

Visual Studies: Their Potential for the Comparative Study of the Late Ottoman Empire

Karl Kaser

The production of knowledge in history is still primarily text-based. Although the pictorial turn is in full swing, the photograph is still rarely used as an autochthonous source with central interpretative value.¹ This 'scopophobia'² means that a whole set of primary documents is being neglected. As scholars of visibility state, a new kind of history has to be written, a history that emphasizes the power of the image, since pictures have a different story to tell from words.³ Other researchers suggest 'a revision of those histories written without critical reflection on the visual evidence'.⁴ In Balkan studies visual sources have been completely ignored. In Near Eastern studies – under the term Near East the former Asian provinces of the Ottoman Empire are understood – this lack is not so tremendous, since we can base future research on the British journalist and teacher Sarah Graham-Brown, who published in 1988 her book on *Images of Women*.⁵ However, this has remained the only systematic study for the last two decades.

This lack of studies in the Balkans as well as in the Near East is even more pronounced in research fields such as the process of de-Ottomanization – primarily in the Balkans – historical, family and gender relations as well as bodily representations, which are per se not easily to be reconstructed. On the other hand, thousands of photographs are available in Balkan and Near Eastern photo-collections – partly published even on the internet – for the second half of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, which have not been used for systematic visual studies. I can mention the many thousand photographs of the 'Fototeka' Marubi in Shkodra (northern Albania) with 250,000 negatives from 1858 to 1959; the photographs and films of the Manaki brothers (Janaki 1878-1954; Milton 1880-1964), who lived and worked in the northern Macedonian

¹ Stanley Brandes, 'Photographic Imagery in the Ethnography of Spain', *Visual Anthropology Review* (1997) 13: 1; Elizabeth Edwards, 'Introduction', in *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 3.

² Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester and Wolfram Hartmann, 'Photography, History and Memory', in *The Colonizing Camera: Photographs in the Making of Namibian History*, ed. Wolfram Hartmann, Jeremy Silvester and Patricia Hayes (Windhoek: Out of Africa, 1998), 7.

³ Christopher Pinney, *'Photos of the Gods': The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion, 2004), 9.

⁴ Joshua A. Bell, 'Visual Histories and Photographic Evidence', *Journal of Pacific History* 41 (2006): 166.

⁵ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988).

city of Manastir (Bitola); or the Karastoyanov dynasty of photographers in Sofia, the Jovanović dynasty in Belgrade as well as the early – mostly Armenian – photographers in the Ottoman Empire, for instance the brothers Vichen, Kevork and Hovsep Abdullahian in Istanbul, who were appointed as court photographers by Sultan Abdülhamid II in 1862 (photos 1-5). Yessayi Garabedian, who studied photography with the Abdullahian brothers, became Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem in 1865. He trained a generation of young photographers – among them the famous Garabed Krikorian, who made a wonderful pictorial collection of Jerusalem (photo 6). Five years after him, in 1890, Khalil Raad – Palestine's first Arab photographer (active 1890-1948) – opened a photo studio in Jerusalem (photo 7).

Besides the indigenous photographers, hundreds of foreigners – travellers, ethnographers, men and women – visited the region in this period of time and shot thousands of photographs. Here let us only mention the Hungarian Felix Kanitz, whose collection is stored in Sofia, the German Maximilian Lambertz, the Hungarian ethnographer Baron Franz von Nopcsa (photo 8), the Félix Bonfils photo collection (photo studio in Beirut) (photo 9), the Pascal Sebah photo studio in Istanbul (1856-1900) (photo 10), the Lehnert und Landrock photo studio in Cairo, which still exists (photo 11), the English woman traveller and Orientalist Freya Stark (1893-1993) (photo 12), the English woman traveller, historian and archaeologist Gertrude Bell (1868-1926) (photo 13) and the photographic studies of the British anthropologist Paul Stirling, who conducted studies from 1949 to 1994 in two Turkish villages.⁶

The rest of this chapter centres on four points. Its first and general intention is to advocate making much more use of the historical photograph as a source for the late Ottoman period of modernization and as part of this modernization period. Second, it will document the new urban architectural style of the post-Ottoman Balkan city of Sofia. Third, the chapter will address family photography and its potential of helping evaluate more precisely the late and post-Ottoman de-patriarchalization of gender relations. Fourth, it will shed light exemplarily on the women's photography, which includes the potential of strengthening Edward Said's thesis of Orientalism and Maria Todorova's thesis of Balkanism.

