Discussions

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THE "TURKISH YOKE" REVISITED: THE OTTOMAN
NON–MUSLIM SUBJECTS BETWEEN LOYALTY,
ALIENATION, AND RIOT*

The process of European unification provides a strong stimulus
to question myths embedded in national memories[1]. In their
efforts to form a new, collective European identity, some intellec-
tuals look for inspirations in the past supra–ethnic and supra–
national bodies, including the once despised empires.

Such efforts of idealization can provoke negative reactions
from the side of the former subjects, whose nineteenth–century
national identities were shaped in opposition to imperial centers.
What London was to the Irish, St. Petersburg to the Poles, and
Vienna to the Hungarians, Istanbul was to the Greeks and
Bulgarians. While the Polish national historiography was largely
formed in opposition to Russia and Germany, Bulgarians shaped
their identity in their fight against the Ottoman Empire. Typical
nation state ideologies usually required martyrs to be worshipped

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[1] Cf. Marek Z i ó ł k o w s k i, *Pamięć i zapominanie: trupy w szafie polskiej zbioro-
wej pamięci (Memory and Oblivion: The Skeletons in the Polish National Memory
Closet)*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo" 45 (2001), p. 12.

and traitors–renegades to be branded[2]. "Cowardly" conformists, often forming a majority of a given society, were not even worth to be mentioned in school history textbooks.

A scholarly interest in "renegades" was recently raised when two French authors published a book entitled *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*. Recalling the thousands of West Europeans who had voluntarily adopted Islam and served the Muslim rulers, Bartolomé and Lucile B e n n a s s a r challenged seemingly established truths regarding the social, religious, and national self–identity[3]. In France this dispute was soon overshadowed by the issue of more recent "renegades" serving the Vichy regime[4].

The Poles, traditionally (and with a good reason) presenting themselves as the main victims of WWII, recently had to swallow an uneasy discovery that *some* of them had collaborated in murdering their Jewish neighbors. A next "skeleton from the closet" is already on the agenda: some scholars search for a more balanced view of the Poles who claimed German roots under the Nazi occupation (the so called *Volksdeutschen*).

These new interests and discoveries coincide with a fashionable current in modern historiography: studying marginal groups and "irregular" behaviors, once condemned to contempt or oblivion.

The Balkans form another promising field for such discoveries. Having in mind the warning of Maria T o d o r o v a, I do not want to ridicule the Balkan historiographies as the "repositories of negative characteristics"[5]. Rather, I find them, along with their attitudes towards the Ottoman past, typical for the European nation state ideologies.

Sometimes it requires a foreigner to look at a nation's past through unbiased lenses. The 'revisionist' contribution of the Welshman Norman D a v i e s to the Polish historiography can be compared with the impact of the Dutchman Machiel K i e l in Bulgaria. Not by accident Kiel's book on the *Art and Society of*

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[2] In her socio–anthropological approach, Mary Douglas distinguishes three types of societies: individualist (or else competitive), hierarchical, and sectarian, celebrating respectively heroes, patriarchs, and martyrs; cf. M. D o u g l a s, *How Institutions Think*, Syracuse, New York 1986, pp. 7–8 and 80. Yet, the US cult of Alamo or the French cult of Jeanne d'Arc show that even modern societies that can hardly be described as sectarian include 'martyrs' to their pantheons.

[3] Bartolomé and Lucile B e n n a s s a r, *Les Chrétiens d'Allah*, Paris 1989.

[4] Cf. the revealing book by Sonia C o m b e, *Archives interdites: les peurs françaises face à l'histoire contemporaine*, Paris 1994.

[5] Maria T o d o r o w a, *Imagining the Balkans*, New York–Oxford 1997, p. 188.

Bulgaria in the Turkish Period is provided with a motto: "the nation state is the prison of the mind"[6].

Kiel's book was recently translated and published in Sofia[7]. Numerous studies by Bulgarian historians prove that the Islamic past is no longer a taboo[8]. When a Bulgarian scholar, Antonina Z h e l y a z k o v a, admits that "most Balkan historians have been unable to accept calmly and analyze objectively the spread of Islam in the Balkans, both by immigration and by the conversion of a segment of the local population"[9], this very statement is the proof of a deep change.

Yet, every historian knows that the impact of scholarly monographs is slow and shallow. A novel or a movie can influence popular imagination much stronger than a scholarly work. Also politicians rarely read books written by historians. Consequently, we should expect that some stereotypes will last for generations.

The notion of the "Turkish yoke" has been coined in the Bulgarian collective imagination by the famous late nineteenth–century novel by Ivan V a z o v, *Pod igoto* (*Under the yoke*). From the political and literary language, it easily found its way to the academia[10]. One may name a few paradigms associated with the notion of the "yoke":

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[6] Machiel K i e l, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period. A Sketch of the Economic, Juridicial and Artistic Preconditions of Bulgarian Post–Byzantine Art and its Place in the Development of the Art of the Christian Balkans, 1360/70–1700. A New Interpretation*, Assen/Maastricht 1985, p. 19. This motto origins from the Christian Arab scholar William H a d d a d.

[7] The translation by Rossitsa G r a d e v a appeared in 2002.

[8] Cf. the article by Rossitsa G r a d e v a and Svetlana I v a n o v a, *Researching the Past and Present of Muslim Culture in Bulgaria: the 'popular' and 'high' layers*, "Islam and Christian–Muslim Relations" 12 (2001), pp. 317–337; this article is also republished in Gradeva, *Rumeli under the Ottomans, 15th–18th centuries: institutions and communities*, Istanbul 2004, pp. 133–162.

[9] Antonina Z h e l y a z k o v a, *Islamization in the Balkans as a Historiographical Problem: the Southeast–European Perspective*, in: *The Ottomans and the Balkans. A Discussion of Historiography*. Edited by F. A d a n ı r and S. F a r o q h i, Leiden 2002, p. 265.

