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PRELIMINARIES TO A COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF THE RUSSIAN AND OTTOMAN EMPIRES: PERSPECTIVES FROM OTTOMAN STUDIES

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The Russian and Ottoman empires had many characteristics in common. Both were continental empires with vast territories comprising multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic populations. Both originated from the frontier of their respective religious civilizations: Orthodox Christianity and Islam. After the population movement during the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Turks' expansion to Anatolia and Slavs' north-eastward movement), state formation began around the twelfth to thirteenth century. The imperial history of the Ottomans goes back to the mid-fifteenth century, when they captured the capital of the Byzantine Empire, and they established an Islamic empire after the conquest of the Arab lands in the early sixteenth century. During the same period, the Muscovite state grew into the Russian Empire after the conquest of the Kazan Khanate. Again, both empires collapsed almost simultaneously in the last phase of World War I. As neighbors, the two empires shared many stages of world history.

I will focus here on the long nineteenth century, that is, from ca. 1780 to 1917/18, when the Russian and Ottoman empires came in closest contact and were confronted with common problems. The parallelism between these empires is most conspicuous for their later period and thus it can be said that their long-nineteenth-century histories are most suitable for comparison. Traditionally, the history of late Imperial Russia has been described as a series of failures when compared to west European countries, but the Russians have been deemed successful modernizers when compared to the Ottomans. This type of comparative approach, however, puts too much emphasis on the process of modernization and nation building and fails to look into the parallel development of the

nineteenth-century imperial powers. Comparative studies of empires, including the Russian and Ottoman empires, have recently appeared and stimulated the opening of fresh discussion. One is a book entitled *After Empire*,[1] edited by Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, which is an attempt to compare the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires and the Soviet Union, concentrating on their collapse and the aftermath. Another is Dominic Lieven's book, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals*,[2] which compares the Russian Empire with other empires including the Ottoman. The main focus of the comparison is on the dilemma of empire: how to preserve an empire's unity in the face of the challenge of nationalism. Now we have a number of recent studies in the fields of both Russian and Ottoman histories that examine specific aspects of one empire with some reference to another. This signifies that historians are becoming interested in common problems.

In this chapter I present several points of reference for comparative studies of the Russian and Ottoman Empires during the nineteenth century. Because I specialize in late Ottoman history, my argument mainly draws on recent studies on the late Ottoman Empire, while I also survey some of the latest studies on Imperial Russia in search of common grounds for discussing the nature of empire.

Late Ottoman history has undergone wide-ranging revision especially since the 1990s.[3] One can observe that a new trend of historiography has emerged. One of the common characteristics of these new historical writings is, first of all, their critical position against modernization theory, which presupposes the backwardness and anomaly of the Ottoman Empire as against the "norm" of European countries. Historians are now trying to emphasize the simultaneity of historical developments across the globe. Late Ottoman history is viewed in a common "world time"

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[1] Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, eds., *After Empire: Multiethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder, 1997).

[2] Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (London, 2000).

[3] For recent trends in Ottoman historiography, see Jun Akiba, "The Ottoman Empire as a Modern Empire: A Recent Trend in Ottoman Studies (in Japanese)," *Rekishigaku Kenkyu*, 798 (2005), pp. 22-30; Nadir Özbek, "Modernite, Tarih ve İdeoloji: II. Abdülhamid Dönemi Tarihçiliği Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi* 2:1 (2004), pp. 71-90. For the new approach to late Ottoman history, see also: Donald Quataert, *The Ottoman Empire, 1700-1922* (Cambridge, 2000).

or *Weltzeit*.[4] Researchers admit that the late Ottoman Empire was facing problems similar to those of other contemporary states, especially, but not exclusively, Russia, Habsburg Austria, China, and Japan. Thus, the late Ottoman experience becomes comparable with that of other societies and ceases to be "unique" or "exceptional." Selim Deringil's seminal work, *The Well-Protected Domains*, in a sense concentrates on "de-exoticizing" the Ottoman Empire under the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II.[5] A similar trend can be observed in the historiography of Imperial Russia after the fall of the Soviet regime; historians are recently revising the traditional view on the "failures" or "crises" of late Imperial Russia.[6]

