

MINORITY DEBATES ON THE FUTURE OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE: GREEK AND ARMENIAN NATIONALIST THOUGHT

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Abstract: Nationalist revolutions claimed the secession of parts of the Ottoman territory and the establishment of sovereign nation-states. Greeks and Armenians were two among the biggest minority groups which straddled over a part of the Ottoman territory. They were both influenced by the presence of strong Diaspora communities in Western, Central and Eastern Europe (including Russia) that proved critical in the dissemination of nationalist ideas. Nevertheless, there is a striking difference in the way the two nationalist movements unfold. This paper aims to discuss the reasons why Greek and Armenian nationalism developed along different lines.

Introduction

The Ottoman Emirate came to existence in the early 14th century in the land of Bithynia. Within a few decades, it succeeded in consolidating itself in Western Anatolia and the Southeastern Balkans. By doing that, it included sizeable Christian populations, Armenian and Orthodox (*Rum*) which would form the bulk of the minority populations of the new state. By occupying Constantinople in 1453, it laid a claim on becoming an Empire. Soon further conquests in the Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe pointed at the rise of a formidable political, economic and military power. The two sieges of the Habsburg capital Vienna in 1529 and 1683 marked the high point of Ottoman expansion in Central Europe. A long era of contraction was soon to follow. In fact, the second siege of Vienna became a watermark of the beginning of Ottoman decline. The Ottoman failure to keep up with economic, military and social developments in Europe eventually affected the Empire military capacity and performance. The Treaties of Karlowitz (Sremski Karlovci, Karlofça) in 1699 and Passarowitz (Požarevac, Pasarofça) in 1718 did not only seal the loss of territories to the Habsburg Empire; they also became the harbingers of a long and protracted era of territorial losses. Both the Habsburg and the Russian Empires started reclaiming territories, and the once formidable Ottoman administration appeared unable to deliver solutions. The set of economic, social and political transformation that shaped the European continent in the 18th and 19th century and led to the rise of the modern state gave European states a decisive military and economic advantage over the Ottoman Empire.

Ottoman minorities were inevitably influenced by these processes. Subjugated to the Ottoman rule between the 14th and the 16th century, Ottoman Greeks and Armenians maintained privileged relations with the West through their diasporic communities and the establishment of trade networks. These allowed for the flow of Western ideas, in particular since the Enlightenment and the advent of modernity reshuffled the political and ideological agenda. The Enlightenment set a new political agenda defined by republicanism, secularism and nationalism (Hobsbawm 1990, 14–45). The American and the French Revolutions also clearly manifested that revolutionary mobilization was not necessarily futile and raised optimism among revolutionaries throughout the European continent. Nationalism was one of the key innovations. As the decline of the Ottoman Empire accelerated in the 18th and 19th century, minority nationalist movements grew stronger. Different intellectual discourses emerged within Greek and Armenian intellectuals of the Ottoman Empire. The question of national awakening was addressed in different ways. This had major repercussions on subsequent historical developments. The position of primordial community institutions, religion, the choice between pursuing secession and independent statehood for the nascent nation or attempt to improve the relative position of minorities within the Ottoman Empire with the help of Ottoman reform were crucial questions. This paper aims to discuss the reasons why Greek and Armenian nationalism developed along different lines by focusing on the work of key scholars residing both in the Ottoman Empire and in the European Diaspora (Kitromilides 1989, 151–59; Kitromilides 1994; Panossian 2002, 125–39; Suny 2001, 886–88).¹ The reason Greeks and Armenians are selected and not Serbs or Bulgarians, for example, has to do with the long coexistence of Greeks and Armenians in the core Anatolian lands of the Ottoman Empire which inevitably affected their approach towards the new Enlightenment ideas. Bulgarians, Serbs, Bosnians and Croats were never as integrated in the Ottoman state administration as Armenians and Greeks were. Ideas flowed on both ways from Western Europe to the Ottoman lands and vice versa, when it came to discuss the transformation of the Ottoman *millets* to modern nation states. This became easier with the activities of intellectuals who travelled between the Western, Central and Eastern Europe and the Ottoman imperial domains thus facilitating that crosspollination.

¹ On Korais and his intellectual environment, see several chapters of the seminal Paschalis M. Kitromilides. *Enlightenment, Nationalism, Orthodoxy: Studies in the Culture and Political Thought of South-Eastern Europe*. Variorum, 1994. Collected Studies Series CS453.