[10] Some refreshing thoughts can be found in the article by Wojciech G a ł ą z k a, *Mit niewoli w literaturze i kulturze bułgarskiej (Myth of Slavery in Bulgarian Literature and Culture)*, in: *Mity narodowe w literaturach słowiańskich. Studia poświęcone XI Międzynarodowemu Kongresowi Slawistów w Bratysławie*. Edited by M. B o b r o w n i c k a, Cracow 1992, pp. 59–65. According to this author, the notion of "political freedom" was absent in the nineteenth–century colloquial Bulgarian; thus, in the traditional patriarchal Bulgarian society the term "Turkish yoke" could not have assumed its modern political meaning of "political slavery"; *ibidem*, p. 64.

1) Turkish invasion destroyed national states in the Balkans while the national conscience of their inhabitants had been already developed;

2) for over 500 years of their existence the Ottoman state and Ottoman institutions were regarded as alien and hostile by non–Muslim subjects; any cooperation between the Muslim state and the Christian population, not to say loyalty, was unthinkable and should be treated within the notion of "national treason";

3) the original Muslim culture, developed in the Balkans, was created by "renegades" and did not belong to the "national heritage" of respective Balkan nations; this last stereotype was obviously less widespread in Bosnia and Albania than in Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece;

4) Ottoman rule brought backwardness to Balkan societies; this backwardness impeded their economic growth and is responsible for their socio–economic problems today; this opinion, embedded in the Marxist notion of Asiatic mode of production, was cherished by official historiographies in all communist states, including non–Balkan countries such as the Soviet Union, Poland, and Hungary. However, the most illuminating statement origins from a British prime minister whose affiliations with Marxism were rather problematic. To quote after Selim D e r i n - g i l, in November 1914 David Lloyd George called the Turks: "a human cancer, a creeping agony in the flesh of the lands which they misgoverned"[11];

5) conquered populations constantly tried to get rid of the Ottoman yoke; local brigands, such as the *haydut*s and *klepht*s were conscious national leaders, romantic forefathers of Bulgarian and Greek generals of the Balkan wars[12]. Some Balkan historians readily overlooked the confusing fact that banditry was widespread in ethnic Turkish territories as well, and the apogee of the *haydut* activity in the Balkans coincided with the so–called *celalî* rebellions in Anatolia. Polish and Ukrainian historians know a similar debate on the question whether the Cossacks were conscious leaders of Ukrainian Orthodox rebellion against Catholic Poland, or just plain bandits who only with time adopted

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[11] Selim D e r i n g i l, *Turkish foreign policy during the Second World War: an 'active' neutrality*, Cambridge 1989, p. 65.

[12] A classical monograph on the Bulgarian *haydut*s is Bistra C v e t k o v a's: *Hajdutstvoto v bălgarskite zemi prez 15/18 vek*, Sofija 1971.

a religious and political program. Peasant movements are another point of confusion. Whenever Balkan peasants rioted against their Ottoman authorities or simply refused to pay taxes, historians tried to associate their behavior with religious or national beliefs. I would argue that to explain peasant discontent, be it in fourteenth–century France or nineteenth–century Bulgaria, we do not necessarily have to bring religious or national reasons.

To return to the first paradigm, it is in no way indisputable. While a Bulgarian scholar, Valeri K a c u n o v, states that "on the eve of Byzantine rule, the Bulgarian society already possessed its own ethnic traits that distinguished it as a separate ethno–social organism"[13], according to a Turkish scholar, Kemal K a r p a t: "the Ottomans inherited in the Balkans not states whose populations had developed distinctive political–national allegiances, but rather clusters of urban and rural communities bearing a memory of various ruling dynasties, bitter wars, invasions, and migrations which had ravaged the area from the eighth to thirteenth centuries"[14].

Quite unexpectedly, Karpat would find an ally in the person of... V o l t a i r e who viewed the establishment of the Ottoman Empire and its expansion in southeastern Europe as a positive phenomenon. According to the French philosopher, Eurasia benefited from the replacement of many small anarchic polities by one extended centralized monarchy[15].

If Kacunov and Karpat have anything in common, it is their view of Orthodox religion as a decisive factor shaping nationhood in southeastern Europe[16]. Consequently, religion would play a crucial role in my further arguments.

By stating that Bulgarians "had no access to the [Ottoman] administrative system, since they were not followers of the prophet Muhammad", Kacunov tacitly assumes that Bulgarian con-

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[13] Valeri K a c u n o v, *On the Ethnic Self–Consciousness of the Bulgarians during the 15th–17th Century*, "Bulgarian Historical Review" (1996), N⁰ 2, p. 3.

[14] Kemal K a r p a t, *Millets and Nationality: The Roots of Incongruity of Nation and State in the Post–Ottoman Era*, in: *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The Functioning of a Plural Society*. Edited by B. B r a u d e and B. L e w i s, New York and London 1982, vol. 1: *The Central Lands*, p. 143.

[15] Krystyna P i e c h u r a, *Cette spectaculaire réorganisation de l'espace orientale* [unpublished paper presented on the 16th CIÉPO symposium in Warsaw, June 2004], p. 4. The text should appear in the "Canadian Journal of History" under the title: *Did Voltaire side with peace or aggression more often. Western European and other perspectives.*

[16] K a c u n o v, *op. cit.*, pp. 4–5; K a r p a t, *op. cit.*, p. 144.

verts to Islam were no longer Bulgarians[17]. A similar opinion was recorded by a Croatian writer, Predrag M a t v e j e v i ć who recently visited his native Mostar after the Yugoslavian war. A local teacher, asked why he did not accept Muslim children in his school, reportedly answered: "they do not speak our language". "So what language do they speak?" — asked the author. "Turkish" — was the answer[18]. The teacher must have known that Turkish could not be the first language of the local Muslim children. In his statement it only symbolized the language of "the other".