One must be cautious, however, about this "normalizing" tendency in the Ottoman historiography. Because the historians' effort to present the Ottoman Empire as something "normal" somewhat echoes Turkey's current political agenda: to gain membership in the EU, while preserving its national identity. As Nadir Özbek points out, Kemal Karpat's book on Islam and modernity in the Ottoman-Turkish context[7] is reminiscent of the revisionist view of today's Turkish conservatives, who are trying to accommodate Islam within the Turkish national identity.[8]

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[4] Benjamin C. Fortna, *Imperial Classroom: Islam, the State, and Education in the Late Ottoman Empire* (Oxford, 2002), p. 12.

[5] Selim Deringil, *The Well-Protected Domains: Ideology and the Legitimation of Power in the Ottoman Empire, 1876-1909* (London, 1997). In reviewing the existing literature, Deringil writes in his introduction: "The 'anomaly' of the Ottoman position has been reflected in the historiography pertaining to the Ottoman State which has been characterized by a tendency to 'exoticize' this uncomfortable phenomenon." Ibid., p. 4. The word "de-exoticizing" is mine.

[6] For the recent historiography of Imperial Russia, I referred to the following studies: "Introduction," in *Imperial Russia: New Histories for the Empire*, ed. Jane Burbank and David L. Ransel (Bloomington, 1998); Jane Burbank, "Revisioning Imperial Russia," *Slavic Review* 52:3 (1993), pp. 555-567; Aleksei Miller, "Between Local and Inter-Imperial: Russian Imperial History in Search of Scope and Paradigm," *Kritika: Explorations in Russian and Eurasian History* 5:1 (2004), pp. 7-26; and Mark von Hagen, "Empires, Borderlands, and Diasporas: Eurasia as Anti-Paradigm for the Post-Soviet Era," *The American Historical Review* 109:2 (2004), pp. 445-468.

[7] Kemal H. Karpat, *The Politicization of Islam: Reconstructing Identity, State, Faith, and Community in the Late Ottoman State* (New York, 2001).

[8] Özbek, "Modernite, Tarih ve İdeolojı," p. 75. For the Russian counterpart, see Miller, "Between Local and Inter-Imperial," pp. 24-26.

The Modern Form
of the Monarchial Regime

A new trend of Ottoman historiography has appeared in the re-evaluation of the period of Sultan Abdülhamid II (1876-1909). The autocratic regime of Abdülhamid is no longer presumed to be archaic, anti-modern, or irrational. Rather, the Ottoman experience during this era can be considered similar to the monarchial forms of modern state formation, which were equally seen in central Europe, Russia, and Japan. For example, Deringil illustrates how the Sultan employed the symbols of power to remind the people of his power and beneficence through imperial ceremonies and a variety of other means.[9] In his study of the politics of welfare in the late Ottoman Empire, Nadir Özbek argues that the organization of circumcision ceremonies or the construction of the poorhouses and children's hospitals was intended to disseminate a patriarchal image of the ruler, which was at the same time integrated with a scientific, modernist, and positivist discourse.[10] As Özbek suggests, Abdülhamid's regime as a modern form of the monarchy is comparable to the contemporary tsarist regime.[11]

Adopting the concept of "world time," Benjamin Fortna highlights education under the Hamidian regime and places it in the global context. According to his study, emphasis on Islamic morality in the new "secular" schools during the Hamidian period was a typical example of "indigenization" of modern education, and it was also in accord with the trend in other contemporary countries such as France, Japan, and Russia.[12] It must be noted that the authors mentioned here consciously take a comparative approach to the analysis of the Ottoman Empire.