The photograph as document and instrument of modernization

Although scholars in the German-speaking world are discussing the usefulness of the photograph as historical source intensively,⁷ the most powerful incentives

⁶ <http://lucy.ukc.ac.uk/tvillage>.

⁷ Thomas Overdick, 'Ethnofotografie. Versuch einer Repositionierung volkskundlicher Fotografie', in *Fotografien vom Alltag – Fotografieren als Alltag*, ed. Irene Ziehe and Ulrich Hägele (Münster: Lit, 2004); Ulrich Hägele, 'Visual Anthropology oder Visuelle Kulturwissenschaft? Überlegungen zu Aspekten volkskundlicher Fotografie', in *Fotografien vom Alltag – Fotografieren als Alltag*, ed. Irene Ziehe and Ulrich Hägele (Mainz: Lit, 2004); Ulrich Hägele (ed.), *Foto-Ethnographie. Die visuelle*

come from Anglo-American anthropologists, who have established visual studies as a sub-discipline of cultural anthropology within the last three decades.⁸ Older⁹ and recent publications¹⁰ analyze the potential of still photography as historical and anthropological document. The nexus of negotiation, historical agency and photography becomes more pronounced than ever before.¹¹ In visual studies a broad variety of methods has been practiced, but Western methodology applied to non-Western visual material is under criticism,¹² and 'vernacular modernism'¹³ comes into focus.

Theories of Euro-American experience cannot be exported to other cultures without modification. There is an urgent need to challenge the primacy of models of Western seeing in the sense of disembodied abstract vision.¹⁴ Orthodox and Muslim populations had a negative attitude towards the visualization of the human body in general, and the visualization of God and religious dignitaries

Methode in der volkswissenschaftlichen Kulturwissenschaft (Tübingen: Tübinger Vereinigung für Volkskunde, 2007); Jens Jäger, *Photographie: Bilder der Neuzeit. Einführung in die Historische Bildforschung* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 2000); Marion G. Müller, *Grundlagen der visuellen Kommunikation. Theorienansätze und Methoden* (Konstanz: UVK Verlagsgesellschaft, 2003).

⁸ Joanna C. Scherer, 'Historical Photographs as Anthropological Documents: A Retrospect', *Visual Anthropology* 3 (1990): 135; Howard Murphy and Marcus Banks, 'Introduction: Rethinking Visual Anthropology', in *Visual Anthropology*, ed. Marcus Banks and Howard Murphy (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999); Elisabeth Edwards, 'Photographs and the Sound of History', *Visual Anthropological Review* 21 (2006): 27; Sarah Pink, 'Introduction: Situating Visual Research', in *Working Images: Visual Research and Representation in Ethnography*, ed. Sarah Pink, László Kürti and Ana Isabel Afonso (London and New York: Routledge, 2004).

⁹ Roland Barthes, *Die helle Kammer. Bemerkungen zur Photographie* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1985).

¹⁰ Joanna C. Scherer, 'Historical Photographs as Anthropological Documents: A Retrospect', *Visual Anthropology* 3 (1990): 136; Joanna C. Scherer, 'The Photographic Document: Photographs as Primary Data in Anthropological Inquiry', in *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992); Elisabeth Edwards, 'Photographs and the Sound of History', *Visual Anthropological Review* 21 (2006): 27-46.

¹¹ E.g., Jane Lydon, *Eye Contact: Photographing Indigenous Australians* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2005); Benjamin R. Smith, 'Images, Selves, and the Visual Record: Photography and Ethnographic Complexity in Central Cape York Peninsula', *Social Analysis* 47 (2003): 8-26.

