Introduction: Towards a Comparative Study of the Balkans and the Middle East

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The Balkans and the Middle East share a common history spanning over four hundred years characterized by Ottoman control and influence. When the Ottoman Empire was formally dissolved in 1922 and replaced by the Republic of Turkey and a series of mostly Arab states under colonial domination, most of the Balkan countries were already independent and on the way to modernization, which was equated with Europeanization (in the fields of the political, administrative and legal systems as well as cultural orientation). For the Christians in the Balkans this process often meant de-Ottomanization – the attempt to disassociate themselves from what they regarded as an era characterized by Oriental backwardness and oppressive foreign rule. Turkey began to pursue its specific kind of de-Ottomanization in the form of Kemalism; most of the Middle Eastern countries underwent a troublesome process of being colonized, de-colonized and then having to define their positions in a post-colonial world. Writing with a wish to shape national historiographies, many of the Arab authors perceived the Ottoman rule as a foreign domination that suppressed the Arab lands. Therefore, during most of the twentieth century the post-Ottoman countries were in various stages in the process of de-Ottomanization and the search for new orientations, which has not yet completely finished. Even in the Balkans this process has been practiced in various tempos. Whereas Greece introduced it already in 1830, promoted by its European-imposed Bavarian dynasty (ruled 1833-1862) and administration, the neighbouring country of Albania received sovereignty only in 1913. However, its Muslim majority faced a serious dilemma concerning how to relate to its Ottoman past and legacy; the case of the Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina is similar.

In the course of the twentieth century, Turkey, the Balkans and the Arab Middle East pursued different forms of de-Ottomanization. A sharp rejection of the Ottoman past constitutes one of the commonalities in this respect. 'De-Ottomanization' is a kind of roof-term that covers an array of transformations of the post-Ottoman world in various directions. Here, three main paths may be discerned:

1. Most of the Balkan countries initiated processes of modernization understood and defined as Europeanization. Dependent on the point of time of liberation from Ottoman domination, they appropriated West European state institutions, attire or urban planning strategies; many mosques, bazaars and Ottoman-era

buildings and complexes were eliminated and replaced by 'European' ones.[1] For these countries, with the exception of Greece, World War II ended with the emergence of a new and even more radical concept of de-Ottomanization – under the umbrella of socialism; Since 1989 these countries have been, like most of the rest of the globe, in a process of adaptation to a globalizing world.

2. Turkey was subject to a specific transformation, which is generally called Kemalism. Until the mid-twentieth century it can be characterized as a radical break from the Ottoman past and autochthonous Europeanization. Since the middle of the century the country has been seeking ways to integrate into the European community but has been, in tandem, exposed to different waves of re-Islamization since the 1980s that also entail a growing positive view of its Ottoman past and an attempt to accommodate the Ottoman legacy into the national past.[2]

3. The post-Ottoman, Arab Middle East became a target of French and English colonial aspirations. When the colonizers left the region after World War II, the struggle over how to structure it politically, economically and ideologically began. The Cold War and the establishment of Israel, among other things, were constitutive factors in this struggle. Today the burning question is whether or not Islamism (whatever variant of it) will position these countries vis-à-vis 'the' West. The rise of Islamism also often fosters a new positive attitude towards the Ottoman past which is clearly different from the traditional national historiography prevailing in the Arab world during the 1950s and 1960s.[3]

Without any doubt, these three main paths of advocated de-Ottomanization and new orientation have resulted in a highly differentiated post-Ottoman landscape nine decades after the fall of the empire. This transformation, however, constitutes only one side of the coin. The other one is the remaining Ottoman imprint on the post-Ottoman world. Beyond the cuisine and other visible objects,

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[1] Maximilian Hartmuth, 'Negotiating Tradition and Ambition: Comparative Perspective on the "De-Ottomanization" of the Balkan Cityscapes', *Ethnologia Balkanica* 10 (2006): 15-34; idem, 'De/constructing a "Legacy in Stone": Of Interpretative and Historiographical Problems Concerning the Ottoman Cultural Heritage in the Balkans', *Middle Eastern Studies* 44, 5 (2008): 695-713.

[2] See, for example Büşra Ersanlı, 'The Ottoman Empire in the Historiography of the Kemalist Era: A Theory of Fatal Decline', in Fikret Adanır and Suraiya Faroqhi, eds., *The Ottomans and the Balkans* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 115-154.

[3] On the development of Arab historiography during the twentieth century and it changing attitudes towards Ottoman rule, see Youssef M. Choueiri, *Modern Arab Historiography: Historical Discourse and the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 1989), 77-124; Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 6-11; Maurus Reinkowski, 'Late Ottoman Rule over Palestine: Its Evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli Histories, 1970-90', *Middle East Studies* 35, 1 (1999): 66-97; Ibrāhīm al-Daqūqī, *Ṣūrat al-Atrāk ladā al-'Arab* [The Image of the Turks among the Arabs] (Beirut: Markaz Dirāsāt al-Waḥda al-`Arabiyya, 2001), 50-71.

which obviously are still reminders for previously connected regions,[4] what are the 'hidden' commonalities of the post-Ottoman world?

