiş, muta'assıp bâtıl-ı mezhebîden ileri gelmiş bir tedbir-i muzırr-ı siyasî olmak üzre telakkî edilip gitmektedir.* Halil Hâlid, "Dersa'âdet'te Sırat-ı Müstakim Risâle-i Muteberesine," *Sırat-ı Müstakîm* 125, No, 349 (25 Muharrem-13 K. sâni 1326). See Üke, 84.

ideas that appeared in the forthcoming decades amongst scholars and politicians advocating political independence in Africa and Asia.[74] He articulated such sentiments most clearly in his 1904 booklet "A Study in English Turcophobia." He identified a group of Christian clergy, politicians, journalists, and anglicized Jews that have led an anti-Turkish propaganda campaign for the purposes of having the loudest voice in the Eastern Question, promoting the cause of Ottoman Christians and the political destruction of the Ottoman Empire.[75]

When Hâlid does talk of Pan-Islamism, he turns the term back on Europeans and defines it as a form of psychological projection, in which Europeans that exploit Muslim lands accuse their objects of conquest of plotting the same. He writes that all European powers have attempted hegemony over the Islamic world and claim to bring democracy to despotic Muslim regimes, eliminating Islam as an impediment to progress. This is true for France in Algeria or British rule in Africa and India. The Russians, whom Hâlid described as engaging in a "grotesque" civilizing mission, have caused a massive exodus of Muslims in the domains of Imperial Russia to the Ottoman Empire. Streams of refugees pour out from Crimea, Kazan, and the Caucasus. The brutality is appalling, considering Muslims are massacred by the Dutch in the Congo, yet there is no humanitarian movement mobilized on their behalf, in contrast to Europeans mobilizing support for Bulgarians and Armenians under Ottoman rule.[76]

To Halil Hâlid, the glimmering light of hope against European global hegemony is Japan, which has shown that Asiatic nations are not doomed to second-tier status in

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[74]   Wasti, 559, 577.
[75]   Ibid.
[76]   Hâlid, *The Crescent versus the Cross*, 221, 242.

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international politics. Their military victory over Russia serves as an inspiration. This sentiment loomed large in the Ottoman consciousness of the early twentieth century, as Japan was a model of a nation that could experience the material progress of Europe without embracing the religion or culture of Western nations. Renée Worringer convincingly argues that the roots of the twenty-first century's "clash of civilizations" comes from the Islamic world's contestation with pre World War I-European hegemony, not the Crusades or the early Islamic conquests. Therefore, the late Ottoman Empire believed it found an ally in Meiji Japan and grew fascinated with it for its domestic and international achievements. Young Turk party members declared themselves to be the "Japan of the Near East," an emerging trope of modernization.[77] Hâlid believes the only solution for the Muslim world is to align itself with the Far East and form an anti-European block in order to fend off its encroachments.[78]

Halil Hâlid's theme of European colonial domination of Islam struck a deep chord among Muslim intellectuals around the world. "The Crescent vs. The Cross" was translated into Urdu and published in Calcutta shortly after its publication. The pre-World War I treatise is among the last books to argue the cause of Islam in the period of Europe's high-water mark of colonialism. Using a secular language to defend the Muslim world, he calls upon European powers to live up to their own self-proclaimed religious, political, and social values and stop imposing its will in such a brutal manner on Islamic societies. It should respect the natural rights of Muslims to live as free citizens.[79]

Halil Hâlid relies exclusively on Western histories of Europe and Christianity in

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[77] Renée Worringer, *Ottoman Imagining Japan: East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 1-2.
[78] Hâlid, *The Crescent versus the Cross,* 239.
[79] Wasti, 569.

his polemic. To criticize imperialism and Protestant missionaries, he quotes liberal

Europeans supportive of the role Islam played in the progress of civilization or skeptical

of dogmatic Christianity and its role in history. He refers to William Draper's "History of

the Conflict Between Science and Religion," which notes that Christians were always

afforded high places in the courts of Muslim rulers such as Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun (d.

833).[80] Other sources include François Guizot's *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe*

(1828, English translation 1846), whose Crusader history includes observations from the

"less fanatical" Crusaders who realized that their Muslim adversaries possessed many

progressive attributes worth adopting and incorporating into European civilization.[81]

Hâlid also elaborates on European scholarship from the conservative side of the spectrum

regarding the progressive nature of Islam. This includes Martin Luther's observation that

Muslims pay the most honorable testimony to Jesus Christ.[82] The British orientalist

Thomas Walker Arnold shared this sentiment in his "The Preaching of Islam" (1896).

After the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 637, Christians shared the church of St. John

of Damascus with their conquerors for eighty years. This partition was later abandoned

due to the Muslim congregants being no longer able to suffer the chanting of the

Christians during prayer times."[83]

     "The Crescent vs. the Cross" was part of an international genre produced by

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[80]   Hâlid, *The Crescent vs. the* Cross, 37.
[81]   Ibid.
[82]   Ibid., 28.
[83]   Ibid., 35. "The Preaching of Islam" was written at the insistence of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, a friend of Arnold's whom he met while a professor in Lahore. He taught the subject of Islam art at MAO College in Aligarh Aligarh and Government College University. He was later dean of the Oriental Facult at Punjab University. One of his most famous students was the Indian Muslim poet Muhammed Iqbal, whom he introduced Western culture and ideas. See *Arnold, Thomas Walker.* A Cambridge Alumni Database (University of Cambridge: http://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/, accessed May 9, 2014).

Muslim intellectuals that crystalized the concept of the "Muslim world." As Adeeb

Khalid notes, authors such as Halil Hâlid envisioned this concept as a community with

rights, privileges, and territory defined by the external threat of European colonial

encroachment. Scholars and journalists in Russia, India, the Ottoman Empire, and the

Middle East formed an effective solidarity rooted in new modes of communication and

sociability in the Islamic world. Through these modes they sought the cultural

reproduction of a global Muslim identity. The discourse of this sphere is often labeled

with the blanket-term of "Pan-Islamism," but as Hâlid has shown, it was a complex term

with contested definitions. Europeans understood it as reactionary, conservative

xenophobia, or Hamidian state policy attempting to mobilize support for the Ottoman

Empire around the globe. Hâlid and other writers considered it a shared body of theology

and philosophy among Muslim intellectuals. It was a flexible rhetoric comfortable with

discourses of the nation, ethnicity, and progress.[84]

Conclusion

Numerous intellectual developments emerged in the Ottoman polemical writings

of the Hamidian period. The struggles of Muslim intellectuals became connected to

global political tensions. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century Muslims in the

Ottoman Empire, Transcausia, and Russia worked to resolve what Holly Shissler

describes as the tension between the need for self-strengthening and the need to maintain

an intact and authentic identity. There were a wide variety of materials and possibilities

for forging a useful modern identity in a period in which these writers were exposed to an

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[84]   Adeeb Khalid, " Pan-Islamism in practice: The rhetoric of Muslim unity and its uses," in *Late Ottoman Society: The Intellectual Legacy*, 207-210.

array of experiences and influences. Yet Muslims had to contend with the challenges of the period, whether due to institutional disabilities for their brethren in Russia or colonial lands, or technology, military, and political disabilities against Europe.[85]

Against this threat, intellectuals from the 1870s onward such as Fatma Aliye, Halil Hâlid, and Mahmud Es'ad spoke in the discourse of Pan-Islam to address the political concerns of Eurasian Muslims under European colonial threat and to encourage their politicians and intellectuals to seek alternatives to Westernization for ideological validity. Such discussions never coalesced into a single religious or political outcome. Rather, their Pan-Islamism was a heterogenous doctrine used to address political concerns of a print-based public that transcended imperial boundaries.[86]

For these polemicists, a primary political concern of theirs that they expressed in Pan-Islamic terms was the issue of state sovereignty. They depicted European governments and Protestant missionaries as infringing on the individualism, rights, and sovereignty of Muslims around the globe, whether the British army slaughtering Muslims in Kabul or foreign missionaries spreading anti-Islamic propaganda across the Ottoman Empire. They ruthlessly exploited Muslims in Africa and India, holding racial prejudice against non-white races, yet hac the audacity to condemn Islamic civilization as barbarous. Such a perception of the world order led to these Muslim intellectuals crafting an alternative universalistic vision with an inclusive international system and more global form of modernity.[87]

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[85] Holly Shissler, *Between Two Empires: Ahmet Ağaoğlu and the New Turkey* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 2-3.

[86] Khalid, "Pan-Islamism in Practice," 221.

[87] Cemal Aydin describes Ottoman and non-Ottoman Muslim intellectuals embracing Pan-Islamic and pan-Asianistic notions of solidarity for these reasons, along with the purpose of creating the means to attain a new world order in which regional blocks such as East Asia and the Islamic world regained

Ottoman writers, however, did not only operate on a trans-regional level but also refined their ideas through local aspects of this contest, such as the case with Sırrı Pasha and Abdu' Yesu, and they were restricted by these same aspects. Returning to Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital and the social reproduction of culture that I mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, along with Anthony Giddens's concept of structuration, it has been shown that these authors attempted to make sense of their world by plotting strategies of social action given the possibilities and constraints of the world. These agents used social actions that negotiated with and even challenged the rules of society rather than following a script dictated by structures. They operated on a social terrain containing limits but also with possibilities and constantly negotiated the social rules themselves. And in this social field, the groups had more interests and properties in common the closer they were to one another.[88] Harutune Jenanyan advocated the moral and material development of the Armenian people, and for their resilience in the face of persecution from Muslims, but he treaded carefully on this issue, praising Islamic civilization and the Ottoman dynasty. Halil Hâlid critiqued Western hegemony and the Hamidian regime, but the Enlightenment values of the West served as his ethical reference point, along with the Muslim ecumenical language of Abdülhamit II. Fatma Aliye pioneered the use of literature to challenge European notions of gender and sexism

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autonomy from Western hegemony, approaching the global commonwealth of modernity as equal partners. *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia*, 69.

[88] Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judge of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass. 1984 [orig. 1979]); Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production* (New York, 1993); Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus*, trans. Peter Collier (Stanford, 1988 [orig. 1984]); Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture,* trans. Richard Nice (London, 1977 [orig. 1970]). Adeeb Khalid considers this schema in light of framing debates between the reform-minded Jadids and traditional Muslim religious scholars in nineteenth-century Central Asia in *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform*, 6-7. Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984).

in the Ottoman Empire and criticized missionary exploitation of Muslims in Africa, but her views were largely defined by anti-Catholic French literature.

The next chapter will look at the final years of the pre-World War I religious debates and polemical discussions in the Empire. Many of the developments in this chapter continued into the Young Turk period, such as colonial anxieties and calls for global Muslim solidarity. But new threats to the internal security of the Empire altered the religious and political imaginaries of intellectuals. The horrors of the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars convinced some writers that Christian-Muslim harmony in the Empire was impossible, while others attempted a last-ditch effort at ecumenical unity. The influences of the Young Turk period can be seen in the form of increased ethnic identity and even increased anti-Semitism in certain polemical writings. But despite these political elements, these polemics remained a genre that not only attempted to mediate some of these tensions arising from the nationalistic and sectarian strain of the Empire but also sought to create platforms of sincere dialogue on the eve of the terrible catastrophes in World War I.

Chapter Six

Young Turk Era Polemics: Twilight of an Ottoman Inter-Religious Discussion

(1908-1914)

In 1904, a Chaldean scholar named Dawud Benyamin was granted an audience with the *şeyhü'l-islâm* Cemaleddin Efendi while passing through Istanbul en route to his home in Urmiah, Iran. The 37-year-old was pleased to discuss religious matters with the Empire's top religious cleric. Benyamin had made a career of gaining the attention of clerical figures, which usually followed with their patronage. His sponsors over the previous two decades included the Anglican mission in Iran, which sent him to England for theological studies; then the Catholic church, which sponsored his studies at the Propaganda Fide in Rome after he abandoned Protestantism; and then the English Unitarian Church, which sent him back to Iran after he renounced the Trinity. It is little surprise that he abandoned Christianity after meeting the *şeyhü'l-islâm*, accepted Islam, and chose the new name Abdülahad Davûd.[1]

The Chaldean convert crossed many borders in his life: imperial, religious, linguistic, and ethnic. He resided in England, France, Italy, the Ottoman Empire, and Iran, writing articles for journals in many of the languages of these nations. He swapped faiths numerous times and maintained a detailed knowledge of differences between Muslim and Christian sects. His mother tongue of Chaldean gave him linguistic proximity to Arabic

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[1]   Abdülahad Davûd, *Muhammed in the Bible* (Wiseman Publications, 2002), 2-3.

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and Aramaic, the oral language of Jesus. He spoke proudly of his heritage, rebuffing Orientalist scholars such as Ernest Renan who thought Semitic culture and language to be backward.[2] These themes appear frequently in his articles that were published in Turkish journals from 1913 to 1919.

Like Davûd, other authors approached religious topics with renewed vigor with the Young Turk Revolution of July 1908. With the deposition of Sultan Abdülhamit II, the Committee of Union and Progress came to power, promising to establish a reformist system of "liberty, "equality," and "justice," to replace the autocracy of the previous decades. Some foreigners in the Empire believed that a utopian moment neared, in which religious and ethnic divisions would disappear and be replaced with a pluralistic, constitutional "Ottoman Nation." Protestant missionaries from the Balkans to Istanbul to Anatolia hoped to engage Muslims on a friendlier basis. They sought a solution to the Armenian question and to overcome damaged relations between the ABCFM and the state caused by the Armenian pogroms of the 1890s. The CUP condemned these pogroms and praised the American missionaries as "pioneers of progress," even inviting some to

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[2] See Nikki Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal ad-Din "al-Afghani"* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 86-88; Cemal Aydin, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013); Albert Hourani, *Islam in European Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); *Islam in the Eyes of the West: Images and Realities in an Age of Terror*, eds. Tareq Y. Ismael and Andrew Rippin (London: Routledge, 2010); Safdar Ahmet, *Reform and Modernity in Islam: The Philosophical, Cultural, and Political Discourses Among Muslim Reformers* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); Anwar Moazzam, *Jamâl al-Dîn al-Afghani: A Muslim Intellectual* (New Delhi: Naurang Rai, 1984); Nelly Lahoud, "Saving Muslims from Islam: Renan and Al-Afghani" in *Islamic Responses to Europe at the Dawn of Colonialism*, eds.Takashi Shogimen, Cary J. Nederman (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008): 163-185; Michelangelo Guida, "Al-Afghani and Namik Kemal's Replies to Ernest Renan: Two Anti-Westernist Works in the Formative Stage of Islamist Thought," in *Turkish Journal of Politics* 2, Issue 2 (Winter 2011), 61; Ernest Renan, "Islamism and Science," in *Orientalism: Early Sources; Readings in Orientalism*, ed. Bryan Turner (London: Routledge, 2000): 199-217.

Young Turk club meetings in provincial centers as honorary speakers.[3]

The ABCFM's publishing of religious books and tracts continued at its frenetic pace. It never ceased filling the Empire with hundreds of thousands of Bibles, catechisms of the faith, commentaries, children's books, and educational works. In 1911 alone it funded the printing of nearly nine million pages of literature The overwhelming majority of these books were still in non-Turkish languages and mostly inaccessible to Muslims, but a few Turkish books were published by the labors of George Herrick, who directed the Publication Department from 1897 onward. They included the English-Turkish Lexicon, and Herrick's two books "The Dawn of Liberty," and "The Supreme Person of Jesus Christ and His Relation to Humanity."[4]

Other missionary groups took advantage of this liberal atmosphere to publish anti-Muslim articles and books, particularly in former Ottoman domains of the Balkans, many of which had Muslim populations with strong irredentist aspirations. A Turkish convert to Christianity published anti-Islamic polemics in Plovdiv under the auspices of the German Orient Mission from 1908-1911. Bulgaria had been autonomous from the Ottoman Empire since the 1878 Treaty of Berlin but remained under its sovereignty until it declared full independence in 1908. Publisher Edhem Ruhi responded to the convert's

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[3] Hans-Lukas Kieser notes that the efforts of 1908 brought Kurdish-speaking Alevis into closer orbit with the state, but it also brought the previously-concealed rift between the state, Alevis, and Sunnis into sharper contrast through the CUP's cultural Turkification program. "Some Remarks on Alevi Responses to the Missionaries in Eastern Anatolia (19th-20th cc.)" Presented at *Altruism and Imperialism: The Western Religious and Cultural Missionary Enterprise in the Middle East Middle East Institute Conference: Bellagio Italy August 2000.*

[4] The majority were the weekly newspaper Avedaper in Armenian, hymn books in Armeno-Turkish (2,112,000 pages), the English-Turkish Lexicon (836,000 pages), and Sunday School lessons in Armenian (682,000 pages)*Report of the Publication Department for the Year 1911*, Istanbul ABCFM Publication Department, H.S. Barnum (Istanbul: March 29, 1912).

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challenge, all the while hoping for the CUP's return to Bulgaria. He exalted the party as the savior of Islam for its political power, military strength, and civilizational attainment.

The period from the Young Turk Revolution into the early years of World War I saw the final flowering of Christian-Muslim polemical debate defined by the intellectual topography of pre-war Europe: belief in progress, universal collective identities, and the enduring status of the Ottoman Empire among native Christians and Muslims. With this zeitgeist in mind, this chapter will look at the polemics of Abdülahad Davûd, ulema member Hasan Sabri, publisher Edhem Ruhi, legal scholar Mahmud Es'ad; Armenian Protestant Ohannes Kirkorian, and Muslim converts to Christianity Johannes Avetaranian, Mehmed Nesîmî, and Ahmed Keşşaf. Their polemics contain many elements of Tanzimat and Hamidian-era writings, but other elements are framed in the political and imperial anxieties of the period, particularly the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars, irredentism, and the onset of World War I. All these writers contended with the ideology of the CUP, which had been broadly influenced by European-inspired positivism and Social Darwinism. Racialism appears for the first time in these polemics, with the emergence of anti-Semitic tropes couched in modernist discussions of the human species being divided into distinct biological categories. In the past Ottoman Muslim polemicists largely ignored Jews. But as waves of Jewish settlers arrived in Palestine, their status in the Empire was politicized and they became the target of Muslim writers' animus. They were discussed at length in Ottoman parliamentary sessions of 1911 and their loyalty to the Empire was called into question.