¹² Deborah Poole, 'Figueroa Aznar and the Cusco *Indegenistas*: Photography and Modernism in Early-Twentieth-Century Peru', in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Christopher Pinney, *Photos of the Gods: The Printed Image and Political Struggle in India* (London: Reaktion, 2004); Patricia Hayes, 'Introduction: Visual Genders', *Gender & History* 17 (2005): 519-537.

¹³ Christopher Pinney, 'Introduction: "How the Other Half..."' in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Christopher Pinney, 'Notes from the Surface of the Image: Photography, Postcolonialism, and Vernacular Modernism', in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Deborah Poole, 'Figueroa Aznar and the Cusco *Indegenistas*: Photography and Modernism in Early-Twentieth-Century Peru', in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); Alec H. Balasescu, 'Faces and Bodies: Gendered Modernity and Fashion Photography in Tehran', in *Visual Genders, Visual Histories*, ed. Patricia Hayes (Malden: Blackwell, 2006, 219-250).

¹⁴ Christopher Pinney, 'Introduction: "How the Other Half..."' in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 12.

specifically. The heavily embattled discussion on their visual representation in the Christian Church of the East in the eighth and ninth centuries ended up with the sanction of religious pictures, but the naturalistic portrait has been neglected.¹⁵ Islam generally avoids the pictorial representation of God as well as of human beings and animals. In 1900 an imperial decree forbade the introduction into or sale in the Ottoman Empire of images of God or Mohammed and portraits of Muslim women.¹⁶ Although permission to produce images of the human being finally had been given by the authorities, the photograph was received with significantly greater reservation among the Muslim than among the Orthodox population.¹⁷ Orthodoxy again was more reserved than Catholicism.

The knowledge of the history of photography in the Balkans and the Middle East until the mid-twentieth century is fragmentary. The region was a latecomer in photography compared to France, England, Germany, Italy and Austria-Hungary and the circulation of photographs was low. In 1889, Belgrade had only seven photo studios and in the second half of the nineteenth century not more than a hundred photo studios existed in the whole country. Only after 1900 did photo production begin to increase significantly.¹⁸

It was, of course, accidentally that the photograph was invented in the same year, when Sultan Abdülmecid announced in the garden area of his palace, the Gühane park, the reform period of the Tanzimat. Interestingly, Sultan Abdülaziz and his successor Abdülhamid became patrons of photography in the Ottoman Empire. Abdülhamid even started a photographic workshop in the imperial military engineers' school (photo 14).

The Sultans considered photography an embodiment of modern technology, a symbol of progress. Abdülhamid let the brothers Abdullah(jan) and a series of other photographers work for him in order to document the progress of the empire vis-à-vis the European powers and the United States. The two thousand photographs were compiled into about sixty albums. They show a completely different picture of the empire than the photographs made in private workshops and addressed to the Western audience (photos 15-18).

The post-Ottoman city

Post-Ottoman capitals were extremely exposed to de-Ottomanization in the Balkans. The Ottoman urban structure with its peculiarities was practically

¹⁵ Mahmoud Zibawi, *Die Ikone. Bedeutung und Geschichte* (Solothurn and Düsseldorf: Benzinger, 1994), 11, 57.

¹⁶ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988), 94; M. Ş. İpşiroğlu, *Das Bild im Islam. Ein Verbot und seine Folgen* (Vienna and Munich: Anton Schroll, 1971), 9, 39, 168.

¹⁷ Petar Boev, *Fotografsko uskustvo v Bălgarija* (Sofija: Septemvri, 1983), 72, 112, 114.

¹⁸ Milanka Todić, *Photography in Serbia in XIX Century* (Belgrade: Museum of the Applied Arts, 1989), 34.

destroyed within a short period of time and substituted by a supposedly European style of urban structure. The example of Sofia from 1878 to the Balkan Wars is well documented. The maps show a progressing, planned urban structure that leaves the legacy behind (maps 1-2).