Indeed, the continued importance of the Ottoman legacy or imprint for shaping the contemporary Balkans is evident and has received much attention from historians over the past two decades since the violent demise of Yugoslavia; Maria Todorova highlighted this Ottoman heritage by claiming that 'it seems that the conclusion that the Balkans are the Ottoman legacy is not an overstatement'.[5] For her, the Ottoman legacy in the Balkans can be discussed as continuity and as a source of perceptions. In both cases, however, these legacies form a process that began after the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist for particular regions which shaped themselves, or were defined by external powers (in the case of the Middle East), into successor states.[6]

To be sure, the various Ottoman features in the contemporary Balkans can be discerned in different cultural spheres: from languages to local cuisines; from contending historical memories to architecture and social and administrative structures. However, it is clear that the most important reflections of Ottoman domination in the area are the dissemination of Islam to the Balkans and its various local manifestations,[7] along with the place given to the Ottomans in the collective memories and national myths of the Balkan peoples.[8] As for the Middle East, although the presence of Islam predated the arrival of the Ottomans, the long period of Ottoman rule in the area shaped some of the major political, institutional, legal and religious features that formed the modern Middle East.[9] Compared to the

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[4] See, e.g. Maria Kaneva-Johnson, *The Melting Pot: Balkan Food and Cookery* (Totnes, UK: Prospect Books, 1999).

[5] Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 12.

[6] For a discussion of the meaning of Ottoman legacies in the Balkans, see Maria Todorova, 'Introduction: Learning Memory, Remembering Identity', in Maria Todorova, ed., *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst, 2004), 11-14; Fikret Adanir and Suraiya Faroqhi, eds., *The Ottomans and the Balkans: A Discussion of Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 2002); Hercules Millas, 'Ethnic Identity and Nation Building. On the Byzantine and Ottoman Historical Legacies', in Raymond Detrez and Barbara Segaert, eds,. *Europe and the Historical Legacies in the Balkans* (Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2008), 17-30.

[7] On the development of Islam in the Balkans and its relations to the Arab world, see H. T. Norris, *Islam in the Balkans: Religion and Society between Europe and the Arab World* (London: Hurst, 1993). See also Peter F. Sugar, *Southeastern Europe under Ottoman Rule, 1354-1804* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1977); Alexander Lopsic, 'Islamization of the Balkans with Special Reference to Bosnia', *Journal of Islamic Studies* 5, 2 (1994): 163-186.

[8] On the shaping of national myth among Balkan peoples and the significance of Ottoman rule within these societies, see David A. Norris, *In the Wake of the Balkan Myth: Questions of Identity and Modernity* (London: Macmillan, 1999); Victor Roudometof, *Collective Memory, National Identity, and Ethnic Conflict: Greece, Bulgaria, and the Macedonian Question* (Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 2002); Stephanie Schwander-Sievers and Bernd J. Fischer, eds., *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* (London: Hurst, 2002); Maria Todorova, ed., *Balkan Identities: Nation and Memory* (London: Hurst, 2004).

[9] See, e.g. André Raymond, 'The Ottoman Legacy in Arab Political Boundaries', in L. C. Brown, ed., *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia

Balkans, the legacy of the Ottomans as understood by Middle Eastern societies is clearly less fraught with negative connotations though some examples of such a negative tendency do exist, for example, in the memory of World War I in Greater Syria.[10] Subsequently, the Ottoman past is perceived as less traumatic or significant in the shaping of national myths in the Arab countries.

The Ottomans' legacy was subject to different interpretations and perceptions. While the last two decades witnessed the appearance of numerous studies exploring the various cultural, religious and political aspects of the Ottoman heritage in each of these two areas, there is still a dearth of comparative studies that deal with the common features of the Ottoman legacies between the Balkans and the Middle East, while, in tandem, highlighting the unique cultural aspects. Probably because of the different languages needed to study the two areas and because of the prevalence of the nation-state as the main research and study frames, the study of the Balkans and the Middle East developed separately with only few attempts to examine the two regions in a comparative approach. The lack of a real academic dialogue between scholars of the Ottoman Balkans and those working on the Ottoman Arab lands does not only limit our ability to view and understand the Ottoman Empire (and its legacies) as a whole, but also discourages us from learning and benefiting from each other's scholarly achievements and thus enriching our own studies.

Some pioneer examples of comparative studies do exist. Clearly, the major attempt to present a comparative study of the two former Ottoman regions was the volume edited by L. Carl Brown. In *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East*,[11] he gathers leading scholars of the Ottoman Balkans and the Middle East who examine the meaning of Ottoman rule for the inherent states and societies. The various authors explore similar themes from the perspectives of particular states or societies. A particular emphasis is given to political institutions and legacies, diplomacy and the tracing of political borders, economy and culture.