Recent, and less recent studies by such authors as Metin K u n t, Heath L o w r y, and even Radovan S a m a r d ž i ć, demonstrated that Muslim converts were not always "lost" from the national point of view[19]. To quote Lowry: "the latter–day stigma of 'turning Turk' must have been viewed differently in the fifteenth–century Ottoman world. The manner in which such former Christians maintained ties with those family members who had not converted raises the possibility that the *Realpolitik* of the era fully embraced the concept of: *cuius regio eius religio* as the operative maxim"[20]. For Metin Kunt, it was the abolition of the *devşirme* method of recruitment in the seventeenth century that closed the main avenue of advancement to non–Muslims and added to their sense of alienation towards the Ottoman state[21].

The question whether new Muslims were permanently "lost" to their respective nations is not merely academic; it is enough to remind the very existence and fate of the Bulgarian Pomaks. Yet, most of the Ottoman Christians and Jews did *not* convert and this paper is focused on their attitudes towards the Ottoman state.

Let me start from a banal point: notwithstanding a futile attempt of creating a syncretic Christian–Muslim unity, expressed in the crushed rebellion of Sheikh Bedreddin (d. 1416), the

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[17] K a c u n o v, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[18] Predrag M a t v e j e v i ć, *Podróż do Mostaru*, "Krasnogruda" 16 (2002/2003), p. 51.

[19] Metin K u n t, *Ethnic–Regional (Cins) Solidarity in the Seventeenth–Century Ottoman Establishment*, "International Journal of Middle East Studies" 5 (1974), pp. 233–239; Heath L o w r y, *The Nature of the Early Ottoman State*, Albany 2003, esp. chapter 7: *The Last Phase of Ottoman Syncretism — The Subsumption of Members of the Byzanto–Balkan Aristocracy into the Ottoman Ruling Elite* on pp. 115–130; Radovan S a m a r d ž i ć, *Mehmed Sokolović*, Beograd 1975.

[20] L o w r y, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

[21] K u n t, *Transformation of Zimmi into Askerî*, in: *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, p. 64.

Ottoman Empire was a Muslim Sunni state, where non–Muslims could only enjoy a second–class subject status. Yet, the zeal of Ottoman rulers in implementing Koranic prescriptions was not constant, encouraging their non–Muslim subjects to adopt changing strategies. To quote Antony B l a c k: "Ottoman ideology oscillated between the concept of the Sultan as emperor ruling over diverse peoples and faiths and the concept of him as Caliph of Muslims"[22]. According to the same author, balancing between the more pragmatic, patrimonial system, which enabled different cultural groups to coexist peaceably, and the Islamic rectitude, was characteristic to other Islamic empires as well, to mention only the Indian Mughals[23].

Shmuel E i s e n s t a d t lists three major objectives directing the behavior of religious elites toward the bureaucratic, imperial structures[24]:

a) gaining official recognition and protection from the state — if possible, as the established religion; or else as a secondary, recognized, and protected one;

b) maintaining its independence in the performance of its major functions in the society;

c) preservation of material bases (i.e., property).

In his chronicle *Divrei Yosef*, written in ca. 1672, Rabbi Yosef S a m b a r i of Egypt described how the sultan reserved three seats in his *divan* to the mufti of Istanbul, the Greek Orthodox patriarch, and the Jewish rabbi. Minna R o z e n convincingly questions the truthfulness of this story, but we must keep in mind that this invention is a product of the seventeenth century, and not of our times[25]. It has been correctly argued that the classical Ottoman *millet* system was in fact a nineteenth–century institution, extrapolated by modern scholars into the earlier centuries. Yet, it does not mean that the Christian and Jewish religious institutions did not enjoy certain privileges, financial and legal autonomy as well as the state support.

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[22] Antony B l a c k, *The History of Islamic Political Thought. From the Prophet to the Present*, New York 2001, p. 271.

[23] *Ibidem*, p. 350.

[24] Shmuel N. E i s e n s t a d t, *The Political Systems of Empires*, London 1963, p. 185.

[25] Minna R o z e n, *A History of the Jewish community in Istanbul. The formative years, 1453–1566*, Leiden 2002, pp. 66–70.

In the sixteenth century, Rabbi Yosef C a r o referred to the Ottoman sultan as "our lord the king, may his splendor rise aloft"[26]. His contemporary, Rabbi Mosheh A l m o s n i n o wrote about "our great master Sultan Süleyman, may his memory live forever"[27]. Sultan Süleyman was also the first Ottoman ruler in whose honor a special poem was written in Hebrew by an Istanbuli poet, Shelomoh ben M a z a l – T o v[28]. Rabbinic *responsa*, studied by Minna Rozen, also contain a seemingly strange mention of a Jew "who had love with the viziers", denoting those Jews, whose close relations with Ottoman authorities enabled them to ask special favors[29]. Isaac S c h u l h o f, a seventeenth–century Hungarian Jew who survived the conquest of Buda by the Habsburgs, recalled with sentiment the calm and safe life under "our pasha"[30]. The possessive form "our" is also found in the *responsa* studied by Aryeh S h m u e l e v i t z. The Ottoman state is often referred to as "the gracious Kingdom" or simply "our Kingdom"[31].

The Jewish attitude towards the Ottoman state is not surprising, considering frequent persecutions of Jews in Western Europe. Even in more tolerant Poland–Lithuania, the Jews were not allowed to settle down in numerous towns. No wonder that when the Ottomans conquered Podolia in 1672, they were greeted by the local Jews with words, recorded by a Turkish chronicler: "we know the happiness of life in the shade of the people of Islam"[32].

More interestingly, also Greek attitudes towards the Ottoman rule were by no means unequivocal. To quote Benjamin B r a u - d e and Bernard L e w i s: "some Greek writers of the late eighteenth century were more sympathetic to Ottoman rule than are their descendants today"[33].

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[26] *Ibidem*, p. 20.

[27] *Ibidem*, p. 42.

[28] *Ibidem*, p. 43.

[29] *Ibidem*, p. 40.

[30] Iszák S c h u l h o f, *La Meghilla di Buda (1686)*. Edited and translated by P. A g o s t i n i, Roma 1982, pp. 23–24 and 33.