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[9] Deringil, *Well-Protected*, Chapter 1.

[10] Nadir Özbek, *Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda Sosyal Devlet: Siyaset, İktidar ve Meşruiyet, 1876-1914* (Istanbul, 2002); idem, "The Politics of Poor Relief in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1876-1914," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 21 (1999), pp. 1-33.

[11] Özbek, *Sosyal Devlet*, p. 33, n. 19; Dominic Lieven, *Nicholas II: Emperor of All the Russians* (London, 1993); Richard S. Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy*, Vol. 2 (Princeton, 2000).

[12] Fortna, *Imperial Classroom*; idem, "Islamic Morality in Late Ottoman "Secular" Schools," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 32 (2000), pp. 369-393. For education during the Hamidian period, see also Deringil, *Well-Protected*, Chapter 4; Selçuk Akşin Somel, *The*

Ottoman Borderlands
and the Policy of Integration

Ottoman borderlands are now drawing wide scholarly interest. This trend can be seen in the fact that in 2003 two academic journals published special issues on the Ottoman borderlands.[13] Common to the recent studies on the borderlands is that the histories of the particular regions are considered in the broader context of Ottoman history. Considering that one of the most basic features of empire is the possession of a culturally distinct periphery, the borderlands can best provide subject matters for the historians interested in the Ottoman state as an imperial power. In the field of Russian Imperial history, too, many scholars have recently turned to the re-evaluation of the multi-ethnic dimension of the empire. Many studies have been already made on Russian policy toward the borderlands and these would provide valuable suggestions for Ottoman specialists.[14]

Borderlands are the zones where the state is confronted with societies having distinct cultures and social organizations. The cultural and political friction in the periphery became fierce during the long nineteenth century, when the Ottoman state expanded its direct rule over the frontier regions. While some regions on the fringes of the empire attained independence or autonomous status, or came under foreign occupation during the nineteenth century, Ottoman direct rule was restored or first established in other remote regions, which had long been nominally under Ottoman sovereignty. Prominent among these regions were Iraq, Libya, Hijaz, Kurdistan, Transjordan, Yemen, and Albania. In other regions too, such as in Syria and the eastern Black Sea coast, the domination of local magnates was put to an end by the

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Modernization of Public Education in the Ottoman Empire, 1839-1908: Islamization, Autocracy and Discipline (Leiden, 2001).

[13] *International Journal of Turkish Studies*, 9 (Summer 2003); *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies*, 3 (Spring 2003). The former was published in a book: Kemal H. Karpat and Robert W. Zens, eds., *Ottoman Borderlands: Issues, Personalities and Political Changes* (Madison, 2004).

[14] See especially, Andreas Kappeler, *The Russian Empire: A Multiethnic History*, tr. Alfred Clayton (Harlow, 2001); and Miller, "Between Local and Inter-Imperial." I also referred to the works of Paul Werth, Kimitaka Matsuzato, and Theodore Weeks, among others.

mid-nineteenth century and replaced with centralized administration.[15] The Ottoman policy of integration must be comparable with its Russian counterpart.

Here it would be helpful to look at the Ottoman system of local administration in general.[16] The Tanzimat reform of local administration was first applied only in the "core regions" in the Balkans and west and central Anatolia. But it was conceived from the beginning to comprise a wider area, and it did gradually expand to other areas in the following years. It became the practice for the Tanzimat reformists to designate model provinces for the reform and then to adopt it in other regions. Following this practice, a new set of administrative reorganizations was first applied in the province of Danube in 1864. Eventually the Provincial Reform Law of 1864 became the standard for the whole empire, and within a decade, the new administrative structure was established in most of the Ottoman domains, including such remote regions as Yemen and Libya. Thereafter, the basic distinction of administrative status was between normal provinces, where the Provincial Reform Law was implemented, and "privileged" provinces (*eyâlât-ı mümtâze*), where special administrative arrangements were adopted to the detriment of Ottoman sovereignty, either because of foreign intervention or the predominance of local powers. After the Berlin Treaty of 1878, the privileged provinces included Egypt, Tunisia, Bulgaria, Eastern Rumelia, Bosnia, Samos and Cyprus. Mount Lebanon and Crete could also be regarded to be in the same category.[17] Besides these privileged provinces, the Ottoman government avoided forming large provinces

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[15] For this process, see Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge, 2000).