Enlightenment and Ottoman Minorities

Ottoman minorities were the first to be affected by this revolutionary wave. Through their extensive diasporic networks, Ottoman Armenians and Greeks became influenced by the ideas that questioned the legitimacy of autocratic regimes and the primacy of religion in the public sphere, advocated popular sovereignty, liberty and equality of all citizens. Since the transformation of the whole Empire was soon understood as an unrealistic goal, nationalist movements aimed at the secession of parts of the Ottoman territory and the establishment of sovereign nation-states.

Greeks and Armenians were two among the biggest minority groups which straddled over a part of the Ottoman territory. They were both influenced by the presence of strong Diaspora communities in Western, Central and Eastern Europe (including Russia) that proved critical in the dissemination of nationalist ideas. Nevertheless, there is a striking difference in the way the two nationalist movements unfold. The emergence of the Greek nation-state because of the Greek War of Independence between 1821 and 1828 became a catalyst for the further development of Greek nationalism, as well as attitudes towards the future of the Ottoman Empire. Greek and Armenian nationalist movements remained in a dialectic relationship throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. As they operate in a common public sphere, Greek and Armenian intellectuals were informed about developments in both their respective and the other community. Positive and negative experiences were noted, although this may have not sufficed to change the status quo within their communities.

Greek Debates on the Future of the Ottoman Empire

Greek nationalism appeared willing to challenge Ottoman sovereignty and carve a Greek nation-state from the Ottoman territories already in the late 18th and early 19th century. Two intellectuals made the biggest contribution to the cause, Adamantios Korais and Rigas Velestinlis. Adamantios Korais, a medical doctor by profession, devoted his life to the publication of the works of ancient Greek classics and the proliferation of the Enlightenment ideals within the Ottoman Greek communities (Kitromilides 1994). In his writings, it was clear that he considered the restoration of the cultural links of Ottoman Greeks with their own classical past as *sine qua non* for their liberation from the Ottoman rule. The liberation of the Greek nation would in other words occur first at the mental and then at the political level. Korais' secularism was a crucial aspect of his political message. He considered the Orthodox Church not as a liberating force but as part and parcel of the *ancien régime*, the Ottoman imperial autocratic order. The reduction of the

influence of the Orthodox Church and the Byzantine culture and the resurgence of the Hellenic classical heritage was seen as an essential step towards the true liberation of the Greek nation. While Korais lived for most of his life in Western Europe, his ideas had a profound influence upon the Ottoman Greek intellectual elites.

Rigas Velestinlis (Feraios) was an emblematic figure of the Hellenic Enlightenment. Intellectual as Korais, as well as revolutionary, Rigas travelled between the Danubian provinces, the Habsburg and the Ottoman Empires and engaged in extensive publication activities, trying to propagate his ideas about a republican confederation of all Ottoman ethnic groups which would realize ideals of the French Revolution. While Rigas was eventually arrested by the Habsburg authorities, extradited to the Ottoman Empire and murdered in custody in Belgrade, his revolutionary message could not be suppressed. Even after the death of Rigas, the French Revolution generated repercussions within the Ottoman Greek community. Two pamphlets published in the early 19th century manifested the divide between the views of the Orthodox Church and intellectuals (Grigoriadis 2012, 17–21). In the first pamphlet entitled *Patrikē Didaskalia* (Paternal Instruction) authored by Patriarch of Jerusalem Neophytos,² the author argued against the proliferation of Enlightenment ideas and the French Revolution and defended the legitimacy of Ottoman rule (Clogg 1969, 94–97). In that view the demise of the Eastern Roman Empire and the Ottoman rule was a divine punishment for the sins of the Greek Orthodox³ which would cease as soon as they were able to recover their moral stature. It stressed that the French Revolution had not delivered what it had promised. Instead it wrought havoc to the France and other European countries and comprised a much more venal threat against the Orthodox than the Ottoman rule. Considering that, it advised Ottoman Greeks to reject the revolutionary messages that were circulated by leading diaspora intellectuals and pledge loyalty to the Ottoman order. In the author's words:

² It has been inconclusively claimed that the true author of this piece might have been Athanasios Parios, a major intellectual opponent of the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, or Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V himself. See Paschalis M. Kitromilides. "Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans." *European History Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1989, pp. 149–94. It has been inconclusively claimed that the true author of this piece might have been Athanasios Parios, a major intellectual opponent of the Neo-Hellenic Enlightenment, or Ecumenical Patriarch Grigorios V himself. See *ibid.*

³ On this, see Richard Clogg. "The 'Dhidhaskalia Patriki' (1798): An Orthodox Reaction to French Revolutionary Propaganda." *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 5, no. 2, 1969, pp. 87–115, and Paschalis M. Kitromilides. "Imagined Communities and the Origins of the National Question in the Balkans." *European History Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, 1989, pp. 149–94.