[31] Aryeh S h m u e l e v i t z, *The Jews of the Ottoman Empire in the late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries: administrative, economic, legal, and social relations as reflected in the responsa*, Leiden 1984, p. 33.

[32] "Ehl–i Islam sayesinde olmağı ni'met bilürüz"; see Haci 'Ali E f e n d i, *Fethna-me–i Kamaniçe*, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi [Istanbul], Lala Ismail 308, fol. 85b.

[33] Benjamin B r a u d e and Bernard L e w i s, "Introduction", in: *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, p. 17.

The inclusion of local chronicles written in Greek and other vernaculars into the framework of Ottoman studies was already postulated by Johann S t r a u s s. Such chronicles provide a different perspective from the "bureaucratic" view offered by central Ottoman archives[34]. Yet, this is more easily said than done. For an Ottomanist, who already had to master Ottoman Turkish, at least some Persian and Arabic, a requirement to learn in addition Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, Armenian, Hebrew, Ladino, and some other vernaculars used in the Ottoman domains is not much realistic. On the other hand, scholars working on Christian or Jewish sources composed within the Ottoman realm are often unfamiliar with Muslim institutions. Cross references between, say, the editions of a Greek, a Jewish, and a Turkish local chronicle written in the same region and time, are still very rare.

Perhaps the most interesting Greek source from the seventeenth century are the memoirs of Synadinos, a seventeenth–century Orthodox priest from Serres. They provide a fascinating microcosm, full of passions and conflicts. The author deeply mourns for every Christian conversion to Islam, blaming his compatriots greed, lechery and frivolity. He also accuses Greeks that due to their sins "strangers took the imperial crown" of Constantine[35]. Yet, when referring to the Ottoman sultan, Synadinos attributes him the Greek royal title of βασιλεύς, thus giving him a kind of legitimacy[36]. Mentioning the janissary rebellion and the assassination of Osman II in 1622, the Greek priest regrets this young and promising ruler[37]. His favorite sultan, however, was Murad IV, known for his strict measures against corruption and his campaign to abolish tobacco and coffee. Mourning after Murad's death, Synadinos could not imagine

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[34] Johann S t r a u s s, *Ottoman Rule Experienced and Remembered: Remarks on Some Greek Chronicles of the Tourkokratia*, in: *The Ottomans and the Balkans*, pp. 193–195.

[35] *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos, prêtre de Serrès en Macédoine (XVIIe siècle)*. Edited by P. O d o r i c o with the collaboration of S. A s d r a c h a s, T. K a r a n a-s t a s s i s, K. K o s t i s, S. P e t m é z a s, Paris 1996, pp. 56–57.

[36] *Ibidem*, p. 43; cf. S t r a u s s, *op. cit.*, p. 200. The seventeenth–century Wallachian chronicler Radu P o p e s c u went even further as he legitimized the right to rule Constantinople by the Ottomans, recalling their alleged kinship with the Comneni; see Radu P o p e s c u V o r n i c u l, *Istoriile domnilor Ţării Romîneşti*, edited by C. G r e c e s c u, Bucureşti 1963, pp. 6–7; my thanks go to Bogdan Murgescu who provided me with this quotation.

[37] *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos*, pp. 84–85.

anyone fit to replace him[38]. He also recalls the outburst of common joy and solemn celebrations after the Ottoman troops took Erevan in 1634[39]. Sultans were not the only Turks praised by Synadinos for their merits. Another positive character in his chronicle was Kenan Pasha, sent to Serres in order to eradicate injustice and corruption on the side of the local bureaucracy[40].

Writing about many plagues affecting his small community, Synadinos enumerated Turcs, Christians, Jews, and Gypsies sharing the same fate[41]. Not surprisingly, it seems that most of his enemies were among his fellow Greeks. In the most dramatic moment of his life, Synadinos barely escaped death, temporarily deprived of his position and banished. He even thought of going to Russia, considered already at that time a safe haven for Orthodox Christians[42]. Like his father, also an Orthodox priest, he acted as a leader of his local community, being involved in numerous financial affairs with local Ottoman notables, often dining with them and giving them counsels[43]. Such inter–confessional cliental relationships were apparently quite common. At one place in his memoirs Synadinos refers to an alliance between the patriarch of Constantinople and the Ottoman grand vizier, since they both originated from Albania[44].

A similar source from the very same period was written in Ottoman Crimea by an Armenian, Xačatur from Caffa. By no coincidence he was also a priest, as one could expect literary ambitions more widespread among clergy members. Like Synadinos, he also used to explain misfortunes of his community by the sins of its members. The world of Xačatur seems to be even more isolated than that of Synadinos as he is mostly interested in the

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[38] *Ibidem*, pp. 94–95; cf. S t r a u s s, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

[39] *Ibidem*, pp. 116–117; cf. S t r a u s s, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

[40] *Ibidem*, pp. 96–99. Interestingly, a miniature depicting Christian peasants, rejoicing on the arrival of Kenan Pasha on his "anticorruption campaign" in Macedonia, is preserved in the Ottoman manuscript of *Paşaname*, dated ca. 1630 and held in the British Museum (Sloane 3584, fol. 20a). The manuscript contains a poem written by Tului Ibrahim E f e n d i o f K a l k a n d e l e n [today Tetovo in Macedonia], celebrating the exploits of Kenan Pasha; see G. M. M e r e d i t h – O w e n s, *Turkish Miniatures*, London 1963, p. 29 and plate XXIV, containing a black and white reproduction.

[41] *Conseils et mémoires de Synadinos*, pp. 90–91.

[42] *Ibidem*, pp. 144–145.

[43] On Sidérès, father of Synadinos, see *ibidem*, pp. 120–129.