[16] For an insightful argument on Ottoman local administration, see Jens Hanssen, "Practices of Integration: Center-Periphery Relations in the Ottoman Empire," in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Würzburg, 2002), pp. 49-74.

[17] Egypt and Tunisia were semi-independent states with hereditary Muslim rulers but were occupied by Britain and France respectively. Samos and Crete (after 1898) were autonomous provinces with Christian governments, while Bulgaria achieved semi-independence, governed by a Christian prince with its own national army. Eastern Rumelia and the Mount Lebanon were administered by Christian governors, but the former was occupied by Bulgaria in 1885. Bosnia and Cyprus were under foreign occupation (Austrian and British, respectively).

with powerful governors especially in the areas with complex ethnic composition. Thus, geographical Macedonia and Albania, inhabited by Slav, Greek, Albanian, and Turkish populations, was divided into five provinces, whereas Eastern Anatolia, inhabited by Armenians, Kurds, and Turks, was composed of five provinces, increased from three in the 1870s.

It is an interesting coincidence that in exactly the same year both the Russian and Ottoman Empires embarked on a reorganization of local administration and judicial systems. In fact, it was not a mere coincidence because both reforms were directly related to the consequences of the Crimean War. Perhaps the Ottoman counterpart of the Russian system of *Zemstvo* was the local administrative council set up in each administrative unit, consisting of the local officials and elected members from among the local notables. Among the elected members, Muslims and non-Muslims had an equal number of representatives. The representative principle arranged for inter-communal balance was a characteristic of Ottoman administration. The same principle was applied to the new secular *Nizamiye* court established as part of the provincial reform of 1864 and composed of a president judge and several elected members.

The development of administrative structures in the provinces provided the local notables with the opportunity to obtain offices in the provincial bureaucracy. Similarly, the expansion of the state school system enhanced the incorporation of the local notables into the Ottoman system. For example, many urban notable families in Syrian provinces sent their children to the higher professional schools in Istanbul, and many of the graduates ultimately became "Ottoman-Arab bureaucrats."[18] To incorporate the Arab and Kurdish tribes, on the other hand, the Ottoman state established a special school named "the Tribal School" in Istanbul. Sons of leading tribal sheikhs from Syria, Arabia, Libya, and Kurdistan were enrolled in this school. They were expected

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[18] Corrine Blake, "Training Arab-Ottoman Bureaucrats: Syrian Graduates of the Mülkiye Mektebi, 1890-1920," (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1991). For the role of urban notables, the most influential study is Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reforms and the Politics of Notables," in *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East: The Nineteenth Century*, ed. William R. Polk and Richard L. Chambers (Chicago, 1969), pp. 41-68.

to follow a career in the administration or military.[19] The Tribal School was an Ottoman device to transform tribesmen into Ottomans.[20]