Brethren, don't get distracted from the path of salvation, but as you always destroyed with bravery and steadfastness the tricks of the Devil, do the same now, as salvation lies closer to us. Shut your ears and don't listen to these novel hopes of freedom, and be certain that the views and teachings of those, as far as we could understand from the nations that accepted them, are against the words of the Holy Bible and the Holy Apostles who order us to obey the authorities, not only the lenient but also the harsh, so we can sorrow in this world and present our senses clean to Jesus Christ. While being against the Holy Scriptures, they do not do any ephemeral good to our contemporary life, as they mischievously claim, to fool you and deprive you of all heavenly and earthly wealth. Where is the glorious and graceful view of most beautiful Italy, which used to be coveted by all? Where is the unspent treasure of the most ancient and serene authority of the Venetians? This illusory system of freedom caused everywhere poverty, killings, damages, seizures, absolute impiety, soul loss and useless regret. The teachings of these new free are erroneous and watch out. Maintain solid your traditional faith and as followers of Jesus Christ unchanged the obedience to the political administration, which not only gives you whatever is necessary in this life and most importantly does not pose any obstacle or damage to the salvation of your soul. Because what would be the benefit for one, if he wins the entire world and damages his soul? These novel teachings are against the Holy Scripture and the teachings of the Apostles and, even if it were possible to make you win all the wealth of the world, they are again abominable inventions of the evil devil that ambushes for the loss of Christian souls. Furthermore, since their promises are false and elusive, and their consequences are not wealth and glory, but poverty, sorrow, disorder and what this freedom really intends, an abominable oligarchy, as it becomes clear by experience.⁴

The publication of this pamphlet generated a fervent response by the Enlightenment intellectuals. No less than Adamantios Korais responded to this pamphlet by issuing an anonymous counter-pamphlet called *Adelfikē Didaskalia* (Fraternal Instruction). Korais added that he could not believe that Patriarch Anthimos could have made such unfounded statements and argued that the real author of the pamphlet must be someone else. He then delivered a scathing attack against those who objected to the message of Enlightenment and obstructed the renaissance of

⁴ Patriarch Anthimos of Jerusalem. *Didaskalia Patrikē*. Constantinople, 1798. Translated from the Greek by the author.

the Hellenic nation. In effect, he identified priests who objected to the novel ideas with the Ottoman despots:

It is easy to understand from these, that these greedy people must be afraid of the destruction of the Turks as their own catastrophe and of the freedom of Greeks as their unmitigated sorrow. In which free or even moderately law-ruled administration, can they fearlessly commit all these unlawful acts under the illegitimate authority of the Turks? When the laws and not the authoritative decisions of rulers govern the Greeks, the salaried pastors (and I do not mean all of them) can threaten without reason, torture without a crime, apherize and excommunicate anyone they want without investigation and judgment, in one word do what the Turks do?⁵

Korais' views gained the upper hand within the Greek intellectual elite, and this facilitated the work of the '*Filiki Etaireia*' ('Society of Friends'), a clandestine group established in Odessa in 1813, which brought together some of the most prominent Greek intellectuals, merchants and priests, and put forward revolution plans. Underground activities by Greek merchants in the Ottoman Empire persisted, while the aim shifted from a multi-ethnic confederation to the establishment of a Hellenic nation-state. This organization advanced the goal of organizing nationalist mobilization throughout the diasporic centres and the Greek-inhabited Ottoman provinces until a nationalist revolution broke out in early 1821.

The outbreak of the revolution exposed the delicate position of Orthodox institutions within the Ottoman world. One should not forget that the Greeks of Istanbul, Thessaloniki and other big Ottoman cities had paid a heavy toll during the Greek War of Independence. Prominent community leaders including the Patriarch Gregory V were executed, while anti-Greek pogroms led to substantial casualties throughout the Empire (Mazower 2001, 125–32). The outbreak of the Greek War of Independence also led to the rapid loss of the influence of the Phanariotes within the Ottoman administration, the Porte and the Danubian provinces.⁶ The dilemma which Ottoman Greek elites, and the Phanariotes faced was displayed in a very lucid manner. The Ecumenical Patriarchate had to walk on a tight rope. On the one hand, some bishops and clergy sympathized with the revolutionaries, following centuries of Ottoman rule upon Orthodox subjects. On the other hand, it opposed the advent of secularist and nationalist ideas, which were part

⁵ Korais, Adamantios. *Adelphikē Didaskalia*. Rome, 1798. Translated from the Greek by the author.