For all the political elements of these polemics, many of them still retained a

classic theological structure. This is an important feature to note. Religious scholars of the period did not fully embrace the nationalistic rhetoric of the CUP administration. Yet they also were not afraid to engage these issues or hide from them out of a retrograde, religious reflex. Polemical writings continued to be a flexible genre until the end of the Empire and engage with disparate contours of Ottoman modernity whilst retaining traditional precepts and dependence on the Qur'an. Islamic scholars Mahmud Es'ad and Hasan Sabri, for all their knowledge of Western scholarship, saw themselves as part of the continuum of classical Islamic scholarship, not a rupture from this tradition.

The 1908-1911 Plovdiv Debate

The Ottoman Christian-Muslim polemical debate of the early twentieth century largely occurred within Istanbul, but it could flare up wherever a vibrant print sphere existed, typically with the presence of Protestant missionaries and an educated member of the ulema or political class willing to engage them in a written controversy. These elements were present in Plovdiv in 1908. Johannes Avetaranian, an Alevi Muslim convert to Protestantism formerly known as Mehmet Şükri, debated with publisher Edhem Ruhi, who produced the daily newspaper *Balkan* and acted as a local mouthpiece for the CUP. On February 11, Edhem Ruhi wrote in the headline of an article that "a Muslim can have no religion but Islam." In response, Avetaranian launched a long and extended debate on issues between Christianity and Islam.[5]

Avetaranian worked on behalf of the German Orient Mission (*Deutsche Orient-*

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[5] Gabriel Goltz, *Eine christlich-islamische Kontroverse um Religion, Nation und Zivilisation: die osmanisch-türkischen Periodika der Deutschen Orient-Mission und die Zeitung "Balkan" in Plovdiv 1908-1911* (Berlin: Münster, 2002), 1.

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Mission (DOM)) in Plovdiv to carry out missionary work among Muslims. Before this appointment he was a missionary for the Swedish Mission Covenant Church in Northwest China, where he translated the New Testament into Uygur.[6] He published the missionary journals *Şâhidü'l-hakâik* (Witness to the Truth) and *Güneş* (Sun). *Şâhidü'l-hakâik* was a theological journal that addressed differences between Christianity and Islam, often in a thinly veiled attempt to convince its Muslim readership to convert, while *Güneş* was conceived as a newspaper that addressed general social developments from a Christian perspective. Edhem Ruhi responded to Avetaranian's call for Muslims to accept Christianity in *Balkan* over the next three years (1908-1911). His paper served as the Bulgarian press organ of the CUP, which chose Edhem Ruhi to engage in an ideological mission of undermining the Bulgarian state's authority and legitimacy by monitoring its persecution of Muslims in Bulgaria, and alerting Ottoman Muslims of these infringements.[7] Others involved in the controversy were employees of Avetaranian,

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[6] According to his 1930 autobiography *A Muslim Who Became a Christian*, Johannes Avetaranian was a *Sayyid*, a descendant of Muhammed and became a mullah before his conversion. His father was a dervish from Erzurum. As a youth, Avetaranian came across a Turkish New Testament. He soon believed its message and was later baptized in Tiflis, Russia and took the Armenian named John Avetaranian (Avetaranian meaning "Son of the Gospel"). He served the Mission Union of Sweden in Kashgar from 1892 to 1897 until leaving and joining the German Orient Mission in Bulgaria. Here he founded *Güneş*, which was circulated throughout the Balkans and into Istanbul and Anatolia. See *A Muslim Who Became a Christian: The Story of John Avetaranian (born Muhammad Shukri Efendi)* 2nd edition, tr. John Bechard (Sandy, UK: Authors Online, 2003).

[7] Ayçe Feride Yılmaz writes that his ideological publishing mission represented a continuation and extension of Ottoman imperial networks in Bulgaria that sought to manipulate the domestic politics of a former province despite its declaration of independence in 1908. It was also circulated in Ottoman Macedonia, Albania, and other provinces, alerting Muslims of injustices suffered by their victimized brethren in Bulgaria. Letters to the editor of this paper also served as intelligence reports that kept *Balkan* and its audience aware of threats and attacks on the region's Muslim community. Ayçe Feride Yılmaz, "The Ottoman Balkan Gazette as an Agent of Empire Within the Bulgarian Nation State, 1910-1911" (Budapest: MA Thesis, Central European University, 2013). See M. Türker Acaroğlu, *Bulgaristan'da 120 Yıllık Türk Gazeteciliği (1865-1985)* (Istanbul:Gazeteciler Cemiyeti Yayınları: 1990); Ibrahim Hatipoğlu, "Religio-Intellectual Relations between Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian Muslims in the First Half of the 20th Century," *Islamic Studies 46* (2007); Kemal Karpat, "Introduction: Bulgaria's Methods of Nation Building and the Turkish Minority." In *The Turks of Bulgaria: The*

Mehmed Nesîmî and Ahmed Keşşaf, also Muslim converts to Christianity. These writers propagated competing visions for society in light of Bulgaria's autonomy in 1878 and the looming threat of the Balkan Wars, in which religion became heavily filtered through nationalism. Religion was turned into a tool of state building, with the government elevating the position of Christians and marginalizing Muslims. Religion was a critical component of state identity before this period, but in the early twentieth century Balkan states maximized religious nationalist claims in order to achieve the nineteenth-century successes of Germany and Italy. They fought against the Young Turks' political threat to reinvigorate the Empire after their 1908 coup with their own ideological weapons.[8]

The Christian writers use various polemical approaches. Avetaranian adopts a straightforward evangelical Christian discourse: sin, repentance, and salvation as understood by the Scriptures. In regards to the ideas of progress and development, Christianity is the only possible basis for modern civilization. Islam intrinsically produces ignorance and extremism. Nesîmî and Keşşaf, in contrast, do not argue for the absolute truth of Christianity or Islam being completely false. They write from a standpoint of civilization based on technological, scientific, and moral progress that led to equality. Civilization is the leitmotif of their articles and the standard by which religious truths or objects are judged as useful or harmful. Neither Christianity is true or Islam false in this sense, but religion has a part in the independent truth of civilization. To support their arguments, they quote philosophical and scientific works alongside Scripture. To them,

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History: Culture and Political Fate of a Minority, ed. Kemal Karpat, 1-23 (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1990).

[8] Goltz, 2. M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Preparation for a Revolution: The Young Turks, 1902-1908* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ömer Turan, *The Turkish Minority in Bulgaria, 1878-1908* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1998); Edward J. Erickson, *Defeat in Detail: The Ottoman Army in the Balkans, 1912-1913* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2003).

truth is discovered by the synthesis of rational and religious cognition.[9]

The Christian converts Nesîmî and Keşşaf agree with Avetaranian that Islam in its current form produces ignorance and is responsible for its present backwardness. However, they consider Islamic civilization's backwardness as not an intrinsic feature of the religion but only in its current form. Traditional interpretations of *şeria't* are mostly to blame for contradicting the principles of freedom and closed off the Muslim mind to natural reason and the modern sciences. This led to the proliferation of Islamic pseudosciences and forms of superstition that keep Muslims in a state of ignorance. Christianity, in contrast, conveys values of equality, freedom, and fraternity, the fundamental principles of civilization. Europe has surmounted its religious extremism, and as a result, the rational and religious sciences are flourishing. For this reason "Christian Europe" is a model to follow, and its laws and norms are a framework to copy that will enable the evolution of unity, understanding, and progress. They wrote in several articles that Islam can be reformed through this framework. The Qur'an and the *şeria't* do not intrinsically contradict the principles of unity or understanding; only the religion's outward appearance needs to be changed. It can be reformed to values consistent with the "intrinsic values of religion."[10]

Conversely, the theological debate between Avetaranian and Edhem Ruhi in *Balkan* follows classical apologetic and polemical lines of argument. The topics include Scriptural distortion, the Trinity as an abrogation of monotheism, the historicity of the Qur'an and the Bible, and the status of Jesus and Mohammed. However, even in purely

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[9]   Gabriel Goltz, *Eine christlich-islamische Kontroverse*, 98-99.
[10]   Ibid., 100-101.

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religious and theological debates, the discussion drifts to arguments over civilization. The fusion of theological and social arguments are featured in these Christian-Islamic polemics. Contemporary political concerns such as the religious tensions in the Balkans and the 1908 Ottoman constitutional revolution color their writings.[11]

Both *Şâhidü'l-hakâik* and *Güneş* emphasize the positive effects of Christianity for a Western-oriented civilization based on progress. Avetaranian attempts to prove civilization's incompatibility with Islam due to its "ritual character." He sometimes conveys these arguments in an Islamic idiom, such as presenting the concept of freedom using lines of reason found in the Mu'tazila school, an Islamic branch of theology based on rational thought and reason, which posits that the injunctions of God are accessible to inquiry and deduction. He merges this line of reasoning with Paul's concept of freedom as articulated in Protestant social thought.[12]

Edhem Ruhi responds in *Balkan* by referencing negative aspects of Western society, such as moral indiscretion and atheism. He quotes the opinions of the regional mufti Nüsret and an anonymous mufti from Bosnia that Islam does not contradict modern sciences. Rather it is the moral and rational foundation to civilization. He connects this religious argument to irredentist politics, advocating a strong Ottoman state as a unified *millet* that will return to Bulgaria and restore social morality. The collective identity in this future Ottoman Empire will be Islam, not a Turkish cultural or ethnic identity, led by the Committee of Unity and Progress. However, Ruhi's ideal of imperial unity and strength meant opposing the conservative-religious factions within the Islamic

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[11] Ibid., 125.
[12] Ibid., 125-126.

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community, factions loyal to the deposed Hamidian regime and the failed April 1909 coup d'état in Istanbul. According to his schema, the CUP, despite its secular policy, will be the true saviors of Islam.[13]

As Goltz notes, the religious debate within these periodicals was a manifestation of the widespread reform discourse typical within the Ottoman Empire following the proclamation of the Second Constitution in 1908. The writers in the three journals were concerned with the future of the Ottoman Empire and how to save it from collapse. The Protestant periodicals presented a reform discourse based on Western civilization and Christian religion that rivaled the secular-Islamist discourse of the CUP. Avetaranian, Nesîmî and Keşşaf played active roles in this discussion as they were all of Turkish background and former Ottoman citizens. Avetaranian even presented Christianity as the salvation of the Ottoman Empire from Islam and Arab cultural oppression. Edhem Ruhi, in contrast, favored the CUP's line of a centralized state and Islam as the foundational element of an Islamic millet. Nesîmî and Keşşaf advocated a somewhat utopian ideal of unity among all people and advocated positions radically critical of Islam, opposing all forms of tradition. They envisioned a secular model of society, and their criticisms of Islam triggered major opposition from the readership of *Balkan,* which largely supported the paper's goals of subverting Bulgarian sovereignty.[14]

Different concepts of unity led to division between the Ottoman Balkan writers. Their disagreements over liberal, secular, and religious tendencies and concepts of society played out in this Bulgarian print sphere, but it was reflected in the larger

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[13]   Ibid., 127.
[14]   Ibid., 128.

polemical debates of the Ottoman press. All sides, whether Protestant missionary or loyal

statist, were actively involved in the controversy around the restructuring of the Ottoman

Empire within a modernist, liberal interpretation of various forms. Yet their discussion

was localized to Bulgaria and its recent independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1908.

The setting for this discussion was amidst simmering tensions between the Bulgaria state,

its Christian citizens, and its displaced Muslim population. The CUP closely monitored

this behavior toward its former imperial holdings in Bulgaria through *Balkan* and

supported a narrative of Muslim plight, a common theme in Edhem Ruhi's polemics.

Thus, their discussion comes at the end of the CUP's program of a multi-confessional,

multiethnic citizenship model and increasing mobilization of Ottoman Muslims.

Moreover, the debate between Edhem Ruhi and the two Muslim converts to

Christianity represents a reversal from the Ottoman self-narratives of conversion to Islam

in the early modern period. From the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries the production of

conversion narratives written by Balkan Christian converts to Islam were critical for the

Ottoman Empire articulating its imperial identity and Sunni Muslim "orthodoxy." The

Ottoman Empire simultaneously built its early modern state and religious identity in the

process of confessionalization.[15] By the early twentieth century, Ottoman power waned in

the Balkans. Now Muslim converts to Christianity were valued by Bulgarians and

missionaries for articulating a Christian, Bulgarian national identity. Yet that is not to say

that Christian converts to Islam lacked influence in the Ottoman print sphere. The case of

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[15]   Krstić, *Contested Conversions to Islam*, 12-16, 98-120. Krstić notes the role that convert narratives play
       in the early modern age, when the Empire's power configuration grew against its adversaries and
       converts were valued by Ottoman authorities.

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Abdülahad Davûd indicates the central role that converts to Islam still played in articulating Ottoman identity, even in the final years of the Empire.

Abdülahad Davûd and *İncîl ve Salîb*

Abdülahad Davûd (d. 1940) echoed Edhem Ruhi's hopes for Ottoman imperial consolidation, but he favored religious revival over political unification. This theme appears in his 1913 polemic *İncîl ve Salîb* (The New Testament and the Cross). Abdülahad Davûd's active years were during the late Hamidian period and the Young Turk period, during and following the Balkan Wars. In the aftermath of the 1912-1913 conflict in which the Balkan League (Serbia, Greece, Montenegro and Bulgaria) battled the Ottoman Empire – resulting in half a million casualties and the near-total loss of the Empire's European land holdings – religious rhetoric on both sides took a decidedly vitriolic turn. A media war ensued between the Ottoman government and Christians who inhabited its former domains via books, newspapers, and postcards in order to blame the war's violent atrocities on the other side's religion. The belligerent states initiated propaganda campaigns to demonize their opponents and harness the emotions of their publics.[16]

CUP officials promoted religious inclusivism only to replace it with a reified form of Islam before the Empire's political collapse in World War I. Davûd sought to prove Islam as the revealed religion of God by using modern research methodologies and

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[16] Y. Doğan Çetinkaya. "Atrocity Propaganda and the Nationalization of the Masses in the Ottoman Empire During the Balkan Wars (1912-1913)," *IJMES* 46, No. 4 (November 2014): 759-778. The Ottoman government commissioned an Istanbul publishing house to print a number of postcards depicting "Bulgarian Atrocities" of wretched violence that Christian soldiers committed against innocent Balkan Muslims.

linking it to contemporary geopolitical events. He suggested that the violence inflicted by Christians against Muslims in the Balkan Wars proved that Christianity lacked the marks of true religion, suffered from internal division, and did not serve humanity or good faith.[17]

Abdülahad Davûd engages Christian Scripture through philological criticism. His analytical capacity owes to his polyglot abilities attained from his education throughout the Middle East and Europe: He claimed comprehension of 11 languages, including English, French, Italian, Latin, Greek, Persian, Syriac, Hebrew, Arabic, Kurdish, and Turkish. Prior to writing *İncîl ve Salîb*, the details of Davûd's life are obscure, and the only biographical facts come from his own writings.[18] What is known is that he was born in Urmiah, a historically Assyrian region in northwestern Iran near Tabriz, to a Chaldean Catholic family.[19] Here he practiced Eastern Rite Catholicism and spoke Syriac as his mother tongue. The Nestorian patriarch of this region converted to Catholicism in 1582 as part of the Counter-Reformation. Rome recognized him as the Chaldean patriarch, and established the Chaldean Rite Diocese of Urmiah in 1890. By the turn of the century,

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[17] Abdülahad Davûd, *İncîl ve Salîb* (Mahmud Bey Matbaası, 1913); transliterated version, ed. Kudret Büyükçoşkun (İnkılab Yayınları, 1999), 16.

[18] Ömer Faruk Harman, "Abdülahad Dâvûd," *Diyanet İslâm Ankiklopedis (DİA)*, I, 177–178. See Denis Savelyev, "Using the Bible in Da'wa," in *SCIOF Occasional Papers 3* (2012): 67-96 and his references to Mark Pleas, "David Benjamin Keldani – A bishop converts to Islam?"

[19] In a series of articles entitled "The Articles of the Bishop of Urmiah, On the Creator, Holy Books, and Prophets," Davûd makes reference to his Assyriani family. In referring to an Old Testament verse, he notes that, "I have translated the above paragraph from the only copy of the Bible at my disposal, lent to me by an Assyrian lady cousin in her own vernacular language. But let us consult the English versions of the Bible, which we find have rendered the original Hebrew words *himda* and *shalom* into "desire" and "peace" respectively." Little other information is given regarding his childhood or upbringing. The contents of these articles are found at http://www.islamicweb.com/ [accessed December 5, 2013] and are nearly identical to the autobiographical information contained within *Muhammed in the Bible.*

there were approximately 5,000 Catholics in this diocese, along with 42 priests, 44 churches, and numerous primary schools.[20]

From this point on Davûd's life involves a whirlwind of inter-imperial travel, education, and religious conversion. According to autobiographical sections of his 1928 work "Muhammed in the Bible," his initial contact with foreigners came when he was on the teaching staff of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Mission to the Nestorian Christians for a three-year period.[21] His narrative becomes muddled from this point forward as Davûd jumps between Christian confessional groups with great alacrity but little explanation for his reasons. In 1889, the 22-year-old taught at the Anglican school in Iran as either a practicing Anglican or Nestorian. Three years later, Davûd was sent to England, most likely through the Anglican mission, but he converted to Catholicism and came under the patronage networks of the British Roman Catholic Church.[22] He writes that in 1892 Cardinal Herbert Vaughan (d. 1903), the head of St. Joseph's College (who did not actually become a cardinal until 1893) realized his scholarly abilities and sent him to the Propaganda Fide College in Rome for theological and priestly studies. Davûd spent the next decade rising through the ecclesial ranks of the Eastern Rite Catholic Church, learning ancient biblical and modern European languages. In preparation for his ministry

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[20] Urmiah, *Catholic Encyclopedia,* v. 15 (1913), 225.