Education was thus an important vehicle for the "Ottomanization" of subjects. Non-Muslims, however, were free to go to the elementary and secondary schools of their religious communities, over which the state continuously tried to exercise close supervision to eliminate any separatist tendencies. Only higher education was "mixed." Overall, the cultural integration policy toward non-Muslim subjects remained only to a small degree. A non-Muslim could become an "Ottoman" bureaucrat after 1856 without converting to Islam and with a poor knowledge of Turkish. Conversion to Islam, whether by force or persuasion, was never adopted as an official policy. In certain provinces, the Greek, Bulgarian, Serbian, and Ladino languages were used in the official or semi-official provincial newspapers, while Greek, Bulgarian, and Armenian were taught in some state schools. On the other hand, Muslims in the peripheral regions were exposed to more systematic integration pressure.[21] The loyalty to the Ottoman sultan, the Caliph of Muslims, of the Muslim subjects of allegedly "heretic" faiths such as Alevis, Yazidi Kurds,[22] and Iraqi Shiis, was considered to be weak. Various means were employed to convert them to Orthodox Sunni Islam: building mosques and schools, distributing religious books, and sending preachers. Albanians were not allowed to build their own schools. The Ottoman government made a great effort to construct state schools for Muslims in Albania, while supporting the Rum (Greek) patriarchate in the establishment of Orthodox schools to prevent independent Greece's cultural penetration. Except for Arabic, the non-Turkish languages of Muslims were never approved

[19] Eugene Rogan, "Aşiret Mektebi: Abdülhamid II's School for Tribes (1892-1907)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 28 (1996), pp. 83-107; Deringil, *Well-Protected*, pp. 101-104.

[20] Rogan, *Frontiers*, p. 14. See also Deringil, *Well-Protected*, p. 67: "the transformation of 'peasant into Frenchmen' paralleled the 'civilizing' or 'Ottomanizing' of the nomad"; p. 109: "Just as the Ottomans tried to instill Ottomanism in Arab notable children in the Tribal School, the Russians attempted 'Russification' of non-Russian peoples."

[21] Deringil, *Well-Protected*, Chapter 3; Somel, *Modernization*, Chapter 6; Isa Blumi, *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire: A Comparative Social and Political History of Albania and Yemen, 1878-1918* (Istanbul, 2002), Chapter 6.

[22] In fact, calling Yazidis "heretic Muslims" is inappropriate, since their religion is not a sect of Islam.

for official usage. Even Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims) were encouraged to speak Turkish in the primary schools.[23] These practices of "Ottomanization" remind us of the Russian policy of conversion in both its western and eastern regions.[24] Perhaps the Ottoman borderlands studies need further exploration on the policy-making process as well as the initiatives of indigenous peoples,[25] which Russian studies have discussed extensively.

For the Ottoman elite, the "Ottomanization" of nomads and "heretic" Muslims was part of their "civilizing mission." Ottoman officials were accustomed to describing the nomadic tribes as "wild" and "primitive" in official correspondence. Actually, the word "nomadic" was synonymous with "un-civilized." In the view of the Ottomans, nomadic people had to be uplifted to the "realm of civilization" through education and other means. As Ussama Makdisi points out, "through efforts to study, discipline, and improve imperial subjects, Ottoman reform created a notion of the pre-modern within the empire in a manner akin to the way European colonial administrators represented their colonial subjects."[26] This kind of Ottoman conception of the people in the borderlands can be termed "Ottoman Orientalism."[27] Although Ottoman Orientalism did not fully developed into an academic discipline, normative discourses on the Ottoman peripheries are most likely to be

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[23] Somel, *Modernization*, pp. 216-217.

[24] Paul W. Werth, *At the Margins of Orthodoxy: Mission, Governance, and Confessional Politics in Russia's Volga-Kama Region, 1827-1905* (Ithaca, 2002). Theodore R. Weeks, "Russification and the Lithuanians, 1863-1905," *Slavic Review* 60:1 (2001), pp. 96-114; Mikhail Dolbilov, "Russification and the Bureaucratic Mind in the Russian Empire's Northwestern Region in the 1860s," *Kritika* 5:2 (2004), pp. 245-271; Darius Staliunas, "Did the Government Seek to Russify Lithuanians and Poles in the Northwest Region after the Uprising of 1863-64?" *Kritika* 5: 2 (2004), pp. 273-289.