⁶ Some of this influence was restored when Tanzimat permitted the rise of non-Muslim bureaucrats in the Ottoman administration.

and parcel of the revolutionary message, at least in its final version. The Greek nation-state to be built would not be Orthodox but secular. The *millet* and its institutions would not fit the new national order. The Ecumenical Patriarchate, as well as the role of religion would be scrutinized and limited. The emergence of the Greek nation would pave the ground for the further fragmentation of the Orthodox *millet*.

While the Revolution was launched both in the Danubian provinces and the southernmost tip of the Balkan Peninsula, it only struck roots in the latter. The revolutionary forces quickly took control of the Peloponnese and several Aegean islands and struggled to expand their territory towards the north. The fortunes of the war seemed to change with the 1825 deployment of Egyptian troops under the leadership of İbrahim Paşa son of the Egyptian ruler Mehmet Ali who arrived to aid the Ottoman forces led to the virtual suppression of the revolution. Nevertheless, increased interest in the plight of Greek population by the European public opinion contributed to the shift in the foreign policy of the European powers which demanded a cessation of hostilities. This paved the way for the independence of the Greek nation-state. The military intervention of Britain, France and Russia with the aim to impose an end to hostilities led to the naval battle of Navarino, the destruction of the Egyptian fleet and the departure of Egyptian troops from the Morea. The independence of a small Greek nation-state in 1830 in the far south end of the Balkan Peninsula and some of the Aegean islands left the vast majority of Greek population still within the domains of the Ottoman Empire but critically changed the nature of the debate about the future of the Greek nation. While the big majority of Ottoman Greek population remained within the borders of the Ottoman Empire and maintained a clear cultural and economic lead, the establishment of the Kingdom of Greece was meant to upset that order (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2002, 249–62). The modern Greek nation-state posed a challenge not only to the Ottoman Empire but also to the Ottoman Greek elite. The Ottoman capital would cease to be the sole point of political and intellectual reference for the Greeks. Athens, nominated as the capital of the nascent Greek nation-state precisely because of its classical glory would soon emerge as a competing centre of Greek nationalism. The intentions of the Greek state elite became clear already in 1833, when a royal decree declared the autocephaly of Church of Greece without any consent from the Ecumenical Patriarchate. This led to a grave ecclesiastical crisis, a schism that was only healed in 1845, when the Patriarchate decided to accept the *fait accompli* and recognize *ex post* the autocephaly of the Church of Greece. This would pave the way for the fragmentation of the Orthodox into national churches in the Balkans, the Caucasus and beyond. This move reflected the views that had dominated in the bureaucracy of the nascent Kingdom

of Greece. The Ecumenical Patriarchate remained an Ottoman institution, and true sovereignty could not be established without full state control of the Orthodox Church. The interests between the Athens-based and the Constantinople-based Greek elites diverged further than the ecclesiastical order. Soon two divergent nationalist visions would be suggested. Athens would soon rise into a competitor against Constantinople

While Athens was swiftly developing from an Ottoman provincial town to a capital of a small European state, the Greek minority of the Ottoman Empire also thrived due to the conditions of the Tanzimat. The modernization process of the Ottoman Empire, the first industrialization steps and its integration into the European economic networks offered unprecedented opportunities to minority entrepreneurs. The existence of Greek and Armenian diaspora communities in all major European capitals and trading ports meant that they would enjoy a crucial advantage against their Ottoman Muslim or European competitors (Panossian 2006, 75–100). In addition, the formal recognition of the equality of all Ottoman subjects regardless of their religion with the 1839 Imperial Rescript of the Rose Garden (*Hatt-i Şerif-i Gülhane*) and the 1856 Imperial Rescript (*Hatt-ı Hümayun*) removed another crucial barrier for the development of economic activities of minority entrepreneurs. In addition, the growing capitulations regime which endorsed the subjects of the European powers with certain privileges and immunities within the Ottoman Empire gave in some occasions even an advantage to some Greek and Armenian merchants against their Ottoman Sunni competitors. Acquiring a passport of a Great European power enshrined key legal and tax privileges to its holder. This allowed Ottoman Greek and Armenian merchants to avoid taxation or enjoy special jurisdiction rights against their Ottoman Sunni competitors. This allowed for their faster economic growth which further consolidated their key role in Ottoman economy.

Towards the end of the 19th century, strong competition between Athens and Constantinople was simmering (Veremis 1989, 140–46). Being the capital of the Greek nation-state, Athens was emerging as a competitor and disputed the leadership of the Phanariotes. The Greek nation-state aspired to establish its own sphere of influence within the Ottoman Greek population sometimes complementing and sometimes opposing the influence of the Phanariot elites. An area of competition was education. A large part of the Ottoman Greek community in inner Anatolia was Turkish-speaking, using Greek only for ecclesiastical purposes. The proliferation of Greek language especially among the Turkish-speaking Orthodox of Anatolia (the Karamanli) proved a key priority of the educational initiatives of both Greek-government supported, Athens-based organizations and

Patriarchate- or Ottoman Greek association-supported, Constantinople-based organizations. The establishment of a network of educational institutions throughout the Ottoman lands by associations linked with the Greek government overlapped with the existing and similarly growing educational network of schools belonging to Ottoman Greek communities.