We can certainly also refer here to some pioneer works that tackle social, legal and economic dimensions of the Ottoman legacy in these two areas. For

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University Press, 1996), 115-132; Carter Vaughn Findly, 'The Ottoman Administrative Legacy and the Modern Middle East', in Brown, *Imperial Legacy,* 158-173; Bernard Lewis, 'The Ottoman Legacy to Contemporary Political Arabic', in Brown, *Imperial Legacy,* 203-213.

[10] Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks*, 192-196; on the commemoration of Ottoman atrocities in Greater Syria during World War I in colonial and independent Lebanon and Syria, see Elie Podeh, *The Politics of National Celebrations in the Arab Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 213-215, 228-234; Fruma Zachs, 'A Transformation of a Memory of a Tyranny in Syria: From Jamal Pasha to "Id al-Shuhada", 1914-2000,' *Middle Eastern Studies* 48,1 (2012), 73-88. On the celebration of the so-called Great Arab Revolt against the Ottomans during World War I as a national day in Jordan, and, to a lesser extent, in Hashemite Iraq, see Podeh, *Politics of National Celebrations*, 119-120, 173-174, 183-185.

[11] L. C. Brown, ed., *Imperial Legacy: The Ottoman Imprint on the Balkans and the Middle East* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

example, Mustafa Imamoviç offers a comparative discussion in his article on the application of Ottoman criminal law in the Arab provinces and in the Balkans during the Ottoman period.[12] Muhammad al-Arna´ut examines the role of the Muslim pious foundations (Arabic *Awqāf*; Turkish *Evkaf*) in the development of cities under Ottoman rule.[13] Karl Kaser's recent book *The Balkans and the Near East* is an innovative monograph that aims to open up a completely new understanding of the joint history of the Balkans and the Middle East that goes back to pre-Ottoman eras.[14] Isa Blumi compares Ottoman imperial attitudes towards their political and social peripheries in late Ottoman highland Albania and Yemen to clarify the meaning of imperialism and nationalism and the role of local actors in these remote areas of the Ottoman state.[15] In another study, Blumi explores the significance and amplitude of encounters between Muslims in the Balkans and their coreligionists in the Arab provinces under the Ottomans. For him the various encounters set the cultural foundations for 'what remains today a fascinating (if not well-studied) history of Balkan cultural engagement with the Arabic-speaking world'.[16] He also claims that the parallels experienced in western Syria and the western Balkans are intriguing and deserve further study.[17]

We strongly believe that a collaborative effort is vital to our ability to practice a comparative approach to the study of the Ottoman imprint in the Balkans and the Middle East. By gathering scholars who examine in their studies similar topics in these two regions, this volume aims to fill this gap by comparing the various aspects of Ottoman heritage in the Middle East and the Balkans and investigating their relevance to contemporary Muslim and non-Muslim societies living in these former areas of the Ottoman state. The volume also draws attention to particular topics related to the Ottoman legacy that are pertinent both to the Balkans and the Middle East and, therefore, are better positioned for a comparative approach. Indeed, the chapters in this volume operate in the widening gap between the trajectory of studies on the Ottoman Arab provinces and the path of studies on the Ottoman Balkans. Several common points of interest arise in the different

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[12] Mustafa Imamoviç, 'The Ottoman Criminal Law: Arab Countries and in the Balkans', in Emel Doğramacı, ed., *Türk-Arap İlişkileri: Geçmişte, Bugün ve Gelecekte* [Turkish-Arab Relations in the Past, Present and Future] (Ankara: Hacettepe University Press, 1979), 233-245.

[13] Muhammad M. Al-Arna´ut, 'Dawr al-waqf fī nushū´ wa-tatawwur al-mudun khilāla al-´asr al-´uthmānī: Namūdhajāyni lil-muqārana min bilād al-Balqān wa-bilād al-Sham' [The Waqf's Role in the Establishment and Development of Cities during the Ottoman Period: Two Comparative Examples from the Balkan Lands and from Syria], *al-Majala al-Tarīkhiyya al-´Arabiyya lil-Dirāsāt al-´Uthmāniyya* 9-10 (1994): 45-66.

[14] Karl Kaser, *The Balkans and the Near East: Introduction to a Shared History* (Vienna and Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2011).

[15] Isa Blumi, *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen 1878-1918* (Istanbul: Isis, 2003).

[16] Isa Blumi, *Reinstating the Ottomans: Alternative Balkan Modernities, 1800-1912* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 23-24.

[17] Ibid, 59.

chapters. Many of them focus on the various modes by which Ottoman rule is remembered, used and debated in the contemporary Balkans and in the Middle East. The imagined past of Ottoman rule plays an important role in the shaping of contemporary collective memories in the different societies situated in former Ottoman lands. Special emphasis is given to exploring the (re-)shaping of public spaces in post-Ottoman societies and to discussing the perceptions of the Ottoman legacy as a source of contemporary conflicts and debates in the Balkans and the Middle East. Finally, by suggesting new sources and methodologies, this volume likewise offers new venues to circumvent the inherent hindrances to a comparative discussion of the Balkans and the Middle East.