[21] The Anglican mission was established in Urmiah in 1886 and concerned itself primarily with establishing schools. It did so in order to distinguish itself from its American and Catholic missionary counterparts, preferring the building of schools and printing of liturgical literature to the professionalization of locals to their respective confessional groups. By 1888 the Anglican mission had established high schools in Urmiah, Superghan, Ardishai, along with 40 other village schools. They used a significant number of Assyrian clergy to instruct these students. Robin Waterfield, *Christians in Persia: Assyrians, Armenians, Roman Catholics and Protestants* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), 126-128. Quoted in Pleas.

[22] Abdülahad Davûd, *Muhammed in the Bible* (Wiseman Publications, 2002), 2-3.

among Nestorian Christians, he was also likely instructed in the Christian history of the region and Nestorian doctrine[23] Such an education explains Davûd's knowledge of Ecumenical councils in the early centuries of the church and his keen interest in its confessional politics.

Davûd was ordained a priest in 1895 and represented Eastern Catholics at the 1897 Eucharistic Congress in France, a five-day event in which he appeared in the place of the bishops of Urmiah and Salmas, likely due to his knowledge of French. In 1900 he left his post as priest due to Christian confessional in-fighting in Persia, as Russian, British and American missionaries fought to convert Nestorians to their respective denominations. He particularly disliked Russia for its violent conquest of the Caucasus and his homeland. This, along with his study of the Scriptures in their original languages caused him to question Christianity. He traveled to England in 1903 as a teacher and translator and joined the Unitarian Community, perhaps due to his doubts of the doctrine of the Trinity. While on his way to Persia in 1904 to carry out Unitarian educational work in Urmiah, he stopped in Istanbul. After engaging various ulema members in religious discussion, particularly *şeyhü'l-islâm* Cemaleddin Efendi, he became a Muslim at the age of 37.[24] Davûd's narrative ends here, but it appears he stayed in Turkey through the 1920s and died in America in 1940. The Nestorian-turned-Anglican-turned-Catholic-turned-Unitarian-turned-Muslim was, if nothing else, experienced with the doctrines of many religions and their denominational variants.

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[23]   Pleas, *David Benjamin Keldani.*

[24]   Abdülahad Davûd, *Muhammed in the Bible*, 2-3. Cemaleddin Efendi (d. 1919), was part of the department of the *şeyhü'l-islâm* in his early career, then *mektubu*, then appointed *kadi asker* of Rumeli, then *şeyhü'l-islâm* in 1891, a position he held until 1909 and the Second Constitutional Assembly. He held this position on and off again until 1913, with the fall of Kamil Pasha's cabinet.

As a Muslim, Davûd's numerous writings address flaws in the Christian religion. In addition to *İncîl ve Salîb*, he wrote *Esrâr-ı 'Îseviye: Allâh Bir Midir, Üç Müdür?* (The Mystery of Christianity: Is God Three or One?) in 1916. In the work he explains the inner workings of Christian missionary agencies, what type of missionary activities are taking place in their fields of activity, and their destructive influence in Africa, India, the Ottoman Empire, and the rest of the Muslim world. Much like *İncîl ve Salîb*, this work has received attention by devout Muslims in modern-day Turkey. In 1966 it was transliterated into Latin characters and simplified into modern Turkish by M. Şevket Eygi, renamed *İslâmiyetin Zaferi* (The Victory of Islam).[25]

The larger purpose of *İncîl ve Salîb* is to defend the unity of God as expressed in Islam. Davûd borrows a number of arguments from classical Islamic apologetics and modern European scholarship on ancient Biblical texts. In terms of the classical polemical tropes, Davûd repeatedly makes known that the biblical prophesies that Christians held to be the foretelling of Christ or the Holy Spirit actually referred to Muhammad, arguments that date to the early centuries of Islam. His unique contribution to this topic is not the argument itself, but his methodology of attempting to reconstruct biblical passages linguistically in their original languages. Throughout *İncîl ve Salîb*,

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[25] Despite his conversion to Islam he remained interested in inter-Christian theological disputes and controversies. He wrote numerous articles in the journal *Sebîlü'r-reşad* between 1914 and 1919, produced during his residency in Istanbul in the early twentieth century. They include topics about the division and reunion of confessional Christian groups in the future, along with such theological disputes and their role in early twentieth century politics in the Middle East, particularly in the growing Zionist movement. Specific articles include: "Is a Reunification between the Anglican and Orthodox Church Possible?" (*Anglikan ile Ortodoks Kiliselerinin İttihâdı Mümkün müdür*?), "Is Christianity's Formation of a Jewish State in Palestine Suitable?" (*Hıristiyanlık Filistin'de Bir Yahudi Hükümetinin Teşekkülüne Müsâit midir?*), "Is the Unification of the Churches Possible?" (*Kiliselerin İttihâdı Mümkün müdür?*), and *İngiltere'de Dîn-i İslâm'ın İntişârı* (The Spread of the Religion of Islam in England).Hasan Darcan, *Bir Osmanlı Mühtedisi Olarak Abdülahad Davûd* (Sakarya University Institute of Social Sciences: Unpublished MA Thesis, 2008), 11.

Davûd repeatedly argues that Semitic-language Scripture conveyed the true messages of Jesus, rather than in the Greek translations of his teachings. Jesus spoke Aramaic, not Greek, and Davûd's native tongue of Syriac was a close variant. He considers himself to be an effective arbitrator of linguistic controversies within the Christian holy books due to this knowledge. The number of languages he uses to deconstruct biblical terminology in question and his modern-era philological methods far surpass attempts by his Muslim polemical predecessors.

Davûd's methodology developed during the formative years of his education in England and at the Propaganda Fide in Rome. Here he absorbed contemporary academic trends occurring in Europe, as Ernest Renan elevated critical philology to the level of an empirical science in its application to the sacred texts. Davûd may have rejected Renan's opinion that Islam and scientific inquiry were mutually incompatible due to the limits of the Semitic mentality and the Semites being an "incomplete race,"[26] but he hewed closely to Renan's belief that linguistic research could unlock cultural knowledge. Renan desired to make philology the arbiter of the sciences, and to him philology was "the exact science of the things of the spirit."[27] Davûd displayed similar vigor as Renan in his Biblical hermeneutic of deriving the Aramaic equivalent of biblical verses in the Greek New Testament in order to determine the text's "authentic" message.

As a result, *İncîl ve Salîb* displays a tornado of multi-lingual activity. He typically exegetes one Bible verse by subjecting a critical word to several translations, writing

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[26] *Anti-Semitism*, Gotthard Deutsch, *Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906).
[27] Maurice Olender, *The Languages of Paradise: Race, Religion, and Philology in the Nineteenth Century,* tr. Arthur Goldhammer (Harvard University Press, 1992), 51-52.

paragraphs of analysis. In his exposition of Luke 2:14, when the angels announced to the shepherds, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men,"[28] to find the meaning of the Greek word for "peace" (*Eirene*) and "good will" (*Eudokia*) he cross-references the word's definition in its Arabic, Hebrew, Syriac, Latin, and Turkish forms. His conclusion is that the Greek rendering of the passage is incorrect, as this language would most definitely not have been the medium of communication to uneducated shepherds.[29]

To make his point Davûd plucks stories from the Bible and asks his readers to imagine these characters, poor laborers from first-century Judea, speaking the Koine Greek of the New Testament. He comments sarcastically on such a scenario taking place in regard to Luke's story of the heavenly hosts appearing to shepherds and proclaiming the birth of Jesus: "Did heavenly hosts sing this song to the Syrian shepherds, who did not graduate from the Athenian Academy, in Greek? Of course not! There is no one who claims this. The angels' praises were obviously done in Syriac."[30] He adds that if they

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[28] Luke 2:14, King James Version.
[29] Ibid., 61-66. As a Semitic language rendering would be closer to the authentic meaning, "Eirene" corresponds to "Islam" or "Selam" in Arabic. The latter translation carriers a more comprehensive meaning of "peace" than the former; rather than foretelling a general peace and a cessation of war connoted in *Eirene*, the angels were in fact announcing the establishment of the religion of Islam. The "peace" that the angels proclaimed did not refer to Jesus. He himself claimed in Matthew 10:34 that his coming was not to bring peace to the earth but the sword. In contrast, within the system of Islamic justice all sins great and small would be punished and would provide for the elevation of its adherent's spiritual and material well-being. In his analysis of *Eudokia* he cross-references the word's meaning in Greek, Syriac, and Arabic. Consulting Syrian and Nestorian liturgical works, he argues that this word's Semitic meaning more properly corresponded to the term *Sabra Taba*, or "good hope" rather than "peace." As original sources are not available to determine the exact meaning of the word (which Davûd claims was the result of the Council of Nicea destroying original texts that contradicted Trinitarian theology), the Greek word that comports more strong with "good hope" is *Eudokos.* Following a comprehensive survey of Arabic terms with the same tri-literal root that translate to *Eudokos*, Davûd arrives at the conclusion that the Greek phrase in question means that of a prophet, "one who brings good hope," ultimately meaning in Arabic *Ahmed* or *Muhammad.*
[30] *İncîl ve Salîb*, 49.

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angels had spoken in Greek, it would be as if they communicated to the Kurdish shepherds of the Hakkari Mountains in Japanese.[31]

In Davûd's attempt to uncover the true Islamic meaning within Jewish and Christian holy texts, he constructs a view of *tebşîrât* that defends the Scriptures as being more misunderstood than distorted. Unlike Ahmet Midhat, who viewed the scriptures as completely corrupted, Davûd believes in their essential integrity. This position on *tebşîrât* enables him to critique the Scripture from his strongest position of argumentation: a multilingual philological and hermeneutical criticism of each word, whose proper rendering can be uncovered by transmitting the New Testament text in question into Aramaic. Although he concedes that corruption of the texts did occur, the New Testament should be considered as a heavenly (*semâvî*) book, and above all, it should not be ridiculed, as some French anti-clerical authors are in the habit of doing.[32]

Davûd's primary criticism of Christianity goes beyond European scholarship or philology. The issues with which he most strongly disagrees with in Christianity are the concepts of the Kingdom of God and the Trinity, the second of which he believes to be the same as the first, and both concepts have an Islamic meaning of which Christians are ignorant. In his discussion of of Mark 12, in which Jesus tells Nicodemus that man must be born again in order to enter the Kingdom of God, the Greek term *monogenes* is found

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[31] Ibid., 51. *Atina Akademyasından mezun olmayan Sûriyeli çobanlara 'gök ordusundan bir topluluk' (cunûd-i semâviyye) şu acâyıp neşîdeyi acaba Yunanca mı terennüm ettiler? Elbette ki hayır! Buna itiraz edecek bir kimse yoktur. Melekler her halde Süryânice tesbîhatda bulunmuşlardır.*

[32] *İncîl ve Salîb*, 77. *Therefore, I see it necessary to repeat the warning that the translation into Turkish of the published French and English works written against the New and Old Testaments should never be encouraged. Muslims should avoid these publications, which are full of nonsense, because until now these publications that are against the New and Old Testaments benefit nothing except for damaging and injuring all religions and faiths.*

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in the Greek manuscripts to refer to the "Kingdom of God." *Genos* in Greek means "beginning" or "birth," and *monogenes* also has a conception of birth. These are terms found in Aristotle's categories, a division of persons that is reflected in the Trinity but colors Christology with Greek philosophy.[33] However, if one examines Jesus's conversation of this topic with Nicodemus, which was in Aramaic, Davûd argues that the phrase "Kingdom of God" in its original Aramaic would correspond more closely to the Arabic term *Melekûtullah*, a literal description of "Kingdom of God." Jesus is not preaching the Trinity in his discussion with Nicodemus, but the Kingdom of God, which he interprets in a later chapter to be a universal spiritual brotherhood that finds expression in the religion of Islam.[34]

Davûd argues that the New Testament is heavily invested in the topic of the Kingdom of God, as approximately 80 percent of the gospels' texts relate to this concept. In Jesus' discourses with the Pharisees, he frequently refers to the law of the prophets being fulfilled and its final fulfillment in God's kingdom.[35] Davûd argues that the meaning of "kingdom" here is properly rendered from Greek into Aramaic as "the will of God" (*Allâhın irâdesi*) in the context of Matthew 6:10, which says "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."[36] By itself, "kingdom" (*melekût*) refers to the laws of a nation and thus refers to the coming of a new book of laws. The word "will" (irâde), refers not to a person but contains a spiritual meaning. Therefore in the parables of Jesus he refers to the Kingdom of God as not a race, people group, or citizenship, but a

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[33]   Ibid., 127.
[34]   Ibid., 134.
[35]   Ibid., 107.
[36]   Matthew 6:10: English Standard Version.

spiritual brotherhood. The kingdom will come rapidly and destroy all infidels and polytheists. The word "Kingdom" connotes this heavenly state's legal matters and can therefore only refer to *şeria't*.[37] It concerns matters of repentance, prayer, and prostration, and does not require any intercessors in the form of popes or priests.

At this point in the discussion Davûd connects these theological concepts to contemporary political matters of the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars. He compares the divine nature of God's kingdom to the all-too-human nature of European collective identities that have fueled the fanaticism of the war. The Kingdom of God is a physical oneness and spiritual brotherhood that transcends nationalism (*kavmiyet*) or patriotism (*milliyetperverlik*). The Kingdom of God promotes peace and tolerance while nationalism and patriotism lead to division and bloodshed. Here Davûd heeds the heretofore-unseen levels of violence in the Balkans, which people of the region and foreign observers both recognized as something unprecedented. It was marked by a new quality of warfare, with a new degree of manpower, mobilization, technology, and casualties. The level of destruction was extraordinary, leaving entire villages and towns in ruin. Soldiers' letters, post-war memoirs, and postcards filled the Ottoman Empire and the Balkan nations.[38] To Davûd, secular patriotism and nationalism were to blame for this violence, along with Christianity. The religion lacked the spiritual unity of Islam and left its adherents to war among each other. Their faulty religion, combined with patriotic fervor, threatened to escalate massive violence across the continent. As a result, Christians would do well to

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[37] *İncîl ve Salîb*, 115-124.
[38] Wolfgang Höpken, "Performing Violence: Soldiers, Paramilitaries and Civilians in the Twentieth-Century Balkan Wars," in Sara Dreher, *The No Man's Land of Violence: Extreme Wars in the 20th Century* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2005), 219-220.

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heed the words of Jesus, who preached forgiveness and gentleness, which none of

Europe's Christian nations were doing with each other.

> In this case, why do these children of the church, full of patriotic sentiments, aim their cannons, dreadnoughts, and airplanes at the chests of their brethren? Why do they not fall back upon the cross, the New Testament, or above all, their father God rather than these hellish tools?[39]

Davûd argues that the Muslim world, in contrast, lives in unity across the globe,

whether in Java, China, Russia, or Morocco. They are true co-religionists, unlike the

Christians of Europe. Their resolve is strong and they have withstood attempts by

Christians to tear them apart through colonial oppression. Muslims have become united

by this shared oppression, and their brotherhood is only strengthened by undergoing such

persecution. They suffer across the world, whether young Muslims in Rumelia or India.

Afghani girls are deflowered and held by their mothers, wailing in the streets of Kabul.

At the same time, Christians in the Balkans butcher Muslim civilians and soldiers. The

result of this oppression, however, will only be to strengthen the Islamic world: "Those

who dare to commit such acts will not destroy Islam. Perhaps they will rise up and unite,

strengthening themselves."[40]

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[39] *İncîl ve Salîb*, 144. *O halde şu Kilisenin evlâdı niçin milliyetperverlik hisleriyle dolu olup toplarını, drednotlarını, tayyârelerini kendi dîndaşlarının göğsüne doğru çeviriyorlar! Niçin şu cehennem gibi âletler yerine haça, İncile, Rûhulkudüse ve bilhassa baba Allâh'a (!) müraca'at etmiyorlar?! İşte gel de ma'nevî kardeşliği ve maddi birliği Hristyanlar arasında bul! Kâbil mi? İsevî birlik ve kardeşlik muhal şeylerdendir. Niçin İncil kitabı mı yoktur? Kilisenin kıralları ve rûhânî önderleri mi yok? Va'az ve misyonerleri mi eksik? Fen ve sanâyi adamları ve buluşları mı yetersiz? Katolik ile Ortodoks bir kilisede, Ermeni ile Nestûrî bir mihrab önünde, bir Baptist ile Anklikan aynı minber üzerinde olur mu?*

[40] Ibid., 147. *Böyle diri ve kuvvete mâlik bir ümmetü Kelâmullâhın açıkladığı gibi ta Allâh'ın dilediği vakte kadar yaşayacaktır. Rumelide genç Müslümanların barsaklarını delip döken hançer, Hindistanın gençleri heyecana getirdi! Vahşîler elinde ırz ve bikri izâle olunan ve terk-i hayât eden temiz etekli Müslüman kızların mâtemin Kâbil sokaklarında genç Afgan hanımları çığlık ve gözyaşlarıyla tuttular! Katli'am ile şehîd edilen esir İslâm askerleri, Balkan Hristiyanlarının kılıçlarıyla süngüleriyle kestikleri, doğradıkları Osmanlı yaşlıları, küçük çocukları, bütün İslâm âlemin gazaplandırdı ve inletti... Bu gibi şeylerin işlenmesine cesâret edenler İslâmiyetin imhâsını değil, belki onun birleşmek için uyanmasını ve dolayısıyla, hazırlanmasını ve kuvvetlenmesini kolaylaştırmış oldular.*

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Davûd's Methodology

Davûd's sources for the history of the early church are early church historians themselves. As a former Anglican and Catholic theology student, he uses these primary sources instead of approaching them second-hand through European histories or biblical scholarship, as did al-Kairânawî and Ahmet Midhat. He quotes Eusebius in his analysis of the Council of Nicea and the influence of the Neoplatonist Alexandrians on the doctrine of the Trinity and the canonization of Scripture.[41] In other areas his sourcing is weaker than other Muslim polemicists. Davûd was far less comfortable with European Enlightenment intellectuals than Fatma Aliye or Ahmet Midhat, quoting them infrequently and only with considerable qualification. Davûd realized that the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment scholars who developed the methodological tools of textual criticism – Voltaire, Renan, and Thomas Carlyle – held varying degrees of deism and agnosticism in their religious beliefs, and those same tools that attacked the foundations of Christianity could in turn attack the foundations of Islam. Understanding this threat, Davûd warns his readers against European authors who attempt to flatter Muslim sensibilities by attacking Christians and Jews. They put forth arguments suitable for an Islamic audience, such as rejecting the immaculate conception of Jesus as a superstition, but such religious polemics against Christianity drip with hate. These writers carelessly drift between every religion and sect. They are "like gamblers who have squandered their money."[42]

Davûd approaches historical and rational criticism of the Bible with caution due

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[41] Ibid., 223.
[42] Ibid., 68. *Diğer bölümü ise, kumarda servetini kaybetmiş bir kumarbaz gibi her dînden ve mezhepten âvâre kalmış gâfil ve çâresiz insanlardır.*

to reasons of consistent application. He was aware that such scholarship, while useful in the defense of Islam, could threaten his own monotheistic beliefs if it were completely embraced. While he spared few kind words for Protestant missionaries within the Ottoman Empire, he was even less accommodating to scholars who would belittle the faith of Christians and Jews and consider their beliefs as superstitions. He rejected the popular argument that Christianity and Judaism were derivative of Zoroastrianism or Buddhism. While such scholarly works served Davûd's larger purpose of undercutting the central claims of Christian theology, they went too far by disqualifying these heavenly teachings, which were revealed through the prophet Jesus. Therefore, they were also an attack on Islamic belief: "As they appear to defend Islam, they are in the mind to destroy Islam and other religions. [They] reject all of God's prophets who appear with God's permission. After these lies, with what can Islam and the Qur'an be defended?"[43]

The Reception of *İncîl ve Salîb*

The reception of *İncîl ve Salîb* by Ottoman Muslim authors was decidedly mixed. In a review of the work that appeared in 1913 in *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*, the main ideological organ of late Ottoman Islamism, the reviewer notes that if one is to look at the table of contents, it will be clear that there are matters that will not interest all readers. This is perhaps an indirect way to criticize the work for delving into esoteric matters of language and philology that would lie outside the interest of all but the most committed specialist. The reviewer furthermore criticizes Davûd for the numerous Turkish language errors that fill *İncîl ve Salîb*. Some mistakes are simple grammatical errors, but others are

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[43] Ibid.