[44] *Ibidem*, pp. 166–167.

affairs of his Armenian community. He confuses the island of Malta with Crete, yet his geographical horizon encompasses Constantinople, Iran, Poland, and Transylvania. Though he often accuses Ottoman authorities of collecting excessive taxes and corruption, at the same time he can appreciate certain Ottoman officials. Memi Pasha, killed by the Cossacks offshore Caffa in 1617, is regretted by Xačatur as "a good–natured man" and "a friend of [our] land"[45]. A similar characteristic is given to another pasha appointed in 1630, called in the chronicle "a friend of the city"[46]. The priest recalls his grief when the news of an unsuccessful Ottoman campaign arrived from Persia, and — more significantly — his joy when the Crimean and Ottoman troops safely returned home after a campaign in Transylvania[47]. The Christian solidarity of Xačatur seems to be limited to Armenians. He meticulously registers Armenian slaves kidnapped in Poland by the Tatars, and mentions the efforts of the Armenian community to redeem them[48]. However, the Ukrainian Cossacks, who liked to present themselves as Christian warriors and heroes, appear in Xačatur's chronicle as godless bandits. They murder Christians, plunder churches, and kidnap women. After one such Cossack incursion to the Crimea our priest recalled that "Armenians and Turks mourned and cried together"[49].

In this context, one is tempted to recall a confusing event registered in the Ukrainian chronicle by Samijlo Velyčko. In 1675 the Cossacks invaded the Crimea and delivered all the Ukrainian slaves previously kidnapped by the Tatars. To their astonishment, the slaves refused to leave the Crimea as they found their life there better than in the Ukraine. The furious Cossacks massacred ungrateful countrymen and returned home alone[50].

Let us move from the Crimea to the western Balkans. Over fifty years ago Halil I n a l c i k published a fifteenth–century Ottoman survey register of Albania, causing a scholarly sensa-

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[45] E. S c h ü t z (ed.), *Eine armenische Chronik von Kaffa aus der ersten Hälfte des 17. Jahrhunderts*, "Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae" 29 (1975), p. 140.

[46] *Ibidem*, p. 149.

[47] *Ibidem*, pp. 140 and 161.

[48] *Ibidem*, pp. 141 and 159.

[49] *Ibidem*, pp. 142–143 and 149.

[50] A. K r y m s ' k y j, *Pro dolju ukrajins'kyx polonjanykiv u Kryms'komu xanstvi*, in: *Studiji z Krymu*, Kyjiv 1930, pp. 14–17.

tion[51]. It turned out that, contrary to stereotypes, numerous *timar*–holders in the Balkans, on whose support the Ottoman rule relied, were Christians! Further publications of Ottoman *defter*s proved that Albania was not unique and we meet Christian *timar*–holders in other Balkan countries, the Greek Islands, Eastern Anatolia and Hungary well into the mid–sixteenth century[52]. As late as 1609, a Serbian *sipahi* named Milisav Xrabren not only restored an Orthodox monastery in Hercegovina, but commissioned a fresco depicting himself holding the model of the church[53]. An inscription Мілісав Спахія was inserted over his head, proving that apparently the founder did not see any contradiction between his function and his ethno–religious identity. According to Sreten P e t k o v i ć, more than three hundred churches rebuilt under the Ottoman rule between the mid–15th and the end of the 17th century have been preserved in the territory of the Patriarchate of Peć alone[54]. Among their patrons, quite often one finds the Christian *sipahi*s.

To return to the Xrabren family, studied in detail by Ljubinka K o j i ć, last mention of a Christian *sipahi* from their midst can be found in a source dated 1638[55]. In the following decades, some of the family members became monks, others — quite possibly — adopted Islam, while yet another emigrated to Russia, to be known there under a variant family name as Miloradović.

Leaving aside those few, who opted for emigration, such dilemmas between adopting Islam and becoming a monk were

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[51] *Hicrî 835 tarihli Sûret-i defter-i sancak-i Arvanid*, edited by H. I n a l c i k, Ankara 1954.

[52] K u n t, *Transformation of Zimmi into Askerî*, in: *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, vol. 1, p. 59; K i e l, *Art and Society of Bulgaria in the Turkish Period*, pp. 66–74 (the paragraph on the Christian sipahis in the Balkans).

[53] Sreten P e t k o v i ć, *Art and patronage in Serbia during the early period of Ottoman rule (1450–1600)*, in: *Manzikert to Lepanto. The Byzantine world and the Turks 1071–1571. Papers given at the Nineteenth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Birmingham, March 1985*. Edited by A. B r y e r and M. U r s i n u s, "Byzantinische Forschungen" 16 (1991), p. 406, n. 28; for the reproduction of the fresco, based on a photograph taken in 1867, see Ljubinka K o j i ć, *Manastir Žitomislić*, Sarajevo 1983, p. 92; on the tragic history of this monastery, destroyed in 1941 and then — completely — in 1992 by Croatian militants, see the article by András R i e d l m a y e r, *On the History, Significance, and Destruction of the Zitomislici Monastery Complex*, in: *http://www.haverford.edu/relg/sells/zitomislici.html*.

[54] P e t k o v i ć, *Art and patronage*, p. 414.

[55] This was Radivoj, son of the aforementioned Milisav; see K o j i ć, *op. cit.*, pp. 32–33.

apparently typical for those Balkan Christians who intended to keep or attain a privileged social status. Josif Bradati, an eighteenth–century Bulgarian preacher, admonished his compatriots against the "wrong" choice. "In our times there are women who prefer that their son become a Turk rather than a monk. If he became a Turk, she would praise him and look at her son–Turk with joy. But if she saw him a monk, she would pity him and mock"[56].

In Bulgaria, as in Serbia, numerous Orthodox churches were rebuilt under the Ottoman rule. Meticulous studies by Machiel K i e l proved beyond doubt that many churches were not just restored, but enlarged and embellished[57]. This was not the only proof of pragmatism on the side of the Ottomans, who often tacitly ignored Islamic prescriptions. Likewise, though in theory the Christians were not allowed to ride horses[58], in fact not only the famous chief dragoman, Alexander Mavrocordato, but also Bulgarian priests are known to have mounted horses[59].