The first part of this volume is dedicated to methodologies and sources that may enable scholars to bridge the difference between the study of the Ottoman Balkans and the Ottoman Middle East. Amy Singer stresses the significance of a collaborative work that uses modern technology to promote the comparative study of the Balkans and the Arab provinces. By using her own study on the *imaret*s (public kitchens), she demonstrates the potential of certain Ottoman institutions to serve as one common axis along which to compare the Ottoman experiences in the Balkans and the Arab provinces. Because such comparisons are missing from the Ottoman historiographic writing, she claims, the broader implications of whatever conclusions are drawn from these comparisons will be even more important when they are integrated into an all-empire framework of research. The use of GIS (Geographic Information System) technology can be a tool for creating such a framework because it can hold a seemingly infinite amount of data without losing the capacity to query those data in ways that reveal their patterns and the shifts in them over time and space. The form of data entry, she concludes, will constitute a unified language allowing people to share data, queries and results.

In his chapter Karl Kaser demonstrates the potential of visual sources, such as photographs, as possible documentation that could transcend the linguistic barriers between the Balkan and the former Ottoman Arab provinces and thus allow a comparative approach. Calling for a 'pictorial turn' in the writing on the late Ottoman period, he discusses the only scarcely-used potential of huge collections of photographs for conducting historical and anthropological research. These photographs were produced first by foreign travellers, missionaries and other Western visitors, and later also by locals. Photography was clearly regarded by locals as an embodiment of modern technology and, therefore, gained popularity among urban elites, thus making it possible today to study their visions of modernity. Many of these photographs survived the vicissitudes of time. Some of them are still kept in family collections; others are increasingly available on the internet.

Alexander Vezenkov provocatively puts a question mark on the assertion that the Balkans are part of a European continent. His aim is not to challenge this claim but rather the idea that Europe itself is a supranational community with clearly defined borders and common religious and political similarities that separate it

from its 'others'. By highlighting similarities with Anatolia he maintains that the ostensible border between Europe and Asia, traditionally situated on the Bosporus is merely a European political and cultural construction (later adapted by Ottoman elites, especially among Christians in the Balkans) that relies on seemingly-neutral geographical convictions. Vezenkov advocates in his chapter the inclusion of Anatolia in the traditional study of the Balkans. Exclusively discussing the Balkans in relation to Europe leads to an artificial and erroneous perceptions of the Balkans. By adopting a Balkan-Anatolian perspective in the study of the area, he argues, we would change the proportions between the different elements of the 'diversity' of the Balkan world – i.e. the role of the Ottoman Empire, the Turks and Islam would become clearly visible. The second major contribution of this inclusion is that a Balkan-Anatolian space should not necessarily be studied as an integral part of Europe; instead it will emphasize the broader relation of the Balkans to non-European areas – especially Anatolia and the Middle East in general.[18]

The following part of this volume compares between political and cultural legacies of the Ottoman past in the Balkans and in the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. All authors who contribute chapters to this part of the volume focus on the 'Ottoman long nineteenth century' to claim continuities between the late Ottoman and post-Ottoman periods. Nathalie Clayer discusses the Ottoman roots of Kosova (Kosovo) as an independent political identity. By examining Ottoman administrative choices and decisions, she delineates the early forming of a Kosovar identity that owes its political definition to the formation of the *vilayet* of Kosova (*Kosova Vilayeti*) in 1877 by the Ottoman authorities. It is true that later on the *vilayet* underwent many changes and its internal and external frontiers were altered several times (and they are certainly different from the borders of contemporary Kosova). Still, the existence of this new administrative unit contributed to the shaping of a common fate and historical trajectory. While this process of shaping Kosovar identity was not continuous or linear it was mostly the balance of power in this border zone with its special status, already clear in the late Ottoman period, as well as international factors, that proved crucial in the process of building and autonomization of the territory.

Yuval Ben-Bassat examines another lingering conflict – the Israeli-Palestinian one — to discuss the relevance of the late Ottoman period and its reforms to the unfolding of what he describes as the 'first Jewish-Palestinian encounters'. By challenging both Zionist and Palestinian national historiographies, Ben-Bassat examines what he defines as the 'Ottoman background' of the proto-Zionist-Arab encounters on both the micro and macro levels. Ben-Bassat suggests looking

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[18] We are grateful to Dr. Vezenkov for allowing us to republish his article in this volume. This reedited version contributes to the volume's discussion regarding the artificial academic segregation between Balkan Studies and the study of the Middle East and Anatolia.

at Ottoman official correspondence and at petitions dispatched by Palestinian villagers to the Sublime Porte as a way to widen the discussion on the conflict's roots to include also Ottoman bureaucratic, social and economic issues, as well as the question of centre-periphery relations, which all have significant bearing on later events.