This development is also depicted by a series of Karastoyanov photographs of new buildings, which provided the city with a European flavour (photos 19-23).

Photographs of a flourishing Ottoman city at the same time – Beirut – display similar accessories of modernity: new public buildings, tramways and cars. Although the city had come under strong French influence, it still looks like a variant of an Ottoman city. However, more detailed studies are needed (photo 24).

The family photography

Photography has been the most widespread means of visual communication of the past century and a half, and has done more than any other medium to shape our notions of the body. Its photographic representations shape and reflect not only gender identity and sexuality but also power and ideology.¹⁹ Gender history to a significant degree is made by visuals;²⁰ photographs affirm gender roles and social constructions of the body.²¹ Categories such as 'male', 'female' or the 'body' are considered historical and cultural variables,²² and capital cities as the national avant-garde. How do these different levels of historical perspectives – family, gender relations and bodily representation on the one hand and urban architecture of capitals on the other, fit together? The answer is that they are the two sides of one and the same coin. Urban architecture reflected the desires of the city's most influential socioeconomic strata, and the urban landscape to a certain degree reflects family and gender relations as well as representations of the body. The capital can be considered a symbolic representation of a modernized relationship between men and women. Photographs shot in the second half of the nineteenth century constitute a rough reflection of small social elites, who tried to become 'European'.

The history of gender and family relations in the region has hardly been researched. Based on patrilineal kinship and family ideology, patrilocal marriage arrangements and widespread illiteracy, patriarchy remained hardly affected by legal reforms and economic changes in the countryside until the mid-twentieth

¹⁹ John Putz, *Photography and the Body* (London: Calman & King, 1995), 7.

²⁰ Patricia Hayes, 'Introduction: Visual Genders', *Gender & History* 17 (2005): 519-537.

²¹ Ibid.; Jens Jäger, *Photographie: Bilder der Neuzeit. Einführung in die Historische Bildforschung* (Tübingen: Edition Diskord, 2000), 131.

²² Walter Leimgruber, 'Die visuelle Darstellung des menschlichen Körpers. Gesellschaftliche Aus- und Eingrenzungen in der Fotografie', in *Der Bilderalltag. Perspektiven einer volkskundlichen Bildwissenschaft*, ed. Helge Gerndt and Michaela Haibl (Münster: Waxmann, 2005), 220.

century. The major cities functioned as modernization agencies in a limited way, since the proportion of urban population was only roughly 20 percent and the modernizing impulses of the city towards the countryside were weak.

The triangle consisting of family, gender and body has been chosen deliberately because of its obvious interrelatedness explained, e.g., by the concept of its embodiment by the capital city. Herein body is considered as socially constructed and as the embodiment of a binary gender-world. Since most human attributes are determined culturally and historically, human characteristics cannot be considered spatially and historically universal.²³ The inscription of specific concepts of gender and sex is the result of public and family discourses. The everyday practices of families create sets of meanings about appropriate social behaviour for their members, which are often sex typed. Everyday interactions are based on gender 'scripts' of the individual's culture, social class or family.²⁴ At the same time, sexuality is inscribed on individuals by public discourses of sexual behaviour. These not only constitute persons with sexualized bodies but insert such agents into the social locations of reproduction such as families, kinship groups and the city. The discourse of sexual difference and the organization of power through sexual relations within the household represent essential institutions for the distribution of bodies.²⁵

The invention of the camera is inseparable from these processes. Because of the Ottoman past, the Turks are supposed to have developed differently from the Western 'ideal'. The concept of 'vernacular modernism' relocates the historical agency and centrality of Western representational practice in a new space.²⁶ Both modernity and photography are negotiated affairs. People have undoubtedly negotiated their own peculiar understanding of the new demands of the modernizing state. Accordingly they may have also negotiated their poses and backdrop with the photographer.²⁷

Although industrialization did not take place before World War II on a significant scale, modernization in the sense of copying the Western bourgeoisie was at work: changing family ideals, the nuclearization of family composition as well as changing gender and generational roles. Series of photographs over time may reflect this process, which is usually portrayed as a male project repressing

²³ Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (London: Sage, 1996), 215, 220, 232.