These activities may have apparently aimed at the same objective, namely the promotion of Greek literacy among the Ottoman Greek Orthodox populations, nevertheless it pointed at the crux of the question which was whether the interests and the strategic goals of Greece and Ottoman Greeks always coincided or not (Clogg 1969, 109–32). Setting the interests of the Greek nation-state above the interests of the Ottoman Greek elite was a crucial issue that did generate substantial disconcert. Pushing for the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire made sense from the point of view of a small nation-state that aspired to expand its territory against a declining multi-ethnic, multi-religious empire. Nevertheless, such a strategy exposed the Ottoman Greek minority to substantial risks. Retaliation against Ottoman Greeks in the core provinces of the Ottoman Empire would be likely reactions by Ottoman authorities facing the risk of losing border provinces to Greece. In addition, Ottoman Greek elites greatly benefited from the opportunities that the Westernizing and liberalizing Ottoman Empire availed in terms of freedom of trade and transport. Trading across the Mediterranean and the Black Sea was greatly facilitated by the existence of a common economic space which the Ottoman Empire could guarantee. In contrast to that, the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire would destroy or disrupt trade networks and have multifold negative effects on the economic activities of these merchant elites and even put the Greek communities dispersed across the Ottoman territories to severe risk.

The divergence of views, goals and even strategic objectives was best manifested through the work of Ecumenical Patriarch Joachim II. Joachim II became a leading figure of the Ottoman Greek elites who struggled to protect the interests of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Phanariotes against the mounting nationalist pressure which originated from at least two different directions. On the one hand, the Bulgarian nationalist movement aimed to deprive the Patriarchate of its Balkan dioceses where Bulgarian was the main language of the Orthodox population through the establishment of the Bulgarian exarchate. On the other hand, the Athens-based Greek nationalist movement aimed to become the new powerhouse of Hellenism and impose its strategy and tactics on the Ottoman Greek community. Both Bulgarian and Greek nationalisms aimed to the fragmentation or the marginalization of the Greek Orthodox *millet* and its representative institutions within the Ottoman Empire. The interests of the Greek Orthodox population in the preservation of Ottoman institutions and sovereignty would be either

instrumentalized or side-lined. Joachim II's struggle required diplomatic skills to navigate between the divergent interests of the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan nation-states, the Russian Empire and the other Great Powers. Joachim II realized how grave a threat nationalism comprised for the future of the Greek Orthodox *millet* and the Ecumenical Patriarchate. In the Patriarchal Synod of 1871, as the Bulgarian Exarchate was brewing, nationalism was described as heresy. This was meant not only to condemn the establishment of the Bulgarian Exarchate but also all attempts to subordinate religion to the nation-state, in other words instrumentalize religion for nationalist aims. The diplomatic and political skills of Joachim II were not sufficient to change a tide that was sweeping over all European empires. The Ecumenical Patriarchate would eventually face an existential threat because of the triumph of nationalism and nation-states against pre-modern identities and empires.

Nevertheless, there were certain Greek intellectuals who did not subscribe to the mainstream nationalist view which envisioned the enlargement of the Greek nation-state against the Ottoman Empire until the final substitution of the latter by the former. Other intellectuals saw the impossibility of carving a nation-state out of the Ottoman Empire and endorsed a transformation of the Ottoman Empire to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious entity where the Greek Orthodox culture would rise to a dominant position as in the Eastern Roman Empire. Intellectual diplomats such as Ion Dragoumis challenged the dominant view of Greek nationalism that reduced the renaissance of the Eastern Roman Empire to the expansion of the borders of the Greek nation-state and the '*Megalē Idea*' ('Great Idea') (Koliopoulos and Veremis 2010, 86–87). This fell short of the ambitions of Greek nationalist to replace the Ottoman Empire with a Hellenic one (Veremis 1999, 181–85). On the other hand, it was willing to tolerate Ottoman religious and cultural diversity to the extent that the Hellenic culture would become dominant and would serve as a bridge between the Ottoman domains and Western culture. The Ottoman Empire would in other words only become Westernized and survive if it embraced the classical Greek heritage as its own. These views were closer to the vision of the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Ottoman Greek elites, as it allowed for an institutional framework guaranteeing the prosperity of the Greek communities throughout the Ottoman Empire. Dragoumis had the chance to elaborate on his views, as he served as Greek diplomat in several consular posts in the Ottoman Empire. While his views never had a wide popular following, they appealed to some Greek intellectuals and the leaders of the Constantinople Greek community.