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convoluted passages that are incomprehensible to the reader. Davûd, he says, is "unskilled in writing. When coupled with this, it complicates the entire work. In fact, some passages cannot be comprehended."[44]

The reviewer's critique of Davûd's language errors are perhaps the most damning ones, as the self-proclaimed polyglot based his arguments on his philological expertise in deconstructing and reconstructing Scripture in multiple languages. Poor grammar and vocabulary choices in *İncîl ve Salîb* did not strengthen his criticisms of the New Testament for its weak linguistic foundations. Nevertheless, the reviewer praises *İncîl ve Salîb* for exploring the complicated history of Christianity and carrying out an examination of every "matter under dispute in a detailed manner." He adds that the book has been universally approved by the religious authorities, in particular the theological faculty of the *Dâru'l-fünûn*, the principle institution of higher education in the Ottoman Empire.[45]

A second review of his polemic in *Sebîlü'r-reşâd* comes from Şerafeddin, an instructor at the Bayezid Medrese in Istanbul. He is more complimentary of Davûd's polemic. As a member of Istanbul's ulema class, he praises *İncîl ve Salîb* as an important work that strives for the advancement of knowledge of religions.[46] Şerafeddin lauds Davûd's linguistic acumen and is less critical of his Turkish grammatical errors. He praises the Chaldean convert to Islam for his knowledge of Biblical and modern languages that he attained through study in Paris and London, going so far as to say that

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[44] *Sebîlü'r-reşâd* 11, No 27 (1329), 167-168. Transliterated in Büyükcoşkun, 277.
[45] *Mevki-i münakaşaya konulan her mesele hakkında kuvvetli denilebilecek muhakemeler yürütulüyor.* Ibid.
[46] *Şebîlü'r-reşâd* 11, No. 29 (1329), 296-297. Transliterated in Büyükcoşkun, 278. *İntişar etmekte olan İncîl ve Salîb namındaki eser ilm-i edyân ile uğraşanlar için pek mühim ve hadise-i ilmiyyedir.*

that there has not been a work like this produced in the Islamic world for centuries, with the exception of Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk*. Like his predecessor, he has written a work suitable for all persons, not merely the educated religious class.

> This work is not just for the Islamic world but suitable for all people, because this book is a bright mirror for everyone who is searching for the truth [...] Like the opponents of religion in Europe, who want to prove that the ancient books are without merit, it is only within a few narrow minds, who want to subvert the truth with confusion and misdirection, that this work will never be accepted.[47]

Şerafeddin goes as far as recommending this book to the *Dâr'ül-fünûn*'s theological faculty (*Dâr'ül-fünûn 'Ulûm-i Dîniyye Şubesi*), the school of preachers (*Medresetu'l-Vâ'izîn*) and even all mosques (*bi'l 'umûm cevâmi'-i şerîfe*). May they all read it, he says, and their consciences be comforted and their faith strengthened.[48]

Davûd's *İncîl ve Salîb* attracted attention from Muslim authors due to his articles appearing frequently in the *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*, but the most thorough response to him came from outside his Muslim readership. In 1914 Armenian Protestant Ohannes Kirkorian wrote two articles in reply to Abdülahad Davûd. He is perhaps the only Ottoman Christian of the late Empire to enter the polemical sphere with no external prompting, as it is unknown whether Abdu' Yesu's dialogue with Giritli Sırrı Pasha was undertaken voluntarily. Their polemical discussion is among the final print debates between an Ottoman Christian and Muslim before the end of the Empire.

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47 Ibid., 279. *Bu eser yalnız 'âlem-i İslâmiyyet değil, bi'l-'umûm insaniyet 'âlemi memnûn olmalıdır. Çünkü herkesin taharrî ettiği hakîkatin bu kitap bir mir'âtın cilâsıdır... Avrupadaki dîn 'aleyhdarları gibi kütüb-i kadîmeyi esassız göstermek isteyerek, hakîkâtı yıkmak sûretiyle yalnız bâzı kûteh beyinlerinde ufak iltibaslar ile hakîkat zann olunan muğâlatalara bu eserde asla çây-i kabûl yoktur. Hattâ bu yolda yazılmış eserlerden ehl-i İslâmın tevakkî etmelerini bile müellif-i muhterem bilhassa tavsiye ediyor.*

48 Ibid., 280. *Okusunlar ve ehl-i îmâna dahî müellif-i muhteremin dediği gibi "eyyâm-i ahîrede dûçâr olduğumuz felâketlere, mâtemlere, esâretlere karşı tesliyye-i vicdân, takviyye-i îmân olmak üzere" okumayı tavsiye etsinler.*

Ohannes Kirkorian

Ohannes Kirkorian published responses to Abdülahad Davûd in his journal *Rehnüma*, a semi-weekly religious periodical. The first article was a response to *İncîl ve Salîb* entitled *İzâh-ı Hakîkat: İncîl ve Salîb Nâm Esere Cevap* (An Explanation of the Truth: An Answer to the Work 'The New Testament and the Cross').[49] The second article, entitled *Üç Mü Bir Mi? Yahut Hristiyanların Salus-i Şerîfî* (Three or One? Or, the Christians' Noble Trinity), was a general response to Ottoman Muslim religious scholars who claimed that the Christian doctrine of the Trinity embodied polytheism and was a direct response to another Abdülahad treatise entitled *Esrâr-ı Isevîye: İslâmiyetin Zaferi* (The Mystery of Christianity: The Victory of Islam). In *Üç Mü Bir Mi?* Kirkorian argues that the two religions hold a common understanding of monotheism, and their divisions are grounded in terminological misunderstandings rather than theological division. Ohannes Kirkorian does not mention Abdülahad Davûd by name in the second series, but he clearly had him in mind, as Davûd took strongest issue with the doctrine of the Trinity, and Kirkorian indirectly blames such polemics for the massive inter-religious violence of the Balkan Wars.

Kirkorian was a graduate of American Board primary and secondary schools in his hometown of Aintab. His wife Rebecca Aristeidon was a graduate of the Bursa American Girl College, fluent in four languages, and active in the agency's missionary work among women.[50] According to a biography by his sister, also named Rebecca, the young Ohannes translated sermons from famed English pastor Charles Spurgeon from

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[49] Mu'allim Ohannes Kirkorian, *İzâh-ı Hakîkat: İncîl ve Salîb Nâm Esere Cevap* (Istanbul: Keşişyan Matba'ası, 1330/1914).

[50] "Alumni News," *Life and Light for Women*, Vol. 23 (Women's Board of Missions, 1893), 392.

English to Armenian for the rest of his Protestant family under the direction of his father

Krikore Hartunian, also a pastor and the first ordained Ottoman Protestant in central

Turkey.[51] Ohannes's affiliation with the ABCFM afforded him opportunities to continue

his studies in the United States and participate in their publications department. He

graduated from Yale Divinity School in 1883 and later became professor of theology of

Central Turkey College in Aintab, a post he held for 18 years.

Kirkorian later pastored an Armenian Protestant church in Istanbul and was

involved in the ABCFM's publishing activities as the editor of *Rehnüma*. He assumed

editorial control in the 1900s and quickly grew the subscription base to 2,460 subscribers.

The ABCFM's committee for publications praised his "able editorship" for its growing

influence.[52] His sister recounts that Kirkorian was also a popular preacher. He ministered

to those outside his congregation and held cordial relations with the Muslim religious and

political establishment of Istanbul.[53]

In the introduction to *İzâh-ı Hakîkat*, Kirkorian writes that a priest from the

Catholic Church who converted to Islam, Keldânî Abdülahad Davûd, has released *İncîl*

ve Salîb, a book whose main contention is that Christianity is not a religion but a sect

filled with errors. Here Kirkorian takes issue with the book's inflammatory language. He

appeals to learned Muslims to see the book as a divisive, provocative work that offends

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[51] Rebecca Krikorian, *Jerusalem: The Life Sketch of Miss Rebecca Krikorian and Her Nephew Rev. Samuel Krikorian Together With Their Divine Call To Open a Field of Work in Jerusalem* (Kansas City: General Foreign Missionary Board, 1919).

[52] *Report of the Publication Department for the Year 1911.* Istanbul ABCFM Publication Department, H.S. Barnum (Istanbul: March 29, 1912). Archives of the American Board, Ankara.

[53] Rebecca Krikorian, 149. "He was loved and honored by many of the leading religious and political Turkish men of that city. It was not a strange thing to see in his church, from time to time, some Turks who came to hear him preach; and once about a dozen Mullas (Mohammedan religious teachers with big white turbans) were present and expressed their great appreciation. Wonderful, is it not?"

the sensibilities of any devout believer, whether Muslim, Christian, or Jew. He wrote that

Davûd was disrespectful to use such incendiary language against Christians and

Christianity, the religion into which he was born and raised: "In fact he is pleased to use

unkind and discourteous phrases and descriptions about them, like 'dogs' and 'swine.' [...]

We hope that the Chaldean author will vindicate himself by having calmer and more

moderate statements in the second edition."[54]

Kirkorian addresses the three points of *İncîl ve Salîb*: that the revelation of Islam

answers and fulfills the New Testament, the Kingdom of God, and the will of God.

Regarding the first point, Kirkorian completely side-steps the matters of Davûd's textual

criticism and philological deconstruction of the New Testament. Such literary criticism is

irrelevant to the New Testament, he argues, because it was not created as a literary work,

nor were the spoken words of Jesus meant to be scrutinized as such. The revelations of

Jesus were entirely spoken, so the *İncîl* is not a book but the Messiah's oral

communication of his gospel. This gospel is the verbal proclamation of good news to the

people of Israel, not a text he hand delivered. The purpose of his message is found in his

honorary titled, *Mesih*, which in Arabic means "Messiah," or "one who sets free." Such a

title had political significance for the Jews, who were under imperial rule for centuries

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[54] Mu'allim Ohannes Kirkorian, *İzâh-ı Hakîkat: İncîl ve Salîb Nâm Esere Cevap,* Transliterated in Buyukcoskun, 229. *Ve böylece içinde doğmuş ve büyümüş olduğu dîn 'aleyhinde şiddetle bir gayz ve kin ile fırsatdan bilistifade Hıristiyanlık ve Hıristiyanlar hakkında pek harâretli bir lîsân kullanmak cüretinde bulunuyor. Hattâ onlar hakkında köpek ve hınzır gibi nezâket ve edeb dışı tâ'birleri ve vasıfları mükerren hoş görmüşdür. Biz eminiz ki, bu eseri inceleyen mütefekkir Müslüman biraderlerimiz, dîn mühâbasesi gibi mukaddes bir vazifede ve özellikle İslâm dînini Yahudilere ve Hıristiyanlara hak dîn ve dîn-i mübîn diye takdîm ederken bu derece nezaketsiz ve alaycı ifadelerle dopdolu olan bir kitabı okuduklarından dolayı ümitleri kırılmış ve gücenmişlerdir. Ümîd ederiz ki Keldânî muharrir bu eseri ikinci tab'ında daha sâkin ve daha mu'tedil ifadelerde bulunarak nazarımızda kendilerini temize çıkarmış olur.*

and awaited a liberator, but its primary meaning implies spiritual liberation. In this sense, Jesus orally communicated his role as a priest and a king, and this communication formed the text of the gospel.[55]

This is a curious response for a Protestant educated through the ABCFM system, which largely rejected higher criticism and still hewed to the belief in the Holy Spirit's inspiration of the Bible and the inerrancy of the Scripture. Kirkorian may have been caught up in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy during his studies in America, in which theological differences between liberal and conservative Christians caused schisms in seminaries across the country.[56] Other foreign missionaries embraced liberal Christian theology, such as Howard Bliss, the president of the Syrian Protestant College after the turn of the twentieth century and claimed in 1920 that a modern missionary is one who accepts that Christianity is not "the sole channel through which divine and saving truth has been conveyed."[57] In order for Kirkorian not to have his statement misconstrued as an admission of scriptural corruption, he adds that the New Testament, despite its original oral form, still withstands textual criticism, and as such it remains uncorrupted and unaltered. If one must apply textual criticism to the four gospels and discovers elements

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[55] Kirkorian, *İzâh-ı Hakîkat*, 233. *İncil ta'biri bizce müjde demek olmakla beraber kendilerinin 'İncil bir kelâm-ı ilâhîdir ki Mesîh efendimiz şıfâhen va'az ve i'lan buyurdu' ta'rifini de kabul ederiz. Gerçekte İncil aslında bir kitap veya muharrer bir düstûr veya mecelle olmayıp ancak Hazret-i Mesîhin tebliğ eylediği bir müjdedir.*

[56] These divisions began primarily in the Presbyterian Church in the United States and later spread to most American Christian denominations. The question was whether the Bible was inerrant or merely a collection of myths, legends, and folklore, and whether a kernel of history existed within it. The image of the "kernel" and "husk" was popular in this discourse. See Gary Dorrien, *the Making of Liberal Theology – Imagining Progressive Religion 1805-1900* (Westminster: John Knox Press, 2001), Ernestine van der Wall, *The Enemy Within: Religion, Science, and Modernism* (Leiden: Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences, 2007).

[57] Makdisi, *Artillery of Heaven*, 213. Bliss said that such a missionary "comes to supplement, not solely to create. He prays for all men with a new sympathy – for all mosques and temples and synagogues as well as for all churches."