²⁴ Libby B. Blume and Thomas W. Blume, 'Toward a Dialectical Model of Family Gender Discourse: Body, Identity, and Sexuality', *Journal of Marriage and Family* 65 (2003): 785, 788.

²⁵ Bryan S. Turner, *The Body and Society: Explorations in Social Theory* (London: Sage, 1996), 232.

²⁶ Christopher Pinney, 'Introduction: "How the Other Half..."' in *Photography's Other Histories*, ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicolas Peterson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 12.

²⁷ Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 201.

femininity.²⁸ The circulation of photographs in the region up to approximately World War I was limited mostly to the very thin social elite. One has to assume that in these prevalent agrarian societies of smallholders the majority of photographs were ordered by these urban elites, which were concentrated in the capital cities. This group consisted of owners, entrepreneurs and professions linked to the state service.²⁹

Family portraits are specific for two important reasons: (1) the photographs were taken with the collaboration of their subjects; and (2) the images were intended to be viewed by the people we see in them, rather than by an unknown beholder.³⁰ Family photographs are not so much supposed to show that a person was once present in a particular place, but more that he/she once existed. A family photograph evokes memories that might have little or nothing to do with what is actually in the picture;³¹ the family photograph is more or less 'both an instrument and an index of integration'³² and both a snapshot³³ as well as a document of the dynamics of the lifecycle.³⁴ In a situation of decreasing participation in the family, the members of which were living increasingly widely scattered, the photographs assumed additional functions – to preserve the family inheritance like a treasure³⁵ and as collective memory.³⁶ The family's social construction is a result of negotiation between the photographer and the photographed as well as between the family members. The family photograph reveals hierarchies, power relations and realities/ideals in certain historical contexts over time.

In the West, the use of photography for family portraits began soon after its commercialization in the 1840s, and by the end of the nineteenth century studio portraits, because of the improvement of photo techniques, could be taken

²⁸ Patrizia di Bello, *Women's Albums and Photography in Victorian England: Ladies, Mothers and Flirts* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2007), 151.

²⁹ Wolfgang Höpken, 'Zwischen Bürokratie und Bürgertum: "Bürgerliche Berufe" in Südosteuropa', in *Eliten in Südosteuropa. Rolle, Kontinuitäten, Brüche in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, ed. Wolfgang Höpken and Holm Sundhussen (Munich: Südosteuropa-Gesellschaft, 1998), 77.

³⁰ Deborah Poole, *Vision, Race, and Modernity: A Visual Economy of the Andean Image World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 203.

³¹ Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London and New York: Verso, 2002), 13.

³² Gillian Rose, 'Family Photographs and Domestic Spacings: A Case Study', *Transactions: Institute of British Geographers NS* 28 (2003): 6.

³³ Martha Langford, *Suspended Conversations: The Afterlife of Memory in Photographic Albums* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 97.

³⁴ Sandra Gardner, 'Images of Family Life over the Family Lifecycle', *Sociological Quarterly* 31 (1990): 77; Steward Hall, 'Reconstruction Work', *Ten* 8 (1984).

³⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, 'Kult der Einheit und kultivierte Unterschiede', in *Eine Illegitime Kunst. Die sozialen Gebrauchsweisen der Photographie*, ed. Pierre Bourdieu et al. (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1983), 37; Susan Sontag, *Über Fotografie* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2006), 14.

³⁶ Astrid Erll, *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen* (Stuttgart and Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2005), 31; Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 36, 71.

quickly and cheaply. In the Near East, the evolution of portraits followed a similar pattern, but much more slowly.³⁷ Early family photographs were rather common among the Christian population of the Balkans, the Armenian and the Christian Arab populations. Rich urban Muslim families started with family photography generally only in the 1920s. Such photographs would ideally depict the head of the household at the centre and his wife at his side, in a lower position, surrounded by the rest of the family.³⁸ The patriarchal nature of Arab society in Palestine is evident in such photos as the following taken in 1943. Generally, the picture reflects a trend towards Westernization among the local upper class³⁹ (photo 25).