Political and social continuity between the late Ottoman period and the subsequent shift to nation-states also stands at the core of Ryan Gingeras's discussion of the political role played by local Muslim leaders in the post-World War II Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. This small layer of the Muslim elite owed their political prominence to the Ottoman period. By studying the weekly newspaper *Birlik* (Unity), the sole Turkish-language paper servicing the newly created Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Gingeras explores the journal as a central medium through which the newly established communist regime attempted to incorporate the local Muslims into the workings of the new revolutionary Yugoslavia and the attempt of local Muslim elites to safeguard their interests and status in the face of ever-changing circumstances. Gingeras looks at the shift from Ottomanism to Titoism among Muslims in Macedonia as a way for the members of the local Muslim elite 'to reinvent themselves and lend their voices to the unfolding political and social events'. He especially investigates the continuities and points of departure that marked the evolution of Muslim Macedonia, arguably the heart of the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, from the late Ottoman period to the establishment of the communist regime in post-World War II Yugoslavia.

Justin Hoyle and Paul Williams discuss in their chapter the significance of the Caliphate as developed under Abdülhamid, examining the meaning and extent of the Hamidian legacy in the late Ottoman Arab provinces and the Balkans. They challenge the long-established conviction that the Ottoman Caliphate represented a 'failed' endeavour or that the institution ended with the deposition of Abdülhamid. Instead they argue that Abdülhamid II was successful in his emphasis on the Ottoman Caliphate and that the institution was widely accepted by Muslims within and outside of the empire at least until the demise of the Ottoman state. By presenting three 'case studies' of post-Hamidian nationalist responses, produced and phrased by Arab, Turkish and Bosnian authors, Hoyle and Williams demonstrate the continuous support for the Caliphate among Ottoman Muslims in Anatolia, the Arab provinces and in the Balkans even following Abdülhamid's deposition.

Yuri Stoyanov explores post-Ottoman identity politics and claims associated with the Balkan Alevis and Bektashis. He thereby offers a deeper understanding of the religio-political implications of the transformation, reform and ever-changing identity politics of heterodox religious communities in the Balkans and the Middle East following the demise of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. Stoyanov focuses on the contemporary revival and reconceptualizations of Alevism among Alevi groups in the Balkans and the surviving or revived regional networks and lodges of the Bektashi dervish order. These two related

heterodox groups developed in the Balkans under Ottoman rule and, therefore, should be seen as part of the Ottoman legacy in the area. He points out that processes of restructuring within Alevism and Bektashism in the post-Ottoman Balkans were manifested in the drive to foster a historical and theological higher learning comparable to that already established among Sunni and Shi'a religious and intellectual elites. Concurrent with these developments is the trend towards scripturalization and standardization of doctrinal and ritual traditions, which transforms the regulation of socio-religious life in the community and breaks the monopoly of the oral transmission of knowledge, seen in most cases as a preserve of hereditary elites. Along with the related attempts to 'modernize' Alevi/Bektashi theology, this represents a process of scripturalization that is seen as part of an accommodation with what is regarded as the normative religious mainstream.

The Ottoman legacy is manifest in the urban landscape of both Balkan and Arab counties. The Ottoman rule left its mark on the urban architecture and infrastructure. As such, the post-Ottoman city is a site of collective representation and remembrance. In many major Arab cities the Ottoman layer is only one additional stratum that was constructed on an already well-established urban centre. However, some cities – Beirut being a clear example – owe their development into a major economic, political and social centre to the late Ottoman period.[19] In the Balkans, the Ottoman contribution to the creation and development of the major cities is even clearer. For many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European observers, the Oriental character of the Balkans was evident in the physical layout of the cities and in their social and economic decay and inherent inferiority when compared to European ones. Christian elites in the Balkans absorbed this notion and connected their independent struggle also to the destruction of urban elements that reminded them of what they perceived as the Ottoman Oriental rule, which, in their view, distanced them from Europe, from their own medieval golden age and from civilization as a whole.[20]

Therefore, many of the architects of the modern state sought to obliterate the Ottoman architectural legacy that still prevailed in their cities at the eve of independence and to replace it with modern styles and infrastructures. Many of them endeavoured to demolish what they regarded as the Oriental and backward features of their cities in favour of a modernized and European infrastructure that

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[19] Jens Hanssen, *Fin de Siècle Beirut: The Making of an Ottoman Provincial Capital* (Oxford: Clarendon Press and Oxford University Press, 2005). See also Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp and Stefan Weber, eds., *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Würzburg : Ergon in Kommission, 2002); Çelik Zeynep, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French-Ottoman Encounters, 1830-1914* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008); Stefan Weber, *Damascus: Ottoman Modernity and Urban Transformation (1808-1918)* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 2009).