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to scrutinize, there are no signs in the text of corruption or alteration. Its original essence still exists and has been protected.[58]

Regarding Davûd's interpretation of the Kingdom of God as the universal spiritual brotherhood of Muslims, Kirkorian offers a customary Protestant interpretation of this concept. The Messiah's teaching disrupted the Jewish concept of the Kingdom of God as their religion and the state of Israel, and the Messiah as the fulfillment of the Levitical law that would bring them political independence from foreign empires. The Kingdom of God, he explains, means the dominion in which God is king (*Meliki Allâh olan bir Melekût*). Such a kingdom does not depend on weapons, swords, or personal influence. It does not come with weapons or firearms. As it is written in Matthew 5:5, "The meek shall inherit the earth," the kingdom is not ruled from a city such as Jerusalem, but it is the spirit of God ruling the souls of men. Such a kingdom, he writes, does not need administrators, and it is not restricted to one nation. This kingdom is not of this world, and wholly different from the freedom that Alexander, Caesar, Napoleon, Wilhelm or Osman brought to their respective nations. It is the kingdom of heaven as Jesus proclaimed in the gospels.[59]

Kirkorian then addresses Davûd's concept of the "will of God" as being Islamic law, and his criticism of Christianity that it abrogated Judaic law in favor of granting unregulated power to the church. The will of God is not an aggregation of legal statues, he responds. It inspires love and actions of service, designates God as father, and gives

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[58]   Ibid., 238. *Asıl cevher mevcûd ve mahfûzdur. Melekûtullâhın meliki olan Allâh'ın bizi seven ve bize tenezzül eden peder olması ve bu Melekûtun düstûr ve mecellesinin Allâha ve insanlara karşı muhabbet olduğu meseleleri şüphe ve tartışma götürmez sûrette tahrîfsiz ve tağyîrsiz olarak duruyor.*
[59]   Ibid., 235.

the news of his love toward humanity and his desire to be loved by humanity. Most

people envision a king to be an overbearing and severe judge, but the Messiah reveals

him to be a kind and loving father. The will of God is the life of people and their

sustenance. This will is not a collection of commands or prohibitions but born out of love

to God and humanity.[60]

Kirkorian concludes the short *İzâh-ı Hakîkat* with a discussion on Davûd's central

criticism of Christian doctrine, the Trinity. It is this doctrine that makes Davûd consider

Christianity to be a heresy, but according to Kirkorian, it is his misunderstanding of the

doctrine that prevents him from understanding the common elements between Christian

and Muslim theology. Pace Davûd, Christians do not worship many gods, but understand

God to be one diety that consists of different persons and roles. In the Transfiguration of

Jesus, he reveals himself as king, father, and the Messiah. This understanding shows

Christianity to be a religion that celebrates the diversity of God's persons and character

but understands they are all united in one deity. If it is understood that the teaching of the

Trinity is true, Christianity is not outside the Kingdom of God, but it is a religion that

proclaims the Kingdom of God and the will of God in a perfect form. The teaching of the

Trinity is not out of accordance with the unity of God; on the contrary, it is an article of

faith proclaimed in a most reasonable way.[61]

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[60] Ibid, 241. *Âdildir, lâkin 'adâleti kılıç ve ateş ile başımıza binmiş değil, ancak o şefkatli bir peder gibi kendisinin aşırı giden evlâdını arayıp kurtarmak ister ve onu kendîne döndürmek için her çareyi düşünür. İnsanın hayatı ve rızkı Allâh'ın irâdetidir. Lâkin bu irâdet bir takım emirler ve nehiyler toplamı değil ancak Allâh'a ve insanlara muhabbet ve muhabbeten doğan hizmetdir.*

[61] Ibid., 244. *İmdi Hıristiyanların sâlûs-i şerîf ta'limi doğru anlaşılırsa görülür ki, Hıristiyanlık Melekûtullâhın dışında değil ancak o Melekûtullâhı ve İrâdetullâhı kâmil bir sûrette ifade eden bir dîndir. Ve sâlûs-i şerîf ta'limi vahdâniyyete aykırı olmayıp 'aksine onu en ma'kul sûrette ifade eden bir 'akîdedir.*

Kirkorian turns to Davûd's charge that Christianity is responsible for the violence of the Balkan Wars in his other short treatise, *Üç Mü Bir Mi?* He blames Islam instead, not for its inherent violence as Davûd does with Christianity, but for spreading religious hatred due to its misunderstanding of the Trinity. Again, he writes to convince his Muslim readers that the Trinity is a monotheistic belief, not polytheistic, because he believes this misunderstanding to be the crux in animosity and hatred between Christians and Muslims in the Ottoman Empire and the Balkans, not imperial squabbling between Russians, Europe, and the Ottomans. According to Kirkorian, this incorrect understanding of the Trinity led to fourteen centuries of calamities due to Muslims considering Christians infidels and polytheists. For polemicists like Davûd to antagonize such sentiments and stress religious difference was a reckless act at a time when the Empire's religious groups needed to unite or suffer political collapse. Both religions rejected polytheism, Kirkorian writes, and if Muslims would realize that Christians are not polytheists, then "in our nation religious enmity will fall by 75 percent." [62]

Like other Ottoman Christians, Kirkorian writes his polemic within the typology of a discussion. He believed that religious differences were the result of a mistake in understanding and could be resolved, rather than Davûd's typology of a dispute, in which the writers seek to demonstrate the opponents' arguments as irredeemably false.[63] This is the conciliatory strategy used by Harutune Jenanyan rather than the combative methods

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[62]   Ohannes Kirkorian, *Üç Mü Bir Mi? Yahud Hristiyanların Salûs-i Şerîfi* (Istanbul: Müştereku'l-menfe'a Osmanlı Şirketi Matba'ası, 1913); Kudret Büyükçoşkun, ed. (Istanbul: İnkılab Yayınları, 1999), 273-274.

[63]   Marcelo Dascal "On The Use of Argumentative Reason in Religious Polemics" in *Religious Polemics in Context: Papers Presented to the Second International Conference of the Leiden Institute for the Study of Religions (Lisor) held at Leiden, 27-28 April, 2000*, eds. Theo Hettema and Arie van der Kooij (Lieden: Uitgeverij Van Gorcum, 2004), 3-16.

of Pfander and Koelle. There are a number of reasons for the Armenian Protestants to prefer this method. Both were influenced by the ABCFM, which never engaged in direct attacks on Islam. They were also Ottoman subjects and lacked consular protection, extraterritorial privileges, or close ties to the foreign press enjoyed by foreign missionaries in the Empire. Furthermore, any critique of the Ottoman Empire's lack of civilizational progress would be a self-indictment.

Kirkorian also represents one of the final voices supporting the religiously inclusive collective identity of Ottomanism. He believed that the Empire would be strengthened with Christian-Muslim unity, and his polemic sought to resolve theological misunderstandings and create harmony between the two religions. Unlike Davûd, who does not believe such inter-religious harmony between the two religions is politically feasible, Kirkorian retained optimism that the Young Turk's interest in their educational institutions and its praise of American missionaries as pioneers of progress would lead to the open embrace of Christian values. Like Davûd, his theology has political implications, particularly supporting Ottoman inter-religious unity to shore up its strength against imperial rivals and prevent other military massacres. Such opinions became almost non-existent in the aftermath of World War I, when the hopes of multi-religious pluralism in the Empire became impossible.

Davûd and the Late Ottoman Jewish Question

Despite blaming Christians for the Balkan Wars, Davûd did share some of Kirkorian's inclusive spirit, at least for one non-Muslim group. He expresses a paternalistic attitude toward Jews in *İncîl ve Salîb,* similar to Ahmet Midhat's attitude

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toward Armenians. As a Chaldean of Semitic background and a convert to Islam, he

voices solidarity with Jews for their common Semitic heritage and strong defense of the

unity of God's monotheistic person. He calls them "spiritual brothers" for whom there is

no difference between its holy books and prophets and those of Islam.[64] They are unique

in history in possessing a book of divine revelation. The Greeks produced books of moral

and spiritual wisdom, but all were products of their time, and its greatest teachers

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were unable to establish a religion. He nearly considers

them to be co-religionists and is sympathetic to their political plight and the pogroms they

suffered in Eastern Europe and Russia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This sympathy is ultimately expressed in the language of proselytization. As Muslims and

Jews shared Christian persecution and many articles of faith, it would be a smaller matter

for them to convert to Islam.

> The Jews do not trust any nation, nor are they happy in any land. They are torn asunder across four continents in a miserable state, like scattered sheep. You have rich, wise, and thoughtful men; there are measures to which you have recourse that will remedy this condition. You should not become Christians, and this is your right. You will always remain monotheists. Your enemy is Christianity, not Islam. You can easily and suitably enjoin the commands of Islam. You and Muslims worship the same truth.[65]

Davûd's addressing of Jews in the Ottoman Empire is another example of his dual

approach to theology and contemporary political controversies. Factions in the Istanbul

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[64] *İncîl ve Salîb*, 153. Davûd places himself consciously as a descent of the Assyrian Empire and "repents" that although he is from the nation that has done many terrible actions toward the Jews in the Assyrian captivity of Israel in the eighth century B.C., he cannot write anything but respectful and refined words toward the Jews. *Yahudilere pek fenalık yapmış olan Keldânî-Âsûrî milletinden olmama rağmen ben, Yahudilere karşı hürmet ve nezaketten başka bir şey yazamam.*

[65] Ibid., 156-157. *Yahudiler hiçbir millete i'timâd etmedikleri gibi hiçbir memlekette de mesut değildir. Yerkürenin dört kıtasında, parça parça, perişân halde, dağılmış koyunlar gibi! Sizin bu kadar zengin adamlarınız, âlimleriniz ve mütefekkirleriniz var; bu halinize çare olabilecek tedbîrlere başvursunlar. Siz Hıristiyan olamazsınız ve hakkınız da vardır. Siz daima muvahhîd kalacaksınız. Sizin can düşmanınız İslâm değil 'İsevîliktir. İslamiyetle çok uygun ve kolay şartlarla birleşebilirsiniz. Sizin milliyetinize hatta mahalli bir hükümet kurmanıza, sebtiniz ve savmınıza dokunmaksızın dostluk elini uzatacaktır.*

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political elite were deeply divided over the Jewish Question in the early twentieth

century. At this time the Zionist movement was in full bloom, with Jewish migration to

Ottoman Palestine underway for decades.[66] A growing anti-Semitic political bloc called

into question the loyalty of Ottoman Jews to the state. In reply, Davûd spoke as part of a

pro-Jewish bloc that believed them to be loyal subjects of the Empire and faithful

practitioners of monotheism. This argument occurred alongside parliamentary discussions

over the possible immigration of millions of Russian Jews to Ottoman Iraq and decades

of passive Hamidian policy that allowed the establishment of numerous Jewish

settlements in Palestine, included seven farming communities established through the

Jewish Colonization Association.[67]

Such discussions occurred against the backdrop of Ottoman concerns over

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[66] See Gur Alroey, "Galveston and Palestine: Immigration and Ideology in the Early Twentieth Century," *American Jewish Archives Journal* 56 (2004): 129-150; Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005); Tom Segev, *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs Under the Mandate* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000); *The Second Aliyah: An Anthology* (New York: Zionist Youth Council, 1955).

[67] Louis Fishman, "Understanding the 1911 Ottoman Parliament Debate on Zionism in Light of the Emergence of a 'Jewish Question,'" in *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule*, eds. Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 107. The first and most prominent anti-Semitic intellectual of the late Ottoman period was Ebüzziya Tevfik, who in 1888 published the booklet *Millet-i İsrâiliye* (The Israelite Nation), a book on the Jewish people's early and modern history that so deeply vilified them that the Haham Başı, the chief rabbi of Istanbul and the *de facto* leader of the Ottoman Jewish community, protested to the Grand Vizier at the printing of its first and second edition. In the Hamidian period he published an inflammatory pamphlet *Memleket-i İsrâiliye* (The Israelite Kingdom), which put forth the theory of a Jewish-Freemason alliance set out to endanger the weak Ottoman state. See Ebüzziya Tevfik, Millet-i İsrâiliye (Constantinople: Matbaa-i Ebüzziya, 1305/1888). For more on his anti-Semitism, see Özgür Türesay, "Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda antisemitizmin Avrupalı kökenleri üzerine birkaç not: Ebüziyya Tevfik ve Millet-i İsrâiliye (1888)," *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar* 6 (Autumn 2007-Spring 2008), 97-115; PRO FO 371/992/177 no. 992 (27.12.1909), Marling to Grey. Quoted in Neville Mandel's *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I* (1977, Berkeley: University of California Press), 100; Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 188. By no means was the Ottoman intelligentsia uniformly anti-Semitic. The Young Turk writer Celai Nuri Ileri took up their cause and wrote sympathetically of issues and problems among the Jews. See Lewis, 189. For more on the life, literature, and prolific publishing activities of Ebüziyya, see Âlim Gür, *Ebüzziya Tevfik: Hayatı, Dil, Edebiyat, Basın, Yayın, ve Matbaacılığa Katkıları* (Ankara: Kültür Bakanlığı, 1998).

Zionism, discussed at length in March and May 1911 in the Ottoman Parliament. Zionism

had gained considerable international momentum by this period, and uncertainty about it

spread among the political elite, so much so that CUP opponents used it as their primary

critique of the ruling party.[68] As parliamentarians contested the issue, Ebüzziya Tefvik,

the editor of *Tasvîr-i Efkâr,* took to the pages of his newspaper for a public debate with

Moiz Kohen, an Ottoman Jew and staunch supporter of Russian Jewish migration to

Ottoman lands. Kohen had close ties to the CUP, which also supported Jewish settlement

in Iraq and Palestine. Tevfik and Kohen exchanged letters that were printed in *Tasvîr-i*

Efkâr in 1909. The debate turned ugly, with Ebüzziya Tefvik predicting the Zionists

would spread over the land "bring disaster and calamity – such as the Plague of Locusts."

Louis Fishman describes the debate as emblematic of the breakdown in the CUP's project

of the Ottoman enshrinement of the French Revolution's ideals of *liberté, égalité,*

fraternité in the Young Turk Period.[69]

  Davûd's defense of the Jews in *İncîl ve Salîb* presents a pro-Jewish position that

continued until the collapse of non-Muslim political participation in state affairs upon the

founding of the Turkish Republic. It also represents the complex position of Jewish

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[68] Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism Before World War I*, 93.

[69] Fishman, 107-110. Ebüziyya Tevfik was part of a chorus of anti-Semitic voices that Jewish mass migration to Ottoman Iraq would spell economic disaster for the region. He said that they would spread like a great deluge over the land and not work in agriculture as they claim to. Rather they will "bring disaster and calamity – such as the Plague of Locusts – [which] will spread over all the Ottoman Lands." This was coupled with conspiracy theories involving a Jewish plot to secretly take control of the Ottoman state. Such proclamations came about due to such events as an incident on March 3, 1911, in which the Minister of Finance, Cavid Bey, a *dönme*, was accused of showing preferential treatment to Jewish capitalists and their agents. This larger discussion of Zionism in the Ottoman Istanbul context was in fact only tangentially connected to the actual events of Jewish migration to Palestine. Foremost it was connect to the prevalent anti-Semitism in the capital, the rise of an Ottoman "Jewish" question, and suspicions arising from the Muslim Turkish elite concerning the loyalty of the Jewish people to the Ottoman state in light of growing Turkish nationalism. See *Tasvîr-i Efkâr*, 16 October, 1909.

identity in the late Empire. While Davûd embraced Jews for their monotheism and optimistically called for their mass conversion to Islam, he was no Zionist. A mass Jewish relocation to Palestine, he argues, will make them an easy target for European anti-Semitism and result in their destruction. In his chapter entitled "Has the Time Come for the Jews to Be Included into the Kingdom of God?" he issues two warnings to his Jewish readership. First, they are incurring the wrath of God by rejecting Islam and repeating the Old Testament pattern of rejecting the prophets in favor of idolatry. Thus, they risk falling into similar disasters of the past such as the Babylonian captivity. Second, a mass immigration to Palestine would not save them from European or Russian persecution. Rather, it would invite a military conflict and entice "European Orthodox and Catholic nations, whose old hatred and enmity against you continues, [to] wipe you from the face of the earth."[70]

However, Davûd does agree with Zionists that they will ultimately be safer in Palestine than in Europe if they immigrate peacefully to the Ottoman Empire. After all, it was the Christian lands that launched the Spanish Inquisition against the Jews while the Ottoman Empire embraced them. As the Empire lost its European land holdings in the Balkan Wars to Christian nations, these Jews once again are in danger. He writes that major Jewish population centers have come under European control, particularly Salonica, which was officially annexed to Greece by the Treaty of Bucharest in 1913 after the Second Balkan War. As Christendom gains power over these regions, Davûd asks where they will find shelter. They are destined to be a people orphaned, hopeless, and

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[70] Ibid., 160.

stateless. They will be destroyed if they remained in the Christian world. But if they relocate East, the Jews will occupy a distinguished position in the Islamic world that is "one thousand times more superior and preferable."[71]

Davûd's analysis of the Jewish Question in *İncîl ve Salîb* is a religious approach to the integration of non-Muslim, non-Turkish subjects into the state, a critical issue in the CUP era (1908-1918). After the constitutional restoration of 1908, the CUP implemented legislation to establish uniform procedures across the Empire to integrate its diverse populations. They required the use of Turkish in courts to standardize the justice system. They enacted centralist language and educational policies as a final attempt at constructing a supra-national Ottomanist identity. Yet they were also responsive to developments in the provinces, included many non-Muslims in the Parliament, and were willing to modify policies to accommodate grievances, particularly in the Arab provinces of the Empire. This continued until the January 1913 coup d'état, with concessions to the Arab Congress and their Islamist policy, and the CUP turned to Islamism after the ultimate failure of Ottomanism in 1914. By this time conciliatory gestures to the Empire's non-Muslim population such as those by Davûd were becoming increasingly rare.[72]

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[71] Ibid., 163. *Gece gündüz Mûsevîleri rahat bırakmayan Protestan misyonerlerinin, kuvvet buldukça artık sabırları tükenmeyeceğini ve kuvvete dayanan tedbirlere başvurmayacaklarını kim temin edebilir? İşte zayıf, yalnız yetimin, ümitsiz ve vatansız bir milletin geleceği! Bundan dolayı Siyonistler yukarıda belirttiğim görüşleri dikkate alarak milletin geleceğini ve selametini düşünsünler. Hıristiyanlık âleminde mahvolmaktan ise elbette İslâm âleminde seçkin bir yer işgal etmek bin kat daha iyi ve tercihe şâyandır.*

[72] Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1997). Kayalı argues that the CUP's program of centralization was not the same as Turkification, and the implementation of Turkish in official judicial capacities was an effort to establish uniform judicial procedures, not an attack on Arabic. Ottomanism evolved into Islamism as the empire lost most of its Christian holdings, sought to appease the Arab political bloc, and shore up support among its majority-Muslim population.

Mahmud Es'ad Seydîşehrî's Published Sermons Against Missionary Activity

With the Empire's non-Muslims becoming marginalized, legal scholars also struggled against opposition to non-Islamist reforms. Local notables and power brokers condemned the CUP's secular legal reforms and decried the curtailment of the sultan's rights.[73] Legal experts crafted and reformed state law accordingly. These juridico-political tensions between religion and secularism finds their way into anti-Christian polemics. Perhaps the most prominent figure to write anti-Christian polemics in the Young Turk era was Mahmud Es'ad Seydîşehrî (d. 1918), a legal expert, author, and statesman. He wrote a number of articles in *Sebîlü'r-reşâd* in 1915 against Protestant missionary activity. Mahmud Es'ad is an interesting example of Islamic scholarship integrating with modernist themes. On one hand his polemics are traditional. The majority of his arguments consist of Qur'anic verses that criticize Christians of corruption or falsification of pre-Qur'anic scripture, which appears to be a throwback to polemical writings of the early nineteenth century, lacking the modernist discourse of contemporary polemicists. Turkish nationalist historiography would expect to find a religious scholar here, acing as a hindrance to progress, being reactionary, and backward.[74] Upon closer inspection, however, signs of his interest in European liberalism appear throughout this and other writings. Among his other monographs and article series include "The Law of Islam and Mr. Carlyle" (*Şeria't-ı İslâmiye ve Mister Karlayl*) and the translation of two works by

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73   Kayalı, 186.

74   Amit Bein has problematized this characterization of the religious body of the last Ottoman period by noting that this negative discourse has roots in the Young Turk revolution of 1908. It strengthened after the founding of the Turkish Republic to support a secular ethno-nationalist political agenda and marginalized the religious establishment. Amit Bein, *Ottoman Ulema, Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press: 2011).