In the Balkans, the composition of families in front of the camera is quite similar to Near Eastern examples. The household head is in a superior position; although he is not in the centre of the picture, his social centrality is obvious. The whole family is in modern Western clothing and hats – at least for the photograph (photo 26).

Women's photography and exoticism

Were these modernization processes without industrialization mimics of the West, in the sense of hybridization of the Western original and the copy that deviates from it, as suggested by Western observers? Edward Said's *Orientalism*⁴⁰ and Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans*⁴¹ explain how and in which way this process of *othering*, of the 'Orientalization of the Orient' as the opposite of the 'Occident' and the 'Balkanization of the Balkans' as semi-Occidental and semi-Oriental as well as semi-developed and semi-civilized, was initiated by Western authors since about 1900. Although the first 'indigenous' photographers in the region were introduced into the technique of photography in Vienna, Munich, Paris or Venice, one has to differentiate between the 'Westerners' and the 'indigenous' view. The photographers in the region would run photo studios to survive economically. Foreign ethnographers and travellers used the camera as 'pseudo-colonial entrepreneurs'. The Western view sought for 'typical' Balkan and Oriental motives,⁴² whereas the 'indigenous' view was primarily guided by the desires of the photographed.⁴³

³⁷ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988), 92.

³⁸ Issam Nassar, 'Familial Snapshots: Representing Palestine in the Work of the First Local Photographers', *History & Memory* 18 (2006): 148.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 149.

⁴⁰ Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (New York: Pantheon, 1978).

⁴¹ Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁴² Nada Boškovička, 'Zur Geschichte des Balkans in der Zwischenkriegszeit', in *6000 Kilometer durch den Balkan*, ed. Iwan E. Hugentobler (Zürich: Limmat, 2006), 23.

⁴³ Simona Cupic, 'The Politics of Representation as a Projection of Identity: The Female Body in Its Oriental Construction in Serbian Art', *European Journal of Women's Studies* 10 (2003): 323, 333.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, photography in Western cultures, in addition to its use as a means of defining the human body in terms of class and of normative behaviour, started to create the gendered and erotic body. Between approximately 1900 and 1914, on the fringes of society, popular culture and events intimated that the independent but sober 'new woman' of early modernism would lapse into the sexually liberated flapper of the 1920s. Men and women escaped the sexual morality of the nineteenth century, and the female body gained greater freedom of movement and exposure.⁴⁴ Photographs functioned similar to advertisements studied by Goffman: what the human nature of males and females really consists of is the capacity to learn to provide and to read depictions of masculinity and femininity and a willingness to adhere to a schedule for presenting these pictures, and this capacity they have by virtue of being persons, not females or males.⁴⁵

By the late 1860s in Austria and during the 1870s in most of the other European states, postcards were legalized as a new and attractive form of postal communication.⁴⁶ The postcard played a specific role in the history of colonialism. There seems to be great interest in the depiction of the colonized landscape. How was the colonized Orient depicted, and Beirut as our specific example? Since there were no local photographers in Beirut until 1895, postcards of Beirut were produced and published by European photographers. These postcards depict the city of Beirut as an exotic place worth visiting. One of these postcards shows the port and a section of a mosque, combined with a desert with white-dressed people on a camel. The problem is that there are no deserts in Beirut and its vicinity, but in the view of Europeans a desert belongs to an Oriental city.

Similar to the harem paintings of the pre-photographic era, the 'real' Oriental woman was unveiled and lascivious, a challenge for the imagination of the Western man. The difference between paintings and the photographs lies in the way they appear to the viewer. The photograph has a claim to represent a reality in a way no artist would claim for a painting. The figure of the woman as an erotic and exotic object of the European's gaze⁴⁷ is documented, for instance, by the Syrian postcard for the Russian public.