[20] See, e.g. Božidar Jezernik, 'Western Perceptions of Turkish Towns in the Balkans', *Urban History* 25, 2 (1998): 211-230.

would better connect them to modernity but also to an imagined past.[21] The post-Ottoman period had a profound impact on the physical and social fabrics of Balkan and Middle Eastern cities. Rebuilding became a means of constructing the new nation by eradicating older traditions from cityscapes and setting a new collective memory in stone.[22] Paul Dumont examines the evolution of the urban landscape of Salonica and Beirut after the demise of Ottoman rule in the Balkans and the Arab world. These two thriving Ottoman port-cities were subjected to the intervention of French architects and planners following their incorporation into a nation-state (Salonica) or the establishment of the French Mandate (Beirut). Both were in the process of building up a new urban identity that would manifest the nation's new directions and hopes. The city planners strove to create a new landscape that would represent the sought-after image of a modern city as befitted a modern nation-state. However, having been incorporated into a Greek Orthodox Christian state, the planners of Salonica referred exclusively to the city's Byzantine legacy and Hellenic characteristics when envisioning its future urban landscape. Muslim and Jewish structures were demolished or neglected in the name of modernization and Hellenization. In this regard, the planners of Salonica adopted a different approach to its Ottoman past compared to multi-religious Beirut under the French Mandate. In Beirut it was mostly the neo-Oriental style that was used to indicate the city's role as a modern bridge between West and East. In fact, neo-Oriental or neo-Ottoman themes competed with various other styles, including European 'Baroque', 'art nouveau' and 'art deco' trends, in most of the buildings erected in colonial Beirut. This use of seemingly Oriental motifs represented the Mandate administration's vision of its *mission civilisatrice* in the reinvented Orient.

The endeavour to reconstruct Salonica as a national Hellenic and modern European city was not a unique case in the Balkans. Other newly independent states in the region used architecture to proclaim their 'return' to civilized Europe. Elitza Stanoeva discusses the reconstruction of Sofia as the national capital of the Bulgarian nation-state. Sofia indeed is an illustrative example of a pre-Ottoman city that rose to prominence under Ottoman rule.[23] However, under the Bulgarian

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[21] See, e.g. Paul Dumont and François Georgeon, *Villes ottomanes à la fin de l'Empire* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992); Alexandra Yerolympos, *Urban Transformation in the Balkans (1820-1920): Aspects of Balkan Town Planning and the Remaking of Thessaloniki* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1996); Bratislav Pantelić, 'Nationalism and Architecture: The Creation of a National Style in Serbian Architecture and Its Political Implications', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 56, 1 (1997): 16-41; Raina Gavrilova, *Bulgarian Urban Culture in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Selinsgrove, PA: Susquehanna University Press and London: Associated University Presses, 1999); Régis Darques, *Salonique au XXe siècle. De la cité ottomane à la métropole grecque* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2000).

[22] Stefan Goebel and Derek Keene, 'Towards a Metropolitan History of Total War: An Introduction', in Stefan Goebel and Derek Keene, eds., *Cities into Battlefields: Metropolitan Scenarios, Experiences and Commemoration of Total War* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 41-42.

[23] See Nikolaï Todorov, *La ville balqanique sous les Ottomans (XV-XIXes)* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1977).

autonomous principality (1878-1908) and, later, under the independent Bulgarian kingdom (1908-1945) the projected national identity of Bulgarians was shaped under the urge for 'de-Ottomanization' and 'Europeanization' of the nation. The ideological need to anchor the newly gained nationhood in European modernity, Stanoeva claims, dovetailed well with the pronounced fervour to distance the national identity from the Ottoman past by obliterating its despised material and social traces: 'In the ensuing anti-Ottoman casuistry, the interchangeable concepts of "Oriental" and "Ottoman" became bywords for "underdeveloped" and virtually anti-modern'. The ensuing transformation of Sofia's cityscape triggered an ongoing destruction of many of the city's Ottoman buildings, public spaces and even neighbourhoods now looked down upon as 'Oriental' and, hence, as undesired remnants and reminders of the 'Turkish yoke'. However, in the interwar period this tendency to destroy all Ottoman structures was altered to a certain extent as Bulgarian architects searched for a national architecture that would manifest its own original stylistic vocabulary instead of simply emulating European patterns. While the early exercises of national architectural imagination drew heavily on neo-Byzantine inspirations, in the interwar period, in contrast, the search for a national style diversified in its sources and influences, and directed its attention to the hitherto marginalized building traditions of the immediate Ottoman past, now seen as part of the indigenous 'national style'. This new tendency was mostly manifested with regard to the architecture of the private space which was successfully detached from its Ottoman roots and, therefore, less threatening to the identity of the young nation.

Bucharest, the capital of the two Danubian principalities that were united in 1859 to create the kingdom of Romania, presents another case study. Serving previously as the capital of the autonomous principality of Wallachia and the seat of its *voivoda*, Bucharest was never under direct Ottoman rule. However, under Ottoman influence for a long period, the city manifested many Ottoman social features in its urban and social infrastructure. During the post-independence period its political elite attempted to construct a nation-state that would embrace modernity by 'returning to Europe' and espousing Western civilization. The adoption of the Latin alphabet and of the name Romania for the newly unified state are two illustrative examples. The reconstruction of Bucharest as a modern capital city, a process that started already in the 1830s, is another example. Emanuela Costantini argues that the reconstruction of the city was meant to demonstrate the validity and vigour of 'Romanian Latinity'. Architectural works were one of the best ways of showing the will to westernize Romania and keep it as far as possible from the Ottoman heritage and rule. The selection of a Neoclassical style which evoked an imagined continuity with Latinity, but was also perceived as a