William Henry Quilliam (d. 1932), a nineteenth-century English convert to Islam and founder of England's first mosque and Islamic center.[75]

Mahmud Es'ad was born in the southwestern Anatolian city of Seydîşehîr in 1855 and came from a family of Islamic jurists *(kadı*s*)*. He came to Istanbul at the age of 14 to study at the Fatih Medrese, where he later became an instructor.[76] He received lessons on physics, chemistry, mechanics, French, geometry, history, topography, architecture, and land surveying. He was then appointed instructor at the same school. Mahmud Es'ad's next teaching appointment came at the Gülhane Military Secondary School of Ottoman Law (*Gülhane 'Askerî Rüşdiyesi*). In 1885 he was appointed president of the Izmir Court of First Instance (*İzmir Bidayet Mahkemesi Başkanlığı*), a position he occupied for 11 years. As a legal scholar, he wrote extensively on property and financial law, and as a statesman in the twilight of the Empire he served as an administrator in the Finance Ministry and numerous other financial bodies following the proclamation of the Second Constitution in 1908. Mahmud Es'ad was a principal figure in the Ottoman Finance commission in 1917 concerning family law, determining the provisions for marriage, divorce, inheritance, and their application to Christians, Jews, and Muslims.

Like many Ottoman intellectuals of the time, Mahmud Es'ad was a member of international intellectual societies, particularly the French *Société Académique d'histoire internationale*. He was an informed critic of Christianity, both theologically and in

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[75] *Şerîʿat-ı İslâmiye ve Mister Karlayl (Istanbul: Cemal Efendi Matbaası, 1897-1898). Dîn-i İslâmiye, İslâmiyetin Başlıca Kavâid-i Esâsiye-i İtikâdiyesi Hakkında Ma'lûmât-ı Mücmel*e (Abdullah Gwilliam'dan terceme) (Izmir: Hizmet Matbaası, 1893); *Dîn-i İslâm* (Abdullah Gwilliam'dan terceme) (Istanbul: Eski zabtiye caddesi 61 numaralı matbaa, 1896).

[76] Selcuk Aksin Somel, *The Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy, and Discipline* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).

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regards to global politics, but he read Western scholarship with great interest. Mahmud Es'ad credits his tenure in Izmir, a cosmopolitan coastal city, for exposure to European authors and intellectual sources, expanding his intellectual horizons.[77] Here he interacted with foreigners of numerous nations and was exposed to English, French, Arabic, and Persian. The experience profoundly influenced him and his anti-Christian outlook.[78]

Mahmud Es'ad's polemical series in the *Sebîlü'r-reşâd* consisted of five articles broken into fourteen installments over a 13-week period in 1915. Many of his articles, written as sermons (*hutbe*) are a line-by-line refutation of an anti-Muslim polemic written in Turkish, most likely S.W. Koelle's *Food for Reflections*. He never names the polemic or the author, instead favoring the sarcastic title *hatîb* (preacher) against his interlocutor, but the work in question is likely the *Food for Reflections*, as Mahmud Es'ad takes issue with the author's use of the Qur'an to prove Christian belief and claiming the civilizational inferiority of the Ottoman Empire, a frequent strategy of Koelle's.

In his first article, entitled *Kelimetu'llâh-ı Te'âlâ'ya Dâ'ir Hütbe* (A Sermon Concerning the Word of God [Jesus Christ]), Mahmud Es'ad provides a summary of Protestant missionary activity, beginning with the CMS and Anglican missionary efforts in India. The English attacked Indian resistance fighters during the Mutiny of 1857 and attempted to convert them to Protestantism. Their missionaries distributed tracts and

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[77] Ali Çankaya, *Yeni Mülkiye Tarihi ve Mülkiyeliler, Vol. II* (Ankara: Mars Matbaası, 1968-1969), 1026-1030.

[78] Hasan Basri Erk, Meşhur Türk Hukukçuları, (Istanbul, 1954), 359. *Meşhur Türk Hukukçuları*, 359. *Orada bir sosyete var, efkâr müterakki, ticaret müterakki. Burada kendimi bir Avrupa âleminde ve dâima Avrupa terbiyesi görmüş zevatla temasta bulyordum. Bunlar fikrime çok vüs'at verdi. Onbir sene sonra İstanbul'a 'avdet ettiğimde eski Mahmud Es'ad olmadığımı hissediyorum. Şunu da mâa'l-memnuniye söylemeliyim ki, İzmir bana nasıl tesîr etmiş ise, benim İzmir'e tesîrim ondan az olmadığını zannediyorum. Orada gençlerinde ecnebî lisânına heves uyandırdım. Mektepte muallimlik ederek yeni fikirler verdim. Bu mesai neşv ü nema bulmakta çok gecikmedi.*

books against Islam. Although they have recently entered the Ottoman Empire in

considerable numbers, they have not had the courage to invite Muslims openly to

Christianity but instead entered with the excuse of educating Ottoman Christians. As

such, they have inculcated Ottoman political dissident and contented themselves to work

with Muslims in the Empire's smaller neighborhoods. In the five years since the

proclamation of the Ottoman Constitution, however, this body of priests (*ruhbâniyye*) has

seen it suitable to invite Muslims to Christianity.[79] They travel among poor Muslim

children and preach their customs and religion, even going to the deserts of Syria, and

wander around dressed in the clothing of Islamic instructors, teaching the fundamentals

of Christianity.[80]

Mahmud Es'ad writes that he was compelled to produce his own polemic due to

these circumstances. In his introduction he repeats the trope that missionary literary

output posed a serious threat to Islam while Ottoman Muslims relied on old writings that

are insufficient to repel the attack. A number of new anti-Christian polemical writings

have been produced in recent years, particularly Quilliam's "The Religion of Islam,"

Müdâfa'a, and his own "The Law of Islam and Mr. Carlyle," but the most popular anti-

Christian polemics are still products of the classical age, perhaps a reference to *Tuhfa*. He

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[79] *Sebil'ü'r-reşad*, No. 244 (Istanbul, 1915), 168-172. *Mezâhib-i muhtelife-i Nasrâniyyet'e mensûb misyonerler, Memâlik- Osmâniyye'ye dahî pâzen dühûl olmaya başlayalı hayli zaman olduğu halde, açıkdan açığa ehl-i İslâm'ı da'vete cesaret edemeyip yalnız Teb'a-ı Osmâniyye'den bulunan milel-i muhtelife-i Nasârâ'ya ta'lim etmek ve memleketin ücrâ mahallerinde de el altından bâ'zı efrâd-ı müslimîni idlâle çalışmak ile iktifâ ediyorlardı... Halbuki Meşrûiyet-i Osmâniyye'nin i'lânından beri daha henüz beş sene murûr etmeksizin hey'et-i ruhbâniyye memletetimizde dahî müslimîni alenen da'vete meydânı müsâ'id görmüş olmalıdır ki, 'Hutbe' ünvânı altında yerden mantar biter gibi birden bire birtakım imzasız da'vetnâmeler dağıtılmaya ehl-i İslâm Nasrâniyyet'e da'vet edilmeye başlanmıştır.*

[80] Ibid., 169. *Misyonerlerin nasıl bîçare etfâl-i müslimîn toplayıp kendi fikirlerine göre terbiye ve dînlerin telkîn ettiklerin görmek için, bir kere Suriye çöllerine gitmek ve nasıl hoca kiyafetinde karye be-karye dolaşıp Nasrâniyyet'i ta'lîme çalıştıklarına muttali' olmak için uzak Vilâyetlerimizi dolaşmak kâfidir.*

therefore advises the ulema to carry out an investigation on Christianity, which in the present day existed at the "highest stage of civilization, and at the point of taking the thrones of power across the world."[81]

Much of Mahmud Es'ad's polemic is concerned with showing that Turkish anti-Islamic writings contain weak argumentation. To do so he conducts an extensive line-by-line refutation of a Christian preacher who believes that the Qur'an confirms Christianity's teachings, and whom Mahmud Es'ad constantly reminds his readers lacks the training to carry out Qur'anic exegesis.[82] His debate with the unnamed Christian preacher centers on the creation of Adam, the Fall, the Immaculate Conception, and Abraham's sacrifice of his son to God. In each instance Mahmud Es'ad quotes the preacher's attempt to used Qur'anic verses that defend the Biblical narrative and counters that the preacher either misunderstood the verses or uses them out of context. Much of this work is concerned with scriptural interpretation, but quotes from European intellectuals such as Ernest Renan also inform his narrative, along with reports of international news that demonstrate the violence and immorality of Europe and the more civilized behavior in the Islamic world.

Such an argument over religious titles and their differing meanings in the Qur'an and the Bible take place in his second article, entitled the "Word of God." Here Mahmud Es'ad begins with a discussion on the meaning of the term "spirit of God" (*Rûhullâh*).

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[81]   Ibid. *Şurası da beyân edeyim ki, bu bâbda tedkîkât icrâsını 'ulemâ-yı kirâma tavsiye edişimiz mücerred 'Nasrâniyyet' denilen dînin ne gibi safahât-ı tarihiye geçirerek bu günkü hâle geldiğini ve medeniyetin en yüksek derecesine vâsıl olan ve hemen âlemin her tarafını taht-ı idârelerine almak üzere bulunan beş yüz miyon nüfusu tecâvüz eden bir halkın ne türlü şeylere i'tikâd etmekte bulunduklarını nazar-ı 'ibret ile görmeleri ve 'avâm-ı nâsı da tahzîr etmeleri maksadına mebnîdir.*
[82]   Ibid., 169.

The Christian preacher imputes this term to Jesus, which "proves" his sonship of God. But to Mahmud Es'ad it is merely an honorary title given to a holy prophet, whether Adam, Noah, Abraham, or Moses.[83] The discussion centers on differing interpretations of a portion of the verse 4/171 in the Surat An-Nisâ. The portion of the verse in question reads "But the Messiah... issues forth from the spirit."[84] The Christian preacher adopts this verse to examine the state of the Messiah and his personage, because it makes clear that the Messiah is a spirit which issues forth from God. Mahmud Es'ad shares this interpretation but adds this important qualifier: It should be understood in the context of 15:29 in the Surat Al-Hijr which says "and breathed into him of my soul." This verse confirms that man is distinguished from the spirit that issues forth from God.[85]

The rhetoric then turns to sarcasm and condescension, as it does whenever Mahmud Es'ad's Christian interlocutor says that Muslims have misunderstood the Christian meaning embedded in the Qur'an. Mahmud Es'ad criticizes him for believing the Arabic term for "from the spirit" (*rûhun minhu*) actually refers to Jesus being the same substance of God—and not merely being connected to the invisible heart of God, as were all the other prophets. He is particularly upset by the preacher's suggestion that the Muslim ulema do not understand the meaning of their own holy book and have fallen into uncertainty. Mahmud Es'ad notes that Qur'anic verses concerning Jesus contain a number

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[83] *Sebîl'ü'r-reşad*, No. 245 (Istanbul, 1915), 174-179.
[84] *Innema'l-Mesihu... ruhun minhu.*
[85] Ibid. *Hatip, mu'tadı üzere, iddiasını nass-ı Kur'ân ile isbata kalkışıyor ve yine "İnnema'l-Mesihu... rûhun minhu" âyet-i celilesini esas ittihâz ederek "Makâm-ı Mesih'i ve şahsiyetini teşrîh eden bu âyet-i Kur'âniyye ne güzeldir. Zîra bunlar Mesih'in Allâh'dan sâdır olan bir 'rûh' olduğunu tasrîh ederler". diyor. Biz de hatîbin bu sözlerine tamamen iştirâk ile beraber ilâve ederek deriz ki: Şu makâlemize ünvan ittihaz edilip nezd-i ilahiye-i ma'neviyyede insanın hâiz olduğu makâm-ı âlîye teşrih eden, "ve nefahtu fihi min ruhi..."[Sâd 38/72] âyet-i ne güzeldir. Zîra insanın Allâh'tan sâdır olan 'rûh' ile mümtâz kılındığını tasrîh ediyor.*

of literal and figurative meanings. The greatest scholars of interpretation approach these verses carefully and do not offer inferences that differ drastically from customary interpretation: "How can a Christian preacher who puts concise phrases on the meanings of the Qur'anic verses and has not penetrated deeply into the Islamic sciences, asserting what he knows to be contradictory on purpose?"[86]

In the next article series on the topic of Judgement Day, Mahmud Es'ad dismisses the preacher's eschatology. His article entitled "A Sermon About the One Who Removes the Burden of Sin" (*Günâh Yükü Taşıyan Hakkında Hütbe*) undertakes numerous topics: the nature of The Fall, all humans inheriting this sinful nature, and the Christian claim that all need the salvation of Christ because he is able to remove the burden of their sin.[87] On Judgement Day, the preacher says, brother will be separated from brother, master from slave, the righteous from the unrighteous. To support this vision of the eschaton, he quotes el-Bakara 2/123, which reads, "And fear a Day when no soul will suffice for another soul at all, and no compensation will be accepted from it, nor will any intercession benefit it, nor will they be aided.[88] Mahmud Es'ad acknowledges that such a verse exists in the Qur'an but waves away the preacher's interpretation. He takes particular issue with the preacher's suggestion that for a Muslim to deny the need for an intercessor is equal to following the Mu'tazila school of theology. This school, based on reason and rational thought as the final arbiter between right and wrong, became regarded in certain Ottoman quarters as heresy. Mahmud Es'ad once again takes the preacher to

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[86] Ibid. *Âyât-ı Kur'aniyye'nin lafzen veciz, ma'nen vesî' olduğunu, 'ulûm-ı İslâmiiyede ta'ammuk etmeyen ve hatta bi'l-iltizam bildiğinin hilâfin iddi'a eyleyen bir hatîb-i nasrânî nasıl takdir edebiliyor?*
[87] *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*, No. 250 (İstanbul, 1915), 254-256.
[88] Sahih International.

task for his poor Qur'anic interpretation: The preacher uses verses that suggest denying the need for an intercessor is part of the heretical Mu'tazila sect of Islam. While there is such a verse in el-Bakara, it addresses the children of Israel, not all of humanity. He warns the preacher, "neither a child whom you impute to be God nor any other will intercede for you.[89]

In a later article within the same series "The One Who Carries the Burden of Sin," the subject turns to two points of contention. The first is the Christian doctrine of Jesus atoning for the sins of the world through his crucifixion. The second is the Christian preacher's criticism of an Islamic idea of scales of good and bad deeds that determine whether God condemns a soul to Hell.[90] Mahmud Es'ad argues that the Islamic conception of repentance is completely different from the Christian concept. Well-mannered people will do good deeds, and all people of mercy will submit. Even for those who commit either a venial sin or a mortal sin, there will still be hope and refuge.[91] Second, the Christian idea of salvation that does not require any meritorious acts has led to lawlessness and rebellion in Christian lands. Here Mahmud Es'ad relates to his personal experiences as a magistrate in Izmir. He came in contact with a large cross section of cultures, nationalities, and religions and personally witnessed the poor

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[89] Ibid., 254. *Hatîb-i Nasrânî burada inceden inceye sokmaya başlıyor ve şefa'ati inkâra mukaddime olarak fırak-ı İslâmiye'den mu'tezile fırkasının kebâîrede şefa'ati inkâr hakkında istidlâl ettikleri ayeti ityân ediyor. Biz de deriz ki: Evet! Dostum sûre-i Bakara'da öyle bir ayet vardır; ama kime hitap olduğunu görmedîniz mi! Üst tarafındaki ayette 'Yâ benî İsraîle'zkurû ni'metiy'lleti en'amtü aleykûm ve innî faddaltukûm ale'l-âlemîn' buyurulmuyor mu? Birkaç satır üst tarafında ''ve kâlû'ttehaz'r-rahmânu veleden'' kavl-i kerîminden bunun muhâtabı kimler olduğunu anlayamadınız mı? Sizin Allâh'a isnâd ettiğiniz veled olsun veya sâir biri olsun size şefa'at edemez.*

[90] *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*, No. 252 (Istanbul, 1915), 287-289.

[91] Ibid. *Biz ehl-i İslâm için irtikâp ettiğimiz ma'âsîyi ciro edecek bir vâsî-i şer'î bulunmadığından irtikâp edilmemesini tavsiye edeceğiz. Terbiye ile insanların kesb-i salâh edeceğini de bütün ehl-i insâf teslîm eder zannındayım. Ama hasbe'l-beşeriye kendilerinden bir sağîre veya kebîre sâdır olanlar için de kat'-ı ümîde mahal olmayıp onların da bir ilticâ-gâhı bulunduğunu göstereceğim.*

behavior of the European expatriate community. The rate of Christian incarceration in

Izmir was higher than that of other religious groups. News accounts of Europe confirm

the lawlessness of Christians.

> It will be seen that it is very effectual to observe in practice the rebellious actions against holy law in places where Christians dwell, and the actions of those who dwell in Muslim lands. Once I saw an English newspaper and observed a statistic that among Muslims, one out of every 1,500 people were criminals, amongst Christians it was one out of every 800, and among priests one out of every 40. This is because the protection of the holy law is a matter not known among the people, even up to the priests.[92]

While Mahmud Es'ad blames the preacher's ineptitude on Christianity's

irrationalism, which is closed to every form of reason "like the Great Wall of China," he

ultimately faults Ottoman Muslims for allowing such missionaries to gain so much

influence in the Empire and convert so many Ottoman Christians to Protestantism while

their Muslim neighbors did not bother trying to convert them to Islam for centuries. Not

only were their Muslim neighbors not able to explain their religion, but their sinful

behavior that contradicted the precepts of Islam perhaps awoke a fanatical spirit among

these Ottoman Christians. The Protestant missionaries may lack the truth but they have an

effective propaganda machine and take every measure to spread their writings, he writes.