At the crudest end of the market, there were photographs of women in varying stages of undress, sold to soldiers, sailors and tourists. The most explicit versions of this eroticism were mostly produced in cities of North Africa and

⁴⁴ John Putz, *Photography and the Body* (London: Calman & King, 1995), 35-79.

⁴⁵ Erving Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, introduction by Vivian Gornick (New York: Harper Colophon, 1979), vii-ix.

⁴⁶ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988), 38.

⁴⁷ Rana Wehbe, 'Seeing Beirut through Colonial Postcards: A Charged Reality', <http://webfea.fea.aub.edu.lb/proceedings/2004/SRC-ArD-01.pdf> (published 2004, accessed 31 August 2009).

Egypt; they were more rarely seen in Turkey, Lebanon, Iraq, Syria or Palestine.⁴⁸ The real Egyptian fellah woman is not prudish, covering her body completely – on the contrary. The eroticism of the nude consisted in the juxtaposition of clothed and unclothed parts of the body with the veil or head covering often remaining as a motif. These photographs, like many Orientalist paintings, are a transgression not of Western morality but of the rules and taboos of another culture – viewed as inferior to that of Europe.

Also the Balkan population – and especially its female population – is portrayed as sexually hyperactive in popular publications. One of those publications appeared in 1974 and presents the popular tradition with regard to sexual practices.⁴⁹

The message of the cover picture is relatively clear. The two women at the left, almost completely covered, represent the traditional and official restraint in the public, but in reality they are Balkan sex bombs. Since the authors had obvious difficulties in getting nude photographs, they simply took film scenes from the Yugoslav cinema production of this time.

In coming to a conclusion, I want again to stress the coincidence of the invention of the photography and the beginning of the reform era of the Ottoman Empire. At least for Balkan studies we are not really blessed with an abundance of sources compared to the archives in Western and Central Europe. There is no doubt about the relevance of pictorial material for historical research. Many thousands of photographs are stored in public as well as in private archives – most of them are still untouched and unused by research; only a small percentage has been used for the illustration of textual representations. The value of the photography as primary source remains still underestimated. Working with photographs requires other methodologies than working with written documents, and we are usually not trained in applying these specific methodologies. Hopefully, this chapter could offer several new research perspectives in the study of the late Ottoman Empire, the processes of de-Ottomanization as well as the period of colonialism and post-colonialism.

⁴⁸ Sarah Graham-Brown, *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950* (London: Quartet Books, 1988, 44).

⁴⁹ Reinhard Federmann, *Sittengeschichte der Völker. Balkan: Kulturen – Bräuche – Sexualverhalten* (Munich: Lichtenberg Verlag, 1974).