Such hopes and visions were dashed with the turn of events in the early 20th century. The nationalist vision of Europe emerged victorious against the imperial

order which the balance of powers system had maintained since the end of the Napoleonic Wars. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, the Hamidian administration continued paid lip service to Ottomanism, while it endorsed policies reinforcing the Islamization of the Ottoman state. Meanwhile, pan-Turkism gained strength both within the intellectual circles and the administration of the Ottoman state. These deliberations were in line with the argument developed by a leading Turkish nationalist ideologue Yusuf Akçura in his article *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (Three Ways of Politics) published in the Cairo-based daily *Türk* in 1904. Akçura outlined and then compared the three ideologies, which the Ottoman Empire could endorse in order to survive in a highly volatile international environment: Ottomanism, pan-Islamism and pan-Turkism. Ottomanism aimed at the transformation of the Ottoman Empire to a constitutional monarchy, promoting a civic national identity for all citizens regardless of religious, ethnic or racial affiliation. Pan-Islamism aimed at bringing forward the Ottoman Empire as the Caliphate. Being the spiritual centre of the world's Muslims, the Ottoman identity should be built around Sunni Islam, and the state policy should pursue the unification of all Muslim-inhabited territories under Ottoman sovereignty. Pan-Turkism followed the growing trend of ethnic nationalism throughout Eastern Europe and underscored common ethnic Turkic descent as the founding bloc of Ottoman identity. The Ottoman Empire should therefore pursue the unification under its sovereignty of all ethnic Turks in Europe and Asia. Akçura argued that Ottomanism, which remained the official state ideology in the Hamidian era despite the pan-Islamist sympathies of the Sultan, was not a viable option not only because it did not serve the interests of the Ottoman state. Ottomanism had no future because even the Ottoman minorities had lost faith in it. In other words, Ottoman Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks and other minority groups chose to promote their own nationalist projects against the sovereignty and the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Akçura conceded that adopting pan-Islamism or pan-Turkism would inevitably lead to complications in the Ottoman foreign policy. Ottoman pan-Islamism would displease all European powers that possessed colonial empires and ruled over millions of Muslim subjects. Britain, France and Russia were only the three biggest states that would consider this shift as a threat against their vital interests. On the other hand, Akçura understood that adopting pan-Turkism would turn the Russian Empire into an archenemy of the Ottoman Empire, given that most of the Turkic populations residing outside the Ottoman borders were Russian subjects. While clearly rejecting Ottomanism, Akçura avoided choosing between pan-Islamism and pan-Turkish in his essay. He later became an ardent supporter of pan-Turkism.

The 1908 Young Turk Revolution provided a brief glimpse of optimism about the revival of Ottomanism through the restoration of the Ottoman constitutional order (Ahmad 1982, 401–05). The end of Hamidian despotism was hoped to restore the faith of Ottoman minorities in Ottomanism and reinforce the stability of the declining Empire. Nonetheless, mutual distrust soon reigned. The Young Turk movement soon took a decisively Turkish nationalist shift, while the groups within the Ottoman minorities that supported secession and establishment of nation-states took the upper hand. It became increasingly clear that the days of Ottomanism were numbered. Developments in both the Crete and the Bosnia questions manifested that the interests of Ottoman minorities did not lie in the preservation and reinforcement of the Empire but its partition. The Italian-Ottoman War in Tripolitania and the 1912–1913 Balkan Wars gave the final blow against Ottomanism and led to the full endorsement of Turkish nationalism. The Young Turk triumvirate, Enver Paşa, Talat Paşa and Cemal Paşa would follow a policy of Turkification against the Ottoman minorities.