They are translated to every language in the Islamic world, spreading to Egypt, then to

the Ottoman Empire. These writings appear in the form of Muslim theology books,

written in a common language that deludes the public. Mahmud Es'ad opines that such

missionary writings have one use among Muslims: they demonstrate the degree to which

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[92] Ibid. *Nasârâdan sâdır olan ma'âsînın vasî-i şer'î defterine, ehl-i İslâm'dan sâdır olanların da kendi defter-i a'mâllerine kayd olunmasının fi'liyâtta çok tesiri görülmektedir. Vaktiyle bir İngiliz gazetesinde gördüğüm bir istatistiğe nazaran müslimînde binbeşyüzde bir cürüm sâdır olduğu halde avâm-ı nasârâda sekizyüzde bir, rehâbînde kırkta bir sâdır olmakta imiş. Çünkü bu vasî-i şer'î meselesi elbette 'avâmın rehâbîn kadar malumu değildir.*

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Christian doctrine is unreasonable. But misinterpretation of the Qur'an risks deceiving

Muslims, and it will cause grave injury if he and other Islamic scholars are not vigilant to

respond to them.[93]

Hasan Sabrı's *İkâzu'l-Mü'min fî Reddi's-Salîbin*

The final polemic under consideration in this chapter is Hasan Sabri's *İkazu'l*

Mü'minin fî Reddi's-Salibin (A Warning to Believers in Repudiating the Cross), which

sounds a similar warning as Mahmud Es'ad's articles. *İkâzu'l-Mü'min* was published in

1915, the final years of the Ottoman Empire and the Young Turk period in the throes of

the Great War. The polemic was printed in *Mikyas-ı Şeria't* (The Measure of Law) weekly

periodical, a newspaper founded in 1908 that defended religion and constitutionalism

during the Second Constitutional period. The author Hasan Sabri (d. 1929), was a

provincial scholar of Konya who came to have significant influence among the religious

elite in the final period of the Empire. In the polemic he quotes from contemporary

sources such as Tercüman's *Tuhfa*, but his polemic is primarily theological in nature and

concerned with eschatology. At first glance the polemic appears unremarkable, as it

repeats the same tropes as other Muslim polemics and does not appear connected to its

historical context. However, his forays into conceptualizations of civilization according

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[93] Ibid., *Biz ise 'asırlardan beri içimizde bulunan nasârâ vatandaşlarımıza bile İslâm'ın ne olduğunu anlatamamışız. Yalnız anlatamamışız değil, belki kavâ'id-i İslâmiyeye mugayır hareket ve icraâtımızla 'aksine fikirler vermiş ve onlarda büyük bir ta'assub-i mezhebi îkâz eylemişiz. Osmanlı idâresinden çıkan akvam-ı nasrâniyede eski mübâlât-ı dîniyenin kalmadığı erbâb-ı tedkîkin nazarından kaçmamıştır. Ama nasârâ rüesâ-yı ruhaniye-i muktediresi işte o akl-ı selîmin kabûl etmediği 'akîdelerin 'âleme neşr için hiçbir fedâkârlığı diriğ etmiyorlar. Şimdi bizi işgâl eden şu hutbeler evvelemirde Arapça olarak Mısır'da tab' ve neşredildikten sonra burada Türkçe'ye tercüme ve neşredilmektedir. Daha kimbilir hangi lisanlara tercüme ile âlem-i İslâm'a neşredilmiştir. Bunlar hep sâde-dilân ehl-i İslâm'ı iğfâl edecek sûretinde bir müslimîne nasrâniyetin ne türlü gayri ma'kûl esaslara müstenid olduğunu anlatmaktadır. Ama şekline ve âyât-ı Kur'âniye ile istidlâl eder gibi görünmesine nazaran eğer müteyakkız bulunmaz isek zarar ihtimalinden de bilkülliye vâreste kalamayız.*

to Europeans and Muslims shows that, like less theologically inclined Islamic polemicists, he understands religion to be a discursive field affected by power relations.

Hasan Sabri came from a long line of ulema members. His father Hâdimli Hasan Fâkîhzade Seyid Abdülbaki Efendi was a scholar and allegedly a descendant of the Caliph Ali. His family had close involvement in a special and highly prestigious religious tradition in the Empire known as *huzûr dersleri.* These were annual lectures given during Ramadan at the palace in the sultan's presence – or *huzûr* – and those in the assembly (*meclis*) included bureaucrats, administrators, intellectuals, and religious scholars. In attendance were five or six *muhâtab,* an ulema member who answered questions, and the *mukarrir* led the lectures. Holding one of these positions was a mark of high imperial recognition, and discussion of the conversational issues of the *huzûr dersleri* was forbidden. Many scholars and teachers from Konya had participated in this tradition, which began in 1759 during the reign of Mustafa III and continued until the abolishment of the Caliphate in 1924. From 1917 onward Hasan Sabri participated in the *huzûr dersleri* as a *muhâtab* and continued in this role until the abolishment of the practice and foundation of the Turkish Republic. [94]

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[94]   As a child Hasan Sabri proved himself to be a bright student and was able to complete his education quickly, finishing his primary studies in Konya, then continuing lessons in Istanbul with Abdülkadir Raşit Efendi, a lecturer in the undersecretariat of the *şeyhü'l-islâm* (Meşihat Müsteşarı ve huzûr Dersleri). Most of his studies took place at the *Darülmuallim* (Teacher Training School for Boys). This school was established in 1848 to train teachers in conformity with the state's modernization policy in education. Here formal education lasted three years, and graduates worked as trainees before their appointment as educators to middle schools. Along with his religious lessons and studies in geometry, arithmetic, he gained proficiency in French, Persian, and Arabic. He took a leave of absence from his studies to join in the Ottoman-Russian War of 1877, serving as a Asakir-i Muavene-i Ilmiye. At the young age of 24 he passed his final theological diploma examinations (ruus imhtihan) and was appointed as an instructor at the Beyazit Medrese. Numerous appointments came in the years ahead, including to the *Tetkik-i Müellefat-ı Diniyye* in 1904, the *Meclis-i İdare-i Emval ve Eytam* in 1913, and the *Tetkik-i Mesahif ve Müellefat-ı Şer'iyye* in 1914. See Hovann Simonian, "Hemshin from Islamicization to the end of the Nineteenth Century," in *The Hemshin: History, Society and Identity in*

In the conventional introduction where Hasan Sabri states the reason for composing this work (*sebeb-i te'l'if*), he chose to write this short treatise against missionary brochures that proclaimed Jesus to be God's son. The Christian priests were "like devils [and] have thoughts day and night to mislead people into sacrilege and polytheism."[95] Turkish intellectuals (*münevverleri*) should not remain idle in the face of this threat, and he is among one voice of this group ready to issue a reply. He will prove through Bible verses that Jesus is the servant of God, not his son, and quote Qur'anic verses with the same theme. He approaches his argument in a similar manner as other Muslim polemicists, stating his intention to refute these false opinions through an examination of Christian thought, its history, and the four gospels. He will also argue through the Qur'an that Jesus is merely a prophet subordinate to Muhammed and who came to correct the abrogation in the scriptures.[96]

Much like Mahmud Es'ad's polemics in *Sebîlü'r-reşâd*, Hasan Sabri argues with the author of a Christian brochure that uses Qur'anic verses to prove the divinity of Christ. He paraphrases the missionary's arguments and provides a response to each. The title of the work or the author are never identified, and it could come from any number of sources. It is possible that Hasan Sabri is writing against a tract produced by the ABCFM. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, one such Turkish work was George

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the Highlands of Northeast Turkey, ed. Simonian (New York: Routledge, 2007), 112. Mehmet İpşirli, *huzûr Dersleri*, Islamic Encyclopedia (Istanbul: TDV, 1998). Numan Hadimoğlu, Hadim ve Hadimliler Bibliyoğrafyası (Ankara 1983). Sadık Albayrak, *Son Devir Osmanlı Uleması* (Istanbul, 1996); "Education," *Encyclopedia of the Ottoman Empire*, Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, 203.

[95] Hasan Sabri, *İlkâzü'l-Mü'minîn Fi'r-Reddi's-Salîbin* (Istanbul: Matba'a Ahmed Kemal, 1915), 17. *Bunlar kâfi ise de şeyâtın a'l-cin gibi rehâbin Nasârâ'nın leyl ve nıhâr düşünceleri efrâd-ı nev'i beşer-i şirk ve küfre sevk etmekten ibaret olup...*

[96] Sabri, 2-5.

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Herrick's "The Supreme Person of Jesus Christ and His Relation to Humanity." This tract includes Bible verses that affirm the divinity of Jesus, an issue that Hasan Sabri disputes in detail.[97]

Hasan Sabri's strategy is to describe the contents of the New Testament as illogical and its conclusions, if taken to a rational end, are absurd. He first evaluates Biblical language that "proves" Jesus's sonship of God and his referring to him as "father" *(baba).* He paraphrases John 14:20, which says, "you will know that I am in my Father and you in me, and I in you."[98] What the Scriptures means by "father," Hasan Sabri explains, is in fact "our Lord" (*mâlikimiz*). If he actually were the "father" of Jesus, then according to this verse he would have to be the father of all Christians.[99] The incongruity of Christian theology with any sort of rational analysis is further compounded by Christian Europeans esteeming themselves as being more civilized (*medenî*) than Muslims. However, if those who lack knowledge of their creator can be considered "civilized," then one must also consider non-cognizant creatures such as bees, spiders, and other animals to be civilized.

> As for true civilization, it is Islamic civilization that teaches humanity's duties to God and to other persons and necessary just actions to all people and animals. If it is asked "These characteristics are not present in Muslims," our answer is, "These features are not present in some Muslims, but it is not inherently absent from Islam. As a result, the fault is with Muslims, not Islam.[100]

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Hasan Sabri then turns to the nature of Jesus. After quoting verses from the Qur'an that establish the prophet and servant status of Jesus as one who came to proclaim the coming of Muhammed (Meryem Suresi 30; Al-i İmran Suresi 46, 49, 99; Nisa Suresi 157; and Saff Suresi, 6), Hasan Sabri concludes with a discussion on the *Tuhfa* and Tercüman's claim that the Christian priests and monks lied to their followers about the doctrine of the Trinity. Hasan Sabri provides a final criticism of the Christian preacher's claim that Qur'anic verses resemble those of the Bible that assert the divinity of Christ. Because the preacher imputes his own understanding into the Qur'an, believing that its reference to Jesus as "spirit" (*rûh*) signifies the Qur'an's proclamation of his divinity, he misinterprets it to mean "God's son."

> The preacher, in order to turn people astray, works to disseminate this subjective meaning, which is not an Islamic explanation or interpretation. Because there is not a hadith or verse that supports this, this meaning consists of an invitation to polytheism and a personal vision to instigate chaos among people.[101]

Hasan Sabri concludes that through his examination of verses in the Bible and Qu'ran, he has proven that Jesus is a great prophet, but the greatest prophet is Muhammed, who was prophesied by all other prophets, and he possessed perfect character. Christians should heed Hasan Sabri's words because all will be evaluated on Judgement Day according to the words they have heard. They are now accountable to respond to the revelation of truth that they have received and abandon Christianity. No believer denies this, and only Muslims will be saved on that day.[102]

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[101] Ibid., 28. *Bu 'ındî manayı insanları izlâl içün neşr çalışıyor bu mana 'ındî zira ne tefsirdir ve ne te'vildir çünkü hiç bir ayetle veya hadis ile mübeyyen olmadığı gibi insanları şirke da'vet olduğundan insanlar arasında fitne uyandır...*
[102] Ibid., 30.

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Conclusion

Christian-Muslim polemics experienced two developments in the period immediately prior to World War One. On the Muslim side was a growing tendency to devalue Christian Scriptures. *Tebşîrât* and the use of non-Qur'anic holy books no longer meant understanding the Christian scripture as a revealed text worthy of close scrutiny. To self-proclaimed philologists such as Abdülahad Davûd, the Bible was a textual curiosity altered by post-Babylonian exile Jews and then Neo-Platonic Alexandrian Christians. The only sections worth preserving were those in accordance with the Qur'an or prophecies of Muhammed's coming. Second, the Bible's textual marginalization coincided with some Muslim polemicists seeing Ottoman non-Christians in an increasingly politicized light. Legal scholars such as Mahmud Es'ad saw a hardening of lines separating Christians, Muslims, and Jews, despite attempts in the Young Turk period to give them high-ranking positions within the newly formed Ottoman Parliament. Despite Mahmud Es'ad's personal encounters with European Christians in Izmir and exposure to Western scholarship in history, legal studies, and the positive sciences, he considered Christians as prone to immorality, crime, and religious violence. Hasan Sabri wrote in a theological journal that defended religion and the constitution, and his opinion of Christians as polytheists resembled that of CUP members that based their political legitimacy along increasingly Islamist lines. Edhem Ruhi published *Balkan* for the purpose of provoking anti-Christian sentiments among his audience in Istanbul and Anatolia and kept them informed of the plight of Muslims in Bulgaria. These charges were made in the wake of the Balkan Wars, in which hundreds of thousands died due to

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brutal violence that broke down along mostly religious lines.

A small voice of conciliation is Ohannes Kirkorian, but it is unknown how well his voice was heard. He embraced the spirit of the early Young Turk Period and its inclusive language of embracing non-Muslims and non-Turks, despite the growing phenomenon of cultural Turkification. He called upon his Muslim readers to ignore charges that Christians were polytheists and excluded from the Kingdom of God. They were also monotheists whose similar beliefs should allow them to co-exist in peace and harmony with Muslims. He implicated polemists that stirred up religious hatred such as Abdülahad Davûd for the breakdown of this inclusive structure and the horrific violence in the Empire. Other Christian writers such as Johannes Avetaranian, Mehmed Nesîmî and Ahmet Keşşaf were less conciliatory. Civilization was the leitmotif of their articles, and Islam to them inhibited Ottoman progress. As they lived outside the Ottoman Empire, none were active participants in the CUP political project or advocates of its ecumenical discourse.

As Chapter Five showed, Muslim polemicists in the late nineteenth century used Pan-Islamic discourses to approach contemporary concerns. The CUP era saw irredentists themes and calls to consolidate the shrinking Empire with an educated, unified Muslim community. Solidarity between Ottoman Muslims and beleaguered Balkan Muslims who found themselves within the borders of newly sovereign nations is another theme discussed by Edhem Ruhi and Abdülahad Davûd. They focused on themes of Muslim suffering that resulted in half a million casualties and the near-total loss of the Ottoman Empire's European land holdings. Highlighting this oppression was an important

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polemical tactic used in order to unify their Muslim readership, increase opposition to European encroachment, and boost support of the imperial state.

That is not to say that political and modernist discourse completely dominated these polemics. While such themes are important to understand the means by which these religious scholars determined Muslim identity in the scope of international and inter-imperial politics, classical Islamic discourse still dominates many of these writings. Hasan Sabri, Mahmud Es'ad, and Abdülahad Davûd spent far more pages on Qur'anic exegesis and quoting classical commentators than descriptions of the fallout of the Balkan Wars. The Christian writers spent equal amounts of time quoting Bible verses and defending its classical interpretation rather than disparaging Islamic civilization. Edhem Ruhi is more concerned with politics in his polemical writings, but that speaks more of his ambitions as a mouthpiece of the CUP and propagandist against the Bulgarian state than his disregard for authoritative Islamic sources. Traditional religious discourse still carried significant moral equity in the final years of the Empire.

This all changed in the years ahead. The end of the long nineteenth century and the onset of the Great War brought an end to the type of religious polemics that have been examined in this dissertation. Wars and independence movements permanently altered Europe's colonies, which would completely disappear from the world map by the middle of the twentieth century. The global Muslim print sphere lost its primary focus, that of the threat of European colonial encroachment. Nationalist movements in the Ottoman Arab provinces accelerated, and the primary means of negotiating religious identity and discourses of modernism shifted from modernist Islamist discourse to secularist and

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nationalist discourses. This was exemplified in the Kemalist reforms of the Turkish Republic, but similar forms of rhetoric expressed themselves in Egypt and the Levant. Muslims within Imperial Russia combated Soviet discourse, but some embraced its communist themes.

Having followed the changes and evolutions in religious polemics from the Tanzimat to the Young Turk period across the Ottoman Empire, and considered the authors' multiple narrative techniques to negotiate modernist discourses while defending core theological doctrines, I will now return to the 1854 debate between Pfander and al-Kairânawî. Relying on the research presented in this dissertation, the themes of Ottoman contours of modernity, religious reform, Christian-Muslim dialectics, collective identity, and the global public sphere will be revisited in the conclusion.

Conclusion

Chapter 6 showed that in the years prior to World War One, the polemical language of authors shifted to reflect the decline in ecumenical Ottomanism and the growth of CUP-era Islamification. Other sectors of the media shifted as well. Turkish wartime reports of the "Bulgarian Atrocities" of the 1912-1913 Balkan Wars chronicled violence that Christian soldiers and civilians perpetrated against Balkan Muslim populations. Istanbul publishing houses produced thousands of postcards with graphic imagery of suffering, one of which depicts a soldier preparing to impale the last surviving child of a grieving Muslim mother.[1] Even the most conservative of polemical religious scholars who were connected to Istanbul's educational institutions and religious periodicals were preoccupied with worry over the Empire's political problems. Yet these Ottoman bureaucrats, administrators, and authors still preferred to spend their time parsing Qur'anic and Bible verses rather than discussing European colonialism or Western immorality. Their writings were filled with traditional religious discourse not too dissimilar from İbrahim Müteferrika in the eighteenth century or even Abdullah Tercüman in the fifteenth century.

This dissertation has shown that the Ottoman-era polemical debate had its intellectual roots in previous centuries and applied this classical genre to modern-era religious and political considerations. As a work of history, however, it has not been able to comment on the modern-day significance of this debate. But its effects linger on to this

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[1]   Special thanks to Professor Tolga Esmer, who shared his research and plate imprints of early twentieth-century postcards produced during the First Balkan War.

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day. One brief example is worth mentioning. In 2014, Gordon Nickel, a Canadian

professor of theology at the University of Calgary, released a systematic response to al-

Kairânawî's *İzhâr u'l-hakk.* It was intended as a missional guide for Christians engaging

Muslims who were familiar with the arguments from the 1867 book. Nickel states that he

launched the book project to "level the academic playing field" against the Qur'an. While

teaching in Southeast Asia, near the site of the original 1854 debate in Agra, he

encountered Muslims that subjected the Bible to the same literary criticism as al-

Kairânawî did 160 years ago. His goal was to subject the Qur'an to the same historic and

scholarly critique and show that the supposed victory of liberal biblical theology in the

nineteenth century did not stop traditional Christian scholars in the twenty-first century.