rational, tidy style, in vogue in Western Europe since the 1750s,[24] was the first choice for many of the architects – most of them foreigners. Only later in the century did Neogothicism, also fashionable in France, inspire many architects active in Romania in that period. During the last decades of the century, we can discern a new tendency in Romanian architecture: the search for an architectural style that would better represent the national vision. This was the Neoromanian style, also called the National style. In a similar way to the shaping of a national style in interwar Bulgaria, many elements of the Neoromanian style came from the Byzantine period. The use of Byzantine elements to some extent connected the Romanian national style back to the Ottoman lands and to Ottoman art.

The Ottoman legacy in Istanbul, the city of the sultans, is evident to any visitor. Yet its Ottoman legacy was contested, challenged and differently interpreted since the Tanzimat period in the nineteenth century[25] and, later, under the republic that chose to concentrate on Ankara as the new emblem of the new nation.[26] Malte Fuhrmann maintains that self-identity plays an important role in contemporary Istanbul in laying claim to a legitimate presence and participation in the public sphere in the post-modern era. His chapter deals with four identities that he discerns in contemporary Istanbul: *Konstantinoupolis*, *Islambol*, the *Poli* and *Istanbul not Constantinople* – four history discourses that he names in accordance with different historical names of the city. Each of them evokes a different historical period in the history of Istanbul and, consequently, claims a different identity and authenticity. The discourse of *Islambol* has been promoted by Islamist parties since the 1990s. It serves them in creating an image that is not bound to an imagined past but to an a-historically purist, i.e. reformist approach, which seeks to create an ideal Islamic city. Much of this discourse took the form of a rebellion against the previous republican reordering of the urban space in Istanbul. The present ruling party in Turkey, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party, AKP), altered this image to some extent as it has a positive attitude towards globally active capitalism, trying to harness it to its own means rather than oppose it. Accordingly skyscrapers, shopping malls, highway and car-tunnel development have enjoyed the protection of the AKP municipal government in its efforts to propel Istanbul into the premier ranks of global cities. Furthermore, breaking with the Islamists' attempt to establish a timeless Islamic city, the AKP followed up on the Turkish-Islamic synthesis, a policy and ideology that had first been explored in the years following the 1980 military coup. In this worldview, Islamic order and Turkish nationalism are no longer opposed to each

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[24] John Summerson, *The Architecture of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969), 75-103.

[25] Zeynep Çelik, *The Remaking of Istanbul: Portrait of an Ottoman City in the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

[26] Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001).

other. Instead, it is supposed that Islam had a special place for the Turkish nation, as the protector of the true believers. This neo-Ottomanist ideology has had a great impact on municipal politics. In part, it has led to a more conscious effort to restore and preserve the Ottoman architectural legacy, which had suffered greatly during most of the republican era. The result of the efforts to combine capitalism, Islam and modernity is well evident today in the post-modern megalopolis that Istanbul has become in recent years. According to Fuhrmann, the recent and planned urban mega-projects instead create 'Orientalist package wrapping for twenty-first-century modernity: highways, subway stations and shopping malls are covered with images which ostensibly belong to Turco-Islamic culture'.

The interpretation of the Ottoman legacy in the urban space is clearly related to the Ottoman past as shaped in the collective memories of the countries that were established in the former Ottoman lands.[27] The last part of this volume is indeed dedicated to two major memory agents: the educational system through its monopoly on the publication of history textbooks, and the cinema and its position in the shaping of popular culture.[28] History textbooks that are taught in state schools are a major source for the historian aiming to study the process of producing historical knowledge and its diffusion to the schoolchildren – the citizens of the future. The study of history textbooks also allows us to examine how this historical knowledge is shaped or manipulated to create a collective memory that dovetails with the national history discourse.[29] Vangelis Kechriotis explores two recent debates, the first in Greece and the second in Bulgaria, around the publication of new history books designated for the national educational system. In both cases the authors of these textbooks intended to distance themselves from the national discourse on the Ottoman past and from longstanding stereotypes dominating national historiography to present what they perceived as a more balanced and accurate interpretation. This attempt to create a more moderate historical discourse that would enable a rapprochement with Turkey came under a harsh critique from various major players in Greek politics, from the Church to the Communist Party, who saw the new textbooks as a deliberate distortion and falsification of historical reality. Consequently, the attempt to challenge old conventions came to a halt thus indicating the limits of the Greek public's ability to rethink many of its convictions about its own Ottoman past. Greece,

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[27] On the significance of historical memory for the shaping of a nation or an ethnic group, see Alon Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *American Historical Review* 102 (1997): 1386-1403; Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins, 'Social Memory Studies: From "Collective Memory" to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices', *Annual Review of Sociology* 24 (1998): 105-140; Kerwin Lee Klein, 'On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse', *Representations* 69 (2000): 127-150.