Armenian Debates on the Future of the Ottoman Empire

In contrast to Greek nationalism, Armenian nationalism appeared less willing to challenge Ottoman sovereignty in the short term (Suny 1993, 19–21). While Enlightenment ideas found appeal within Armenian intellectuals in diasporic communities across Europe, this did not translate to a major nationalist mobilization (Tölölyan 2000, 116–19). No revolutionary activities were recorded in the late 18th century, despite the thriving intellectual activities of Diaspora Armenians in Europe. The absence of an Armenian revolution, a war of independence and a nation-state also embedded the interests of the Armenian community to the future of the Ottoman Empire. This meant that the Ottoman Armenians appeared more willing to endorse or accommodate solutions involving the reform of the Ottoman Empire (Panossian 2006, 160–88). The Tanzimat heralded the era of the Ottoman reform, with the aim to transform the Ottoman Empire into a democratic entity recognizing equality of rights for all its citizens regardless of religion and ethnicity. It provided a great opportunity for all non-Muslim communities which saw the prospect of gaining equality for the first time in Ottoman history. Ottomanism as the ideology of Tanzimat reformers came to be called aspired to contribute to the establishment of a civic Ottoman national identity which would remain open to all Ottoman subjects. This served the interests of all Ottoman minorities, not least those that had no recourse to a “motherland” outside the shrinking borders of the Ottoman Empire. The absence of a nation-state outside the Ottoman borders harbouring irredentist claims against the Ottoman Empire turned into a major difference between the two

communities which had crucial consequences regarding the development of Greek and Armenian nationalism within the Ottoman domain. Armenian national movement grows in a more stochastic way. The absence of a national centre in the 19th century meant that the integration of the Armenian elites with the Ottoman state was stronger. Their interest in the success of the Ottomanist project was consequently stronger. The transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a liberal and possibly democratic polity, as promised by the Ottomanist reformers, appealed to the majority of the Armenian urban elites.

The Armenian *millet* was famously called as '*millet-i sadaka*', the 'loyal millet', for failing to endorse any nationalist movement aiming to partition the Ottoman Empire. Armenian elites served the Ottoman Empire through different offices throughout the 19th century. Given the absence of an Armenian nation-state Armenian secularists could not establish themselves and struggle for their positions outside the realm of the Ottoman Empire. They had to fight for stronger influence within the Ottoman Armenian society. This was reflected in the confrontation between the Armenian secular elites and the Armenian Patriarchate regarding the right of representing the Armenian *millet* in front of the Ottoman authorities.

Unlike in the Greek case, where secularist elites found refuge in Greece and attempted to weaken the influence of the Ecumenical Patriarchate through the bureaucracy of the Kingdom of Greece, Armenian secularists pursued their cause within the Ottoman Empire. The circle around the Armenian Patriarchate, which had already consolidated its spiritual power over Ottoman Armenians (Bardakjian 1982, 95–97) and business elites had a strong interest in the success of the Tanzimat and the consolidation of Ottomanism. The Armenian *amira* class played a particular role in that respect in light of their position in Ottoman society and economy. On the other hand, secular middle-class Armenian movements objected to their subordination to the ecclesiastical and business elites and claimed their own role in the management of community affairs. This objection distinguished the Armenian middle class from the Armenian Patriarchate which had consolidated its power because of the Ottoman state support.

This was better expressed with reference to the rise of Armenian secular organizations which disputed the monopoly of representation in front of the Ottoman authorities which the Armenian Patriarchate had traditionally enjoyed. Their lobbying activity bore fruit, and legislation on Ottoman non-Muslim communities was passed in the 1860s (Barsoumian 1982, 177–81). The representation of the Ottoman Armenians ceased to be a monopoly of the Armenian Patriarchate, as some functions were recognized to secular associations. Armenian secular as-

sociations won such rights in contrast to Ottoman Greek associations whose position remained subordinated to the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Even the expansion of the Russian Empire in the Caucasus and its territorial gains against the Ottoman Empire according to the 1881 Treaty of Berlin did not fundamentally alter good relations between the Ottoman Armenians and the Ottoman imperial administration. The Ottoman-Russian War of 1877–1878 and the 1878 Treaty of Berlin led to the annexation by the Russian Empire of Ottoman Armenian-inhabited territories. The annexation of Batum, Kars, Ardahan, Artvin, Iğdır and Doğubeyazıt to Russia meant that substantial Armenian populations would now live under Russian sovereignty. This did not mean, however, that Armenian nationalists would then have a free hand. On the contrary, the Armenian revolutionary message did not resonate with the autocratic tendencies of the Russian administration. Relations between Armenian nationalists and the Russian Empire were not cordial. The former professed a set of ideas which the autocratic Empire fundamentally objected to and they also envisioned an Armenian nation-state to be carved from the territories which belonged either to the Ottoman or to the Russian Empire. Armenian nationalism was not endorsed by the Russian Empire which pursued policies of Russification in the recently annexed provinces against Christian and non-Christian subjects and also attempted to play one community against the other. Only when it became clear that the Ottoman Empire and Russia would be in opposing camps in the First World War did Russia engage with Armenian nationalists in the Ottoman Empire in the hope that they would stand by its side in the event of a war.