Nickel argued that the discovery of ancient texts such as the Dead Sea scrolls confirm the

Biblical text has been transmitted without major distortion in the last 2,000 years.[2]

   İzhâr u'l-hakk had irreversible influence on Muslim views on Christian Scripture

throughout the world and still influences Islamic theology students across the globe. It

remains a popular work among Muslim scholars and is still used in anti-Christian

polemics. Its core argument persists that Christian theologians themselves admit Old and

New Testament corruption and that the Bible is full of errors, contradictions,

misconceptions, and distortions. It has been translated into numerous European and

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[2]   Jim Coggins, "A Gentle Answer has cosmic implications," *Canadian Christianity*, June 6, 2012. The project of Nickel has scholarly and evangelical intentions, much like the missionary work of Karl Pfander in the nineteenth century. Members of the project have consciously used him as an example, particularly Jay Smith, another member of the project who debates Muslims at Speakers' Corner in London for the last 25 years. He has begun an initiative called the Pfander Centre, that prepares missionaries for ministry among Muslims. A collection of his debate videos are called "Pfander Films." Nickel released a study in 2010 on Muslim accusations of Christian corruption of holy books in 2010. See Gordon Nickel, *Narratives of Tampering in the Earliest Commentaries on the Quran (The History of Christian-Muslim Relations)* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

Middle Eastern languages. In Turkey, *İzhâr u'l-hakk* was reprinted in 1972 and 2012, most recently by the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Islamic Studies Center.[3]

The Christian-Muslim polemical debates of the late Ottoman period have also influenced conceptualizations of Christianity in the Turkish Republic, even up to today. Chapter Four looked at Ahmet Midhat's understanding of *tebşîrât,* the place of non-Muslim holy books within Islamic theology, and his marginalization of these books. This concept was further developed by intellectuals of the Turkish Republic, most notably Ziya Gökalp, who developed much of the nation's conception of national ideology, Islam, and modernity by subsuming Pan-Islamism into national principles. At the end of his life he consolidated his ideas in accordance with Kemalist ideology by calling for the "nationalization" of Islam in the Turkish Republic. He rallied around a Turkified form of Hanafi Sunni Islam, with state institutions taking control of religious affairs and abolishing all forms of Islamic orders and the Caliphate. With the subordination of religion to the national state, *tebşîrât* was a vehicle through which scholars could bridge the rationalism of Ottoman modernism with Kemalist aspirations to reform Turkish Islam according to liberal notions of modern religion. Turkish Islam was presented as the final form of the long religious evolution of Turkic civilization. Some nationalist religious scholars sought prophecies for Muhammed's ministry in the Torah and Gospel, along with Hinduism, Buddhism, and even Zoroastrianism.[4]

When I began this dissertation project years ago, there was little scholarship on

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[3] Rahmetullah b. Halilürrahman el-Keyrani el-Osmani el-Kindi, *İzharü'l-hak*, tr. Ali Namlı (Istanbul: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Araştırmaları Merkezi ((ISAM), 2012).

[4] Ziya Gökalp, *Türkçülüğün Esasları* (Ankara: 1990), 168-171; Kasnakova and Saldzhiev, "Zones of Ideological Confict," 144-146.

late Ottoman religious polemics, and this remains largely true despite a few Turkish studies focusing on individual Turkish polemical works. Even in the cases of celebrated authors or theologians as Ahmet Midhat and Giritli Sırrı Pasha, their polemics are only mentioned in passing or partitioned off from their more well-known writings, giving them second-tier status to more well-known books of literature or theology. Through a focus on religious, political, and diplomatic history in Istanbul and the Ottoman Empire's Turkish-speaking environs, this study has shown that for all the recent scholarly work on missionaries in the Ottoman Empire, the intellectual contents of the theological debates and religious polemical discourses in which they and their Muslim opponents engaged has been almost completely overlooked. This is a significant deficiency, because even in a period of inter-confessional violence and exclusivist rhetoric from the imperial center, for late Ottoman writers, Christianity and Islam were two houses built on the same intellectual foundation. Defending religious truth now meant relying on rationalist sources as the primary means of defining authoritative truth rather than the Bible or the Qur'an. Sources of authority shifted to human reason or European scholarship of philosophy and history instead of classical Muslim works or Qur'anic commentary.

I appraised the historiographical trend of privileging Pan-Islamic and secularist frameworks for intellectual inquiry in this period and showed that these tendencies were deeply intertwined. By using the examples of these and other authors I have argued that the lines between modernists/reformers/traditionalists were not so sharply defined. While there were distinct ideological groups such as the Young Ottomans who had their own periodicals, all these camps appropriated religion to navigate the possibilities of

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modernist thought in the late Ottoman period.

I also analyzed the inter-imperial aspects of these polemical exchanges and the shared discursive field of polemical literature. Muslim-Christian mutual intellectual influence across the Mediterranean world precedes the modern period by centuries, with early modern examples such as the Gospel of Barnabas influencing European Unitarians and radical freethinkers. Other articles and books have mentioned the polemicists that appeared in this dissertation, but they often analyzed these polemicists within the confines of their own state. Rahmat Allâh al-Kairânawî's debate with Karl Pfander is understood in the context of pre-mutiny India, but I showed that his writings against Christianity quickly took on inter-imperial dimensions. Knowledge of his research came to the Ottoman Empire first through the intermediation of border-crossing scholars from Iran. *İzhâr u'l-hakk* spread throughout the Muslim world, particularly those Islamic states under European colonial control. Other polemicists in this dissertation wrote on an inter-imperial scale. Ahmet Midhat had readers in Russia and Central Asia; S.W. Koelle wrote about Islamic history for both Ottoman and Western audiences.

This study of Christians and Muslims engaging modernist religious discourse opens new research questions for studies on the late Ottoman Empire and gives new possibilities for the analysis of the genre of religious polemics. The classic historiography of Ottoman modernism leading into secularism has largely been abandoned, but the placement of Ottoman literati into camps of religious traditionalist/reformer/secularist has not. As this study has shown, authors themselves reject such simple classifications. When the Young Ottomans began promulgating their ideas of freedom (*hürriyet*), homeland

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(*vatan*), and rejecting reactionary elements within the religious establishment in the 1860s, they likely did not suppose that by the 1880s the strongest government proponents would be defending Islam against Christianity by quoting Voltaire or Edward Gibbon or denouncing Protestant missionaries in the Ottoman Empire through lengthy profiles of French anti-Catholic dissidents. Yet that is precisely what occurred with Ahmet Midhat's use of European sourcing, and Fatma Aliye's interest in French clergy members such as renegade priest Hyacinthe Loyson, who rejected dogmatic Christianity. They would not have imagined either that the Bible would be deconstructed with Renan-inspired methods of critical philology. Yet Muslim intellectuals resorting to materialist methods of criticism shows increasing intellectual integration between the Ottoman Empire and Europe.

Much research remains to be done on this topic. While understanding these writers as engaging different modernist religious discourses is an important start, there are various other sources that need to be surveyed. This dissertation examined the well-known and widely published religious polemics of the late Ottoman period, but *mecmua*s and newspapers articles in the major manuscript collections of Istanbul and smaller archives in the former domains of the Ottoman Empire are likely filled with such works by local literati. I discovered such works at the Süleymaniye, Millet, and İSAM research libraries in Istanbul after falsely assuming that all major modern-era Turkish polemics had been located. Others were only catalogued at the end of my research, and it is reasonable to assume that many other such works exist.[5] Assessing the tens of thousands

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[5] Examples include Muhammed Reşid Riza, *Şubühâtü'n-Nasârâ ve Hücâcü'l-İslâm* (Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, İzmirli İ. Hakkı Bölümü 1085, 1322/1904-1905); Ahmet Kemâl, *Beyân ü'l-hakk* (Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri Bölümü, 488/070, 1324/1906); Abdülahad Davûd, *42 Bin Katolik Misyoner Cemiyeti (Elvâh-ı İntibâh)*, *Sebîlü'r-reşâd* 12, No. 292 (1914).

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of pages of Ottoman-era newspapers, journals, magazines, and novels might reveal other examples of the polemical genre, as religion is a frequent topic in the emerging late Ottoman community of readers. Researchers may also examine the non-Turkish press of the Empire, including publications in Armenian, Armeno-Turkish, Greek, Bulgarian, Arabic, Persian, and Syriac. These papers spread outside of Istanbul in the twentieth century, particularly the Armenian press, which was robust in Anatolian cities and towns in the years prior to World War I, to say nothing of its presence around the globe.[6]

In addition to matters of sourcing, there are other issues that scholars should consider with regard to the genre of religious polemics and the larger questions of Christian-Muslim co-existence and religion in the late Ottoman period. Ground-breaking studies have been produced on the breakdown of these relations and the death or deportation of millions of Christians in the final years of the Empire. The reasons for the failure of foreign missionaries to convert significant numbers of the Ottoman Empire to Protestantism or Catholicism has also been noted. Placing these matters in the center of imperial models and matters of governing heterogenous subject populations, however, has given undue agency to the state and the Muslim population, allowing the government's agenda to dominate discussions of the complex relations between Ottoman Muslims, non-Muslims, and missionaries. However, individual missionaries had significant ability to assert agency, whether S. W. Koelle making use of British diplomatic strength following the 1878 Treaty of Berlin or H.O. Dwight's ability to

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[6]   Edmund Herzig and Marina Kurkchiyan, *Armenians: Past and Present in the Making of National Identity* (Oxford: RoutledgeCurzon, 2005), 178-181. By the beginning of the nineteenth century Armenian newspapers appeared across the globe, as far away as Calcutta, Astrakhan, Vienna, Istanbul, and Izmir. Dozens of Armenian and Armeno-Turkish newspapers appeared in Istanbul in the mid-nineteenth century and spread to Anatolia in the early twentieth century.

disseminate his messages to Western audiences through the missionary and Western press. Ottoman Christians such as Ohannes Kirkorian could craft his own response to Abdülahad Davûd, as he edited and published a press organ with wide reach in Istanbul.

This study has also shown that much research remains to be done on foreign missionaries in the Ottoman Empire. Historians have made them a popular subject in recent years – due in no small part to the voluminous English-language sources they left behind – but methodological problems remain. Muslim authors and journalists tended to lump all foreign missionaries into one group, whether Protestant or Jesuit, and historians have privileged the state's perspective, viewing all missionaries in the Empire as having a common agenda with agreement on questions of evangelism, proselytization, and the necessity of Muslims to convert to Christianity. As I have shown, the CMS and ABCFM disagreed with each other on these points, even to the point that some ABCFM missionaries sided with the Ottoman government in disputes against the CMS over its distribution of Christian polemical literature.

This study has also challenged the mediation between polemical writers and the ideologies to which they subscribed. Mahmud Es'ad and Fatma Aliye may have promoted forms of Pan-Islamism and Ohannes Kirkorian promoted Ottomanism, but I analyzed their writings in light of individual motivations so as not to make them passive recipients of collective identities. As Lale Can has noted, scholars have given primacy to Pan-Islam, even going so far as to suggest that the actions of a few Ottoman agents or the writings of a few intellectuals could compel entire Muslim communities to wage holy wars.[7] While

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[7]   Lale Can, *Trans-Imperial Trajectories*, 325.

these writers consciously wrote in the vocabularies of these political imaginaries, their individual motivations and literary strategies must be taken into account to understand their writings. Scholars who have neglected reconstructing their views of the world have lost sight of the possibilities and alternatives that appeared to these writers in their own times. The paths open to these polemicists could lead on a much different course than history actually took. To them, the future of the Ottoman Empire was mutable and by no means headed for imminent collapse. This was true even for Ohannes Kirkorian in 1914, following the near-total loss of the Empire's European land holdings, who dreamed that Christian-Muslim reconciliation could still strengthen the Empire in the face of its numerous military failures.

Returning to the question at the beginning of this study, let us consider the matter of modernity and religion in the late Ottoman period. As shown repeatedly in this dissertation, authors of this period approached religion in a different way than in previous centuries. Islam and Christianity were no longer a "taken for granted" aspect of society whose body of knowledge could be communicated to the uninitiated but not altered. They were fields of inquiry that could be transformed by conscious human activity. They were contested fields that were characterized by a number of possibilities and outcomes. The interactions between Christian and Muslim polemicists were grounded in modern education and discourses that swelled with the rise of educational institutions and a vibrant Ottoman press in the mid-nineteenth century. Yet the common ground of secular education did not marginalize the role of religion among Christians and Muslims in their political and social imaginaries. Instead, they accommodated religious thinking and

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produced a growing desire for a religious expression that reflected rising levels of education among all these camps. In the Ottoman print sphere, differences between Christian and Muslim writers of whatever confessional stripe broke down as rationalism became the foundation for both their belief systems. In 1861-1915, church and mosque did not fade into irrelevancy with the rise of secular education. They became a means by which questions of small and large-scale political and social belonging could be addressed head on.

In conclusion, Muslim and Christian polemics were an important conduit between forms of modernity and deep-rooted religious traditions and communities inside and outside the Ottoman Empire. They allowed readers to access forms of modernity through a global print network that did not require European or secular mediation, even when that was the result. Muslim and Christian literati contributed to this global network and were also a product of it. In this study I have problematized this relationship and shown that in these writers' efforts to support access to these forms of modernity through education, they had significant common ground with each other even though their programs were fundamentally opposed to one another. I hope that this research offers insight into the origins of the contemporary struggles and animosity between the religious groups of modern-day Turkey and nations located within the former domains of the Ottoman Empire. The origin of these struggles came from a period in which common fields of inquiry brought these groups together, as they attempted to express and understand their religious conviction in new discourses of the modern period. Perhaps a better understanding of this shared history can facilitate a return to the more positive aspects of

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this legacy, in which Christians and Muslims strove to understand one another while adapting to social and cultural changes.
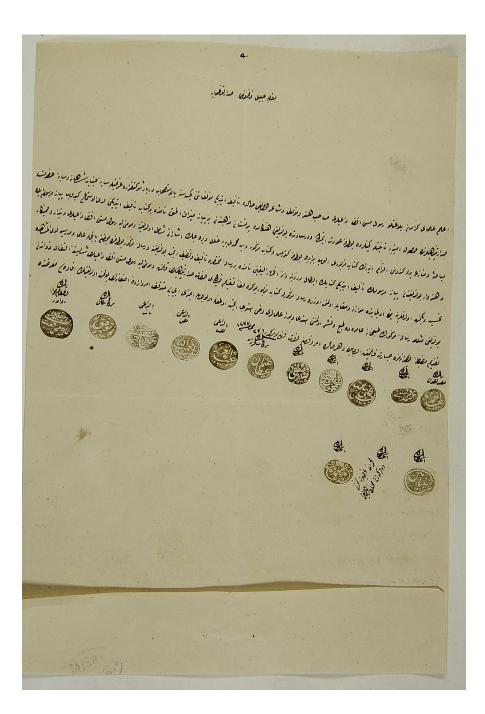
Appendix A

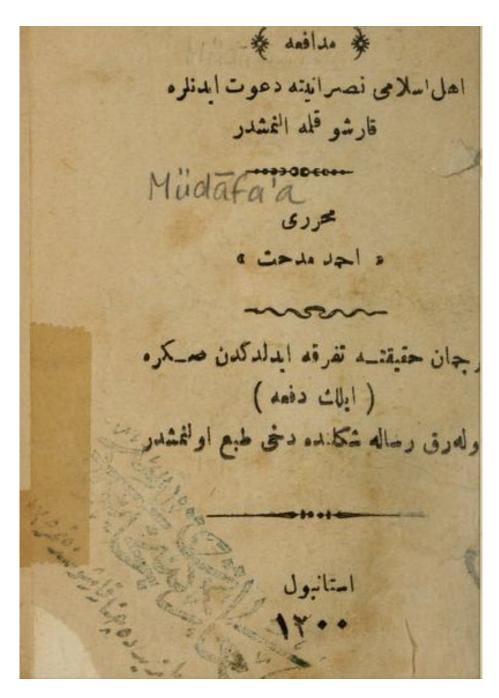Muhammed Şaban Kâmî. *Redd-i Protestan*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Yazma Bağışlar, 4517/1-6, 1858.

Appendix B

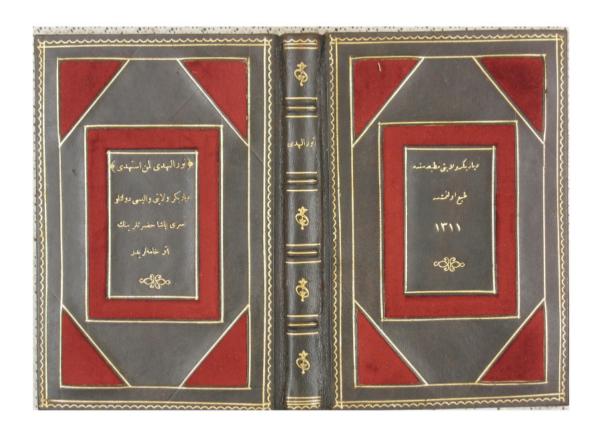Permission for Resûl Mesti Efendi to write a response to Karl Pfander. BOA A.MKT.UM 420/79, 1860.

Appendix C

Ahmet Midhat. *Müdâfa'a: ehl-i İslâmı nasrâniyete dâvet edenlere karşı kaleme alınmıştır.* Istanbul: *Tercümân-i Hakîkat*, 1300 [1882 or 1883].

Appendix D

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DH.MKT (Dahiliye Nezareti Mektubi Kalemi)
HR.SYS (Hariciye Nezareti Siyasi Kısım Evrakı)
HR.TO (Hariciye Nezareti Tercüme Odası)
MF.MKB (Maarif Nezareti Meclis-i Kebir-i Maarif)
ML.VRD.d (Maliye Varidat Muhasebesi Defterleri)
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