Few early texts left by Bulgarian clergymen, containing references to their Ottoman rulers, have been collected by Valeri K a c u n o v. Typically these are just margin notes, written by copiers or readers of religious manuscripts. Often the Ottomans are referred to as "godless and lawless Hagarites"[60]. In 1476 a Bulgarian priest, Stefan, characterized Mehmed II as "the ill–fated, bad–tempered and greedy Judas tsar Mehmed Beg, whose glory ascended to heaven but who will not escape descending to hell"[61]. Selim II was described, not unexpectedly, as "tsar

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[56] Bonju A n g e l o v, *Săvremennici na Paisij*, vol. 1, Sofia 1963, p. 59.

[57] K i e l, *op. cit.*, pp. 143–205; see also G r a d e v a, *Ottoman Policy towards Christian Church Buildings*, in: e a d e m, *Rumeli under the Ottomans*, pp. 339–368, esp. pp. 354–356 [the article originally published in 1994].

[58] Cf. al–M a w a r d i, *Kitab al–ahkam as–sultaniyya [Maverdii Constitutiones Politicae]*. Edited by M. E n g e r, Bonn 1853, p. 251; French translation in Mawerdi (Abou'l–Hasan 'Ali), *Les statuts gouvernementaux ou règles de droit public et administratif*, edited by E. F a g n a n, Alger 1915, p. 306.

[59] On Mavrocordato, see Suraiya F a r o q u i, *Als Kriegsgefangener bei den Osmanen. Militärlager und Haushalt des Grosswesirs Kara Mustafa Paşa in einem Augenzeugenbericht*, in: *Unfreie Arbeits– und Lebensverhältnisse von der Antike bis in die Gegenwart. Eine Einführung*, edited by E. H e r m a n n – O t t o, Hildesheim–Zürich–New York 2005, p. 214; on Bulgarian priests (in this case the author himself), see the memoirs by Sofroni V r a č a n s k i, *Vie et tribulations du pécheur Sofroni*, edited by J. F e u i l l e t, Sofija 1981, pp. 88–89.

[60] K a c u n o v, *op. cit.*, p. 20; cf. *Pisaxme da se znae. Propiski i letopisi*, edited by V. N a č e v and N. F e r m a n d ž i e v, Sofija 1984, p. 71 ("беззаконни агаряне").

[61] "В дните на злочестивия и злонравия, и ненаситния Юда Мехмед–бег цар, който се въздвигна до небесата, и който ще се снизи в ада"; *Pisaxme da se znae*, p. 61; the translation by K a c u n o v (*op. cit.*, p. 23): "the malign and bad–tempered Judas czar Mehmed Beg, who glorified himself to the heaven and descended to hell", is imprecise.

Selim, a bloodthirsty lustful wine–drinker"[62]. Yet, other notes are neutral (i.e., "in the days of the Turkish tsar, Sultan Ibrahim") or even laudatory. In 1469 the deacon Vladislav (known as Vladislav Gramatik) dated his manuscript "in the days of the great and autocratic Muslim tsar, the emir Mehmed Beg"[63]. This formula reminds of an official intitulation, found in the fifteenth–century Ottoman documents written in Greek: μεγας αμυρας σουλτανος[64]. The Slavic term tsar (цар), attributed by Bulgarian writers to the sultans, corresponds with the Greek title βασιλεύς, used by Synadinos, and like in the former case, it gives the Ottoman rulers a kind of legitimacy.

The eighteenth century brought the so–called "Bulgarian national renaissance" along with its most prominent writer, P a i s i j   X i l e n d a r s k i. In his *Slavo–Bulgarian History* Paisij summoned his compatriots to take pride in their ancestry. Yet, only one longer passage is devoted to the Turks, who seized the Bulgarian land, turkicized young lads, turned churches into mosques, plundered and killed. "At the beginning — continues the author — the Turks were fierce and great looters. When they strengthened their position in the Constantinople Kingdom, they learned a great deal about Christian order and law and for some time at the beginning they stopped for a while, they felt embarrassed to rob unlawfully the Christians' belongings and properties. But at present again, the wretched people have neither justice, nor any court of law"[65]. Much more rancor is directed against the Greeks, who have "seized the Tărnovian patriarchate with Turkish help and violence" and have always treated Bulgarians with disrespect[66]. Serbians do not fare better as "their kingdom was small, very narrow, and existed for a short time. [...] All peoples on earth — concludes the author — know the

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[62] "Писах в дните на цара Селима, кръвник, блудник, винопийца"; *Pisaxme da se znae*, p. 24.

[63] "В дните на великия и самодържавен цар мюсюлмански амир Мехмед бег"; *Pisaxme da se znae*, p. 60; cf. K a c u n o v, *op. cit.*, p. 23

[64] Its variant can be also found in the Latin document of Murad II dated 1444: *Magnus Amyras Soltam*; cf. Dariusz K o ł o d z i e j c z y k, *Ottoman–Polish Diplomatic Relations (15th–18th Century). An Annotated Edition of 'Ahdnames and Other Documents*, Leiden 2000, p. 198; cf. also the Serbian intitulation of Sultan Selim I, preserved in his ferman sent in 1514 to Dubrovnik [Ragusa], in: Gliša E l e z o v i ć, *Tursko–srpski spomenici dubrovačkog arhiva*, Beograd 1932, pp. 6–7.

[65] P a i s y   H i l e n d a r s k i, *A Slavo–Bulgarian History*, Sofija 2000, pp. 211–212.

[66] *Ibidem*, pp. 229, 155–156, 216.

Bulgarians and in all histories this is recorded and found in writing. About the Serbs there is nothing written, neither is there any evidence in Latin and Greek histories"[67].

One of Paisij's followers, Sofronij V r a č a n s k i, wrote unique memoirs covering the last years of the eighteenth century. His adopting the role of an "innocent victim" resembles the style of Synadinos, as was already noticed by Johann S t r a u s s[68]. Consequently, his relations with the Turks are not described as rosy. Chased by some Turkish pederasts in his young age, when he grew up he would be robbed, tormented, pulled by the beard, imprisoned, and threatened with death by greedy and unruly Ottoman officials[69]. Once, hiding from some irregulars, he even sought refuge in a harem. According to the author, Turkish women harbored him for 26 days, though — according to the Muslim custom — they kept their faces hidden from his sight[70]. Yet, in spite of numerous extortions, he apparently managed to make some money by provisioning the Ottoman army as his son was charged with supplying sheep for the troops and some transactions took place in Sofronij's house.