Meanwhile, pursuing Ottomanism appeared less appealing or realistic a policy choice, following the advent of Sultan Abdulhamid II to power. The suspension of the Ottoman Constitution of 1876 and the pursuance of policies that stressed the Islamic character of the Ottoman Empire led to doubts about the viability of the aim to achieve full political equality under the Ottoman aegis. The rise of Armenian nationalist party *Dashnaktsutyun* raised some new discussions about the future of Ottoman Armenians (Nalbandian 1963, 151–78). What finally changed the convergence between Armenian elites and the Ottoman Empire, was the decline of Ottomanism and the rise of Panislamism and Panturkism into political significance. It also raised the stakes of the final confrontation between the Armenian and the Turkish nationalist project. This might have been one of the reasons for the brutal turn of the Ottoman-Armenian nationalist confrontation in Anatolia, which culminated with the outbreak of the First World War and the 1915 Armenian Genocide.

The parallel rise of pan-Turkism professing the annexation of all the territories inhabited by Turkic populations and the transformation of the Ottoman Empire

into a state whose identity would be defined by Sunni Islam became an additional reason for concern. Rising religious and ethnic tensions in different Ottoman provinces exposed Armenian populations to severe risks. The Adana Massacres of 1904–1905 reflected a shifting attitude of the Ottoman state towards its minorities. The appeal of Ottomanism was decreasing, while viewing Ottoman Armenians as security threats or second-class subjects became more common. The partnership between the Young Turks and Dashnaksutyun, established at the time of the Young Turk Revolution, did not last for long (Ahmad 1982, 418–25). The official endorsement of Ottomanism finally collapsed in the very last years of the Ottoman Empire, following the Young Turk Revolution, the outbreak of the Balkan Wars and the First World War. A whole-scale Armenian insurrection in the eastern Ottoman provinces following the outbreak of Ottoman-Russian hostilities in 1914 paved the way to the events of the Armenian genocide. The decision on 24 April 1915 to arrest prominent Armenians of Istanbul and deport hundreds of thousands of Armenians from the eastern provinces of the Ottoman Empire led to one of the most horrendous humanitarian disasters of the 20th century.

The 1905–1906 and 1915 massacres were a sad testimony to the failure of the Ottoman Empire to transform into a state that would guarantee equal rights to all its citizens. It also pointed that the Armenian pledge on the successful transformation of the Ottoman Empire into a liberal constitutional monarchy was an unwise one. While fragmentation within the Armenian community was higher than the Greek one, a nation-state project outside the borders of the Empire was absent. This allowed for higher diversity but possibly also for lower effectiveness in pursuing the aims of the Ottoman Armenian community. This proved critical in the last years of the Ottoman Empire. What appeared as the inevitable end of the era of empires proved disastrous for the fortunes of the Ottoman non-Muslim community that had most closely knit its fortunes to that of the Ottoman Empire. It also triggered the eclipse of the Ottoman non-Muslim merchant elites that operated in a cosmopolitan economic and cultural environment and would face the direst consequences as a result of the end of the era of empires and the rise of nation-states in the position left by the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of the Greek nation-state in 1830 and the ensuing competition between the Athens-based and the Constantinople-based elites made it possible that the interests of the Greek nation would be disconnected from those of the Ottoman Empire. The absence of an Armenian nation-state in the 19th century meant that the prosperity of the Armenian nation was closer connected with the fortunes of the Ottoman Empire. This paved the ground for an all-out struggle between Turkish and Armenian nationalists during the First World War that resulted in the Armenian genocide.

Conclusion

Comparing the debates within the Ottoman Greek and Armenian communities from Tanzimat to the end of the Ottoman Empire points at three main conclusions. First, cosmopolitan elites of multi-ethnic Empires were doomed, as long as nationalism became the hegemonic ideology of Europe in the late 19th century. The partition of Empires and the establishment of nation-states would inevitably destroy both the cosmopolitan habitus and the networks that secured the flow of ideas, capital and goods. Second, the establishment of the Greek nation-state became the intervening factor that contributed to the different development of the relations between the Ottoman Greek and Armenian communities and the Ottoman Empire. Athens influenced the course of intellectual debate within Ottoman Greeks and had a crucial impact on the final result. Third, the intensity and the brutality of the Armenian-Turkish nationalist confrontation in the last years of the Ottoman Empire was also due to the fact that they were the last two Ottoman ethnic communities to link their interests and future to that of the ailing Empire. When it became clear that Ottomanism was defunct and nation-states would succeed the Ottoman Empire, their struggle for their jointly claimed motherland was ruthless with an enormous humanitarian cost. Fourth, Greek and Armenian nationalist movements remained in contact, as ideas and practices travelled in both directions. Nevertheless, this interaction did not suffice to transform any of the communities and alter the existing state of affairs.

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