[28] See, e.g. Dina Iordanova, *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media* (London: British Film Institute, 2001).

[29] See, e.g. W. Hopken, ed., *Oil on Fire? Textbooks, Stereotypes, and Violence in Southeastern Europe* (Hannover: Verlag Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1996).

of course, is not alone regarding its public's reluctance to shy away from the national discourse. In Bulgaria, a similar public uproar broke out following the initiation of a new project aiming to critically explore the national myth of Batak, the town where what would later be known in Bulgaria as the 'Bulgarian horrors' took place in 1876 during the Bulgarian national uprising against the Ottomans. The organizers of the project were interested in exploring the ways in which the killing of civilians was reintroduced to the Bulgarian public memory. The public reaction to this project, also studied by Kechriotis, was severe. Many claimed that there were aspects of history that were sacred and, therefore, should not be dealt with as part of a historical debate. Here again, there was zero tolerance for any attempt to reinterpret the Ottoman past in a more nuanced fashion. This chapter, hence, deals not only with the limits of public tolerance so as to suggest new ways to teach the Ottoman past but also with the limited ability of professional historians to influence public opinion. It seems that Frederick Anscombe's remark on the persistence of conventions shaped by 'national' histories still pertains to the collective memories of many Balkan states, and is still valid though a new approach among some young Balkan scholars has also emerged in recent years.[30]

The place assigned to the Ottoman past in the Bulgarian national historiography is also the focus of Gergana Georgieva's chapter, which examines the case of the *kircali* period (the devastation of the Bulgarian lands at the end of the eighteenth century, a time at which the area was controlled by local Muslim notables at the expense of the central regime) as presented and interpreted in various texts (academic histories and school textbooks). In the Bulgarian national narrative, the *kircali* years are portrayed as an episode that reflects and represents the entire Ottoman period. Georgieva looks into the techniques with which these texts manipulate historical facts and create particular stereotypical images. She also considers the ways in which these texts construct the national historiography's perceptions of diverse ethnic and religious groups and how stereotypes for them have been formed and maintained.

The memory of the Ottoman period is evident in popular culture as well. Yannis Papadopoulos studies Greek films that were produced in the 1960s and 1970s to examine how the Ottoman past and Anatolia were constructed and presented in Greek popular culture. These films are not historical documents but fictional narratives that reflect common perspectives on the complex web of Greek history and its relation to the Ottoman past.[31] Papadopoulos pays attention especially to the representation of the 'uprooting experience' of Greek refugees who fled from Anatolia following the Greek defeat in the Greek-Turkish War

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[30] Frederick F. Anscombe, 'Introduction', in Frederick F. Anscombe, ed., *The Ottoman Balkans 1750-1830* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2006), 1.

[31] On the relations between cinema and history in Greek films, see Andrew Horton's discussion of the historical films directed by Theo Angelopoulos: Andrew Horton, *Theo Angelopoulos: A Cinema of Contemplation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 57-58.

of 1919-1922 and the ensuing 'Great Catastrophe' as this episode is known and remembered in the national Greek discourse. These films bear testimony to the acculturation process that led to the development of an Asia Minor and Pontic ethnic identity within Greek society. Moreover, they reflect the construction of divergent collective memories, which accommodated the refugees' experiences in the framework of twentieth-century Greek history and collective memory.

The authors of this volume not only offer a discussion of various perceptions of Ottoman legacies that unfolded in the post-Ottoman period, but also suggest topics and venues in which the Ottoman legacy in the Middle East and the Balkans could be studied and explored in a comparative approach. The debate on the meaning of the Ottoman legacy is still conducted and re-evaluated in all societies that live in former Ottoman lands. While it is clear that social and material remains from the Ottoman past are looked upon much more favourably today among Muslims in the Balkans, Turkey and the Middle East, often represented as an integral part of their national identities, the attitudes among non-Muslims residing in these areas are not exclusively negative. As some of the authors demonstrate in their chapters, sometimes Ottoman remains from the past are interpreted as authentic ingredients of the local heritage (and, therefore, detached from the Ottoman past); others are retained, for example, to bolster tourism.[32] Yet it seems that national historiographies among Balkan Christians still avoid contemplating the Ottoman past with a more critical view of old convictions and stereotypes. We believe that this volume has opened up discussion on a new, rich approach to the comparative study of how Balkan and Middle Eastern peoples and societies understand and interpret their Ottoman past and legacies.

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[32] See, e.g. the problematic conservation of Ottoman sites in Acre, Israel, as an attempt to promote cultural tourism in this northern port city: Caitlin M. Davis and Ashley Norman, *Presenting the Hammam al-Pasha: Conserving Heritage by Creating an Attraction – A Project within the Framework of 'SAVING THE STONES – Conservation Practical Training Internship*' (Rome and Acre: International Conservation Center, 2011), http://www.iaa-conservation.org.il/images/files/pdf_docs/Davis.Norman_Hammam2011.pdf (accessed 24 January 2012).

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