Like in the case of Synadinos, Xačatur, Paisij and Sofronij, most of the firsthand testimonies left by Ottoman non–Muslim subjects were written by clergymen. We hardly have much access to the system of values of Christian peasants. Yet, some descriptions of their behavior bring apparent confusion to the "Turkish yoke" paradigms. In his famous letter to the pope, Stefan To-mašević, the last king of Bosnia, described "disloyal" behavior of Bosnian peasants who greeted the Turks with hope for the abolition of corvée[71]. Peasants are also known to have welcomed the Ottomans in such distant lands as Cyprus, Crete, Morea, and Podolia[72]. These places had one thing in common: by supporting the Orthodox religion and expulsing the Catholic landlords — respectively Venetian and Polish — the Ottomans earned popularity among the Greek and Ukrainian Orthodox inhabitants.

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[67] *Ibidem*, pp. 202–203.

[68] S t r a u s s, *op. cit.*, p. 198.

[69] Sofroni V r a č a n s k i, *Vie et tribulations*, pp. 77–89.

[70] *Ibidem*, p. 97.

[71] Branislav Đ u r đ e v, *O uticaju turske vladavine na razvitak naših naroda*, "Godišnjak Istoriskog Društva Bosne i Hercegovine" 2 (1950), p. 34.

[72] For some relations about the peasants' behavior in Podolia, see K o ł o d z i e j-c z y k, *Podole pod panowaniem tureckim. Ejalet kamieniecki 1672–1699 (Podolia under the Ottoman Rule. The Eyalet of Kamjanec', 1672–1699)*, Warszawa 1994, p. 63.

After the conquest of Crete in 1645, the Ottomans reinstalled an Orthodox metropolitan in the island after almost four–and–a–half centuries of Catholic domination[73]. An analogous, almost forgotten event was recently reminded by the Ukrainian scholar Ihor S k o č y l j a s. In 1681, after Podolia was conquered from Poland and became a regular Ottoman province, the patriarch of Constantinople appointed the Orthodox metropolitan of Kamjanec' named Pankratij[74]. The newly created eparchy of Little Rus' (the Μικρά Ρωσία) was given autonomous privileges of an exarchate and depended directly from Constantinople. It lasted till 1690. In both cases — Cretan and Podolian — the Ecumenical Patriarchate closely cooperated with the Porte. Their common target was to influence their new Orthodox subjects and to cut them off their former Catholic rulers[75].

Other "confusing" facts were disclosed by Rossitsa G r a d e v a and Svetlana I v a n o v a. Orthodox subjects in Bulgaria often preferred the Shari Muslim courts to their "own" Canonical courts run by the Orthodox clergy[76]. Even the *vitae* of Bulgarian neo–

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[73] Nükhet A d ı y e k e, Nuri A d ı y e k e and Evangelia B a l t a, *The poll tax in the years of the Cretan war. Symbol of submission and mechanisms of avoidance*, "ΘΗΣΑΥΡΙΣΜΑΤΑ" 31 (2001), p. 330.

[74] Ihor S k o č y l j a s, *Terytorial'ne rozmiščennja orhanizacijnyx struktur Halyc'koji (L'vivs'koji) pravoslavnoji eparxiji na Podilli*, in: *Istoryčne kartoznavstvo Ukrajiny. Zbirnyk naukovyx prac'*, Lviv–Kyiv–New York 2004, pp. 436–437. The document of appointment, issued in Greek, is published in *Akty otnosjaščiesja k istorii Južnozapadnoj Rusi*. Edited by A. P e t r u š e v i č, L'vov 1868, pp. 51–55; it is also mentioned in Mikołaj A n d r u s i a k, *Józef Szumlański. Pierwszy biskup unicki lwowski (1667–1708). Zarys biograficzny (Josif Šumljans'kyj. The First Uniate Bishop of L'viv, 1667–1708. Biographical Outline)*, Lwów 1934, p. 93. After WWII, the original document was believed to be lost; only recently it was identified among the manuscripts of the Ukrainian National Library in Kiev [Instytut Rukopysy Nacional'noj Biblioteki Ukrajiny im. V. I. Vernads'koho, f. XVIII (A. Šeptyc'kyj Collection), no. 121]. My warmest thanks go to Ihor Skočyljas and Jaroslav Fedoruk for having provided me with this information.

[75] According to Skočyljas, the pro–Ottoman policy of the Ecumenical patriarch, Iakobos (1679–1682), prompted the Orthodox bishop of L'viv, Josif Šumljans'kyj, to whose eparchy Podolia had belonged in the "Polish" times, to embrace the proposal of joining the union with Rome; see S k o č y l j a s, *op. cit.*, p. 438.

[76] G r a d e v a, *Orthodox Christians in the Cadi Courts: the Practice of the Sofia Sheriat Court, seventeenth century*, in: e a d e m, *Rumeli under the Ottomans*, pp. 165–194 [the article originally published in 1997]; I v a n o v a, *Marriage and Divorce in the Bulgarian Lands (XV–XIX c.)*, "Bulgarian Historical Review" 21 (1993), № 2–3, pp. 49–83; even the monks from the Athos monasteries, whom one would expect to be more religiously "conscious", often turned to the Porte or the local cadi instead of settling their disputes before the Great Synod or the Patriarchal Court [see Aleksandar F o t i ć, *Sveta Gora i Xilandar u Osmanskom carstvu (XV–XVII vek)*, Beograd 2000, pp. 53–62 and 404 (English summary)]; also Jews are known to have turned to the Muslim courts even though such practices were condemned by the Jewish community; see R o z e n, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

martyrs, composed with the zeal to strengthen Christian solidarity, present the Ottoman cadis as kind, tolerant, and pragmatic, unwillingly surrendering to the pressions of the fanatic Muslim mob[77]. Zdenka V e s e l á demonstrated that Hungarian and Slovak peasants from the Habsburg–Ottoman borderland were voluntarily migrating to Ottoman territories and giving their daughters in marriage to Muslims[78].