1. Pjeter Marubi



2. Janaki Manaki



3. Milton Manaki



4. Anastas Jovanović, the first Serbian photographer



5. Pilgrims on the way to Mecca, approx. 1857 (by brothers Abdullahian)



6. Garabed Krikorian and family, Palestine/Jerusalem, 1910



7. Woman with child (Khalil Raad, 1920)



8. Franz von Nopcsa (ca. 1916) in north-Albanian costume



9. Veiled woman (Félix Bonfils Photographs Collection, 1867-1885)



10. Two Kurds and a Catholic cleric (Pascal Sebah studio)



11. Front of the Lehnert and Landrock photo studio in Cairo



12. Freya Stark, 1934



13. Gertrude Bell, Iraq, 1909



14. Sultan Abdülhamid II, 1902



15. Hospital for women (Hamidian Collection)



16. Women's teachers college (Hamidian Collection)



17. School of arts for girls (Hamidian Collection)



18. Professors and officers of the Imperial Military Academy (Hamidian Collection)



19. Sofia – National Insurance Company 'Balkan' (Karastoyanov, 1910)



20. Sofia – Tsar's Palace (Karastoyanov, 1910)



21. Sofia – National Theatre (Karastoyanov, 1910)



22. Sofia – Ministry of War (Karastoyanov, 1910)



23. Sofia – Parliament Building (Karastoyanov, 1910)



24. **Beirut – Martyr's Square**



25. Palestine family, 1943



26. Serbian family, about 1900



Sofia, 1887



Sofia, 1907

Images

- Fig. 1: Pjeter Marubi (http://index.fieri.com/thumbnail.php?file=Pjeter_Marubi_779140212.jpg&size=article_medium)
- Fig. 2: Janaki Manaki (<http://www.unet.com.mk/manaki97/images/janki2.jpg>)
- Fig. 3: Milton Manaki (http://www.unet.com.mk/manaki97/images/manki_1.jpg)
- Fig. 4: Anastas Jovanović, the first Serbian photographer (http://cultured.com/images/image_files/1633_anastas_jovanovic_self_portrait.jpg)
- Fig. 5: Pilgrims on the way to Mecca, approx. 1857 (by brothers Abdullahian) (<http://www.uni-jena.de/stuebelsammlung.html>)
- Fig. 6: Garabed Krikorian and family, Palestine/Jerusalem, 1910 (<http://armeniansworld.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/0025ka00001p.jpg>)
- Fig. 7: Woman with child (Khalil Raad, 1920) (http://29.media.tumblr.com/tumblr_lifjpsq8Kf1qi3pmvo1_500.jpg)
- Fig. 8: Franz von Nopcsa (ca. 1916) in north-Albanian costume (http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2089/2201590590_c73862e4af.jpg)
- Fig. 9: Veiled woman (Félix Bonfils Photographs Collection, 1867-1885) (<http://diglib.princeton.edu/ead/bioghist-images/C0942.jpg>)
- Fig. 10: Two Kurds and a Catholic cleric (Pascal Sebah studio) (<http://www.bakhawan.com/kurdipedia/wene/2634.jpg>)
- Fig. 11: Front of the Lehnert and Landrock photo studio in Cairo (<http://www.touregypt.net/images/touregypt/lehnert.jpg>)
- Fig. 12: Freya Stark, 1934 (<http://www.topfoto.co.uk/gallery/womeninhistory/images/thumbs/0482794.jpg>)
- Fig. 13: Gertrude Bell, Iraq, 1909 (http://de.academic.ru/pictures/dewiki/66/BellK_218_Gertrude_Bell_in_Iraq_in_1909_age_41.jpg)
- Fig. 14: Sultan Abdülhamid II, 1902 (<http://vinhanonline.com/images/stories/hinhanh/AbdulHd.jpg>)
- Fig. 15: Hospital for women (Hamidian Collection) (<http://lweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3g10000/3g11000/3g11600/3g11674r.jpg>)
- Fig. 16: Women's teachers college (Hamidian Collection) (<http://lweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3b20000/3b28000/3b28100/3b28190r.jpg>)
- Fig. 17: School of arts for girls (Hamidian Collection) (<http://lweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3b20000/3b27000/3b27700/3b27796r.jpg>)

Fig. 18: Professors and officers of the Imperial Military Academy (Hamidian Collection) (<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/service/pnp/cph/3b20000/3b28000/3b28900/3b28923r.jpg>)

Fig. 19: Sofia – National Insurance Company 'Balkan' (Karastoyanov, 1910) (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/39076413>)

Fig. 20: Sofia – Tsar's Palace (Karastoyanov, 1910) (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/39076414>)

Fig. 21: Sofia – National Theatre (Karastoyanov, 1910) (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/39076846>)

Fig. 22: Sofia – Ministry of War (Karastoyanov, 1910) (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/39076417>)

Fig. 23: Sofia – Parliament Building (Karastoyanov, 1910) (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/39076415>)

Fig. 24: Beirut – Martyr's Square (<http://www.lebanonpostcard.com/images/sepia/psepia3.jpg>)

Fig. 25: Palestine family, 1943 (<http://www.1948.org.uk/introduction>)

Fig. 26: Serbian family, about 1900 (www.emmapayne.net/site)

Map 1: Sofia, 1887 (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/74767704>)

Map 2: Sofia, 1907 (<http://www.pbase.com/ngruev/image/74782544>)

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