The opinions and behaviors related in this paper lead to the conclusion that the attitude of non–Muslims towards the Ottoman state cannot be described as mere alienation. In his book on "the making of the Habsburg monarchy", Robert E v a n s demonstrated that contrary to stereotypes, the Bohemian and Hungarian nobility did not disappear after — respectively — the Battle of White Mountain, the Wesselényi Conspiracy or the Rákóczy Uprising. Rather, they submerged in the Habsburg monarchy, trying to preserve possibly much of their status, autonomy, and authority[79]. Evans' book provides a useful questionnaire for any scholar studying "the making of the Ottoman monarchy". It seems that the Greek Fanariots, whose role is perhaps best known and studied, were not the only non–Muslims who entrusted their fate to the well–being of the Ottoman state.

This allegiance was in no way unconditional. Non–Muslim sources from the late eighteenth century disclose a strong impatience with growing disorder, lawlessness, and lack of security in the Ottoman "well protected domains"[80].

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[77] G r a d e v a, *Turks and Bulgarians, Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, in: e a d e m, *Rumeli under the Ottomans*, p. 209 [the article originally published in 1995]

[78] Zdenka V e s e l á, *Slovakia and the Ottoman Expansion in the 16th and 17th Centuries*, in: *Ottoman Rule in Middle Europe and Balkan in the 16th and 17th Centuries. Papers presented at the 9th Joint Conference of the Czechoslovak–Yugoslav Historical Committee*, Prague 1978, pp. 33–34.

[79] Cf. Robert J. W. E v a n s, *The making of the Habsburg monarchy, 1550–1700. An Interpretation*, Oxford 1979.

[80] Apart from the memoirs by Sofronij V r a č a n s k i j, another characteristic local source from this period is the chronicle by Panayis S k o u z e s, who described the tyrannical rule of the *voyvoda* of Athens, Haci Ali; see S t r a u s s, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–214. Though the 18th century still provides numerous examples of cooperation between the Porte and its non–Muslim — especially Greek — subjects, a first major crisis of confidence occured already in the late 17th century, during the great war against the Holy League. The Ottomans proved incapable to protect their Christian subjects against the enemy raids and — no less important — against the enemy propaganda. In 1688 Bulgarians rised in the area of Čiprovci. In 1689–1691 numerous Serbians supported the Habsburgs and then migrated to

In his famous book entitled *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty*, Albert H i r s c h m a n examined various responses to malfunctioning firms, organizations and states. What was new in his book was the comparison of a firm in crisis with a state in crisis. Comparing human behavior in the fields of economics and politics, Hirschman noticed that "exit belongs to the former realm, voice to the latter"[81]. What is perfectly accepted in the case of a dissatisfied client of a supermarket, will be "branded as *criminal*, for it has been labeled desertion, defection, and treason" in the case of a dissatisfied citizen of a state[82].

Having done the heretical comparison of a state with a supermarket, Hirschman then retracts by consenting that "exit is ordinarily unthinkable, though not always wholly impossible, from such primordial human groupings as family, tribe, church, and state"[83]. Yet, he himself admits that "the United States owes its very existence and growth to millions of decisions favoring exit over voice"[84].

Although no model is perfect to describe social behavior, perhaps it would help to de–emotionalize the historiography of the late Ottoman empire if we agree that the non–Muslims chose a collective exit after several centuries of living in a common state. Only those groups, who had nowhere else to go, like the *dönme* Jewish converts in Salonica, chose "voice" instead of "exit" and actively participated in the Young Turkish revolution[85].

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the north along with the withdrawing Imperial army. Sremski Karlovci, granted extensive privileges by Emperor Leopold I in 1690–1691, replaced Peć as the main center of Serbian religion and culture. The apparent shift of allegiance among the Serbian Orthodox clergy corresponded with a similar process in the Ukraine. In 1685, hoping in vain to prevent joining the Holy League by Russia, the Porte persuaded the patriarch of Constantinople to cede his authority over Kiev to the patriarch of Moscow, in fact abandoning the pro–Ottoman metropolitan of Little Rus', who was still alive and acting; see Kirill K o č e g a r o v, *Początek wojny polsko–tureckiej a stosunki polsko–rosyjskie w pierwszej połowie roku 1683 (The Beginning of the Polish–Turkish War and Polish–Russian Relations in the First Half of the Year 1683)*, "Kwartalnik Historyczny" 112 (2005), p. 75; on the eparchy of Little Rus', see notes 74–75 above.

[81] Albert H i r s c h m a n, *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty. Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*, Cambridge Mass. 1970, p. 15. A Polish translation of Hirschman's book was published in 1995.

[82] *Ibidem*, p. 17.

[83] *Ibidem*, p. 76.

[84] *Ibidem*, p. 106.

[85] Cf. *ibidem*, p. 106. The Turkish term *dönme* ("convert") refers to the Jewish followers of Sabbatai Zevi, who converted to Islam in the seventeenth century but

There is a deeply human truth in the fragment of Hirschman's book, recalling the experience of social psychologists: "exit is unsetting to those who stay behind as there can be no 'talking back' to those who have exited. By exiting one renders his arguments unanswerable"[86]. Perhaps this is the deepest problem for any post–imperial historiography, be it in republican Turkey, post–imperial Russia, or even Poland, slowly coming to terms with her eastern Lithuanian, Belorussian, and Ukrainian neighbours.

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preserved their ethno–linguistic identity. To provide an example of exit and voice from another part of the world, I would mention two Poles of noble origin, who even attended the same school in the Russian empire at the end of the nineteenth century. When they grew up, one of them, Józef Piłsudski, became the founding father of independent Poland, while another, Feliks Dzierżyński, became the Russian revolutionary (and the patron of the *KGB*, but this is another story).

[86] *Ibidem*, p. 126.