[25] In this respect, Isa Blumi's studies give an interesting perspective: Isa Blumi, "Contesting the Edges of the Ottoman Empire: Rethinking Ethnic and Sectarian Boundaries in the Malësore, 1878-1912," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 35 (2003), pp. 237-256; idem, *Rethinking the Late Ottoman Empire*.

[26] Ussama Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism," *The American Historical Review*, 107:3 (2002), p. 769.

[27] Makdisi, "Ottoman Orientalism." See also: Deringil, *Well-Protected*, 68-111; idem, "'They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery': The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45 (2003), pp. 311-342; Thomas Kühn, "Ordering the Past of Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1914," *Turcica* 34 (2002), pp. 189-220.

found in published works of Ottoman officials and officers, who wrote about the history, geography and ethnography of the regions where they had served. Ottoman Orientalism persistently distinguished modernized Ottomans from pre-modern subjects, but at the same time it was also a self-designation, which identified the Ottomans as the East in contrast to the West. While the Ottomans rejected the Western notion of backward Orient and were concerned to present a modern image, they nonetheless, by internalizing the Western perception of the Orient, considered themselves as something unique, essentially different from the West. Ottoman Orientalism thus adopted a hierarchical vision of the world order, placing the Ottomans in between the West and the Orient. In this respect, Ottoman Orientalism more resembled the Orientalism of Russia and Japan.[28]

The argument about Orientalism leads to the problem of colonialism. The Ottoman Empire did not possess official colonies. Even the remotest provinces of Yemen and Libya sent representatives to the Ottoman parliament. According to the recent studies of Thomas Kühn, however, the more the Ottomans faced resistance in Yemen, the more they were inclined to think that a different type of rule was necessary. Some officials even regarded the province of Yemen as a colony by the early twentieth century. The colonial administration of Britain, France, and Italy was commonly seen as a model for the Ottoman government.[29] In North Africa, the Ottomans adopted the colonialists' concept of "hinterland" to claim their interests.[30]

In fact, the provinces of Yemen and Libya were given exceptional treatment regarding the application of census, conscription, land survey, and the secular *Nizamiye* court system, which were basic components of

[28] For the Russian case, see articles in Daniel R. Brower and Edward J. Lazzerini, eds., *Russian's Orient: Imperial Borderlands and Peoples, 1700-1917* (Bloomington, 1997).

[29] Kühn, "Ordering the Past"; idem, "Ordering Urban Space in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1914," in *The Empire in the City*, pp. 329-347; and idem, "An Imperial Borderland as Colony: Knowledge Production and the Elaboration of Difference in Ottoman Yemen, 1872-1914," in "Borderlands of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and early 20th Centuries," ed. Thomas Kühn, special issue, *The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 3 (2003), pp. 5-17 (http://web.mit.edu/cis/www/mitejmes/intro.htm).

[30] Michel Le Gall, "Ottoman Reaction to the European 'Scramble for Africa': The Defense of the Hinterland of Tripolitania and Cyrenaica," *Asian and African Studies* (Haifa) 24 (1990), pp. 109-135. See also Deringil, "Nomadism and Savagery."

the Tanzimat reforms. In Yemen, for example, the secular *Nizamiye* courts were abolished in the face of fierce opposition from the local population. Local Zaydi and Shafii judges mostly took over the judicial posts in the Yemeni sharia courts, despite the Ottoman attempt to appoint judges of the official Hanafi school of law from Istanbul, which lasted only for a short period.[31] Thus, local forms of Sharia were uplifted to official status and incorporated into the Ottoman legal hierarchy. The implementation of legal reforms generally necessitated an encounter between state law, Sharia, and local customary law, and friction between the rule of law and political and financial exigencies. Ottoman legal reform, viewed from the perspectives of legal cultures and the politics of law, is a subject for comparative studies,[32] as already initiated in a workshop in Istanbul.[33]

CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY

Another important issue concerns the problem of citizenship and nationality. First of all, the Ottoman "*millet* system" should be discussed as a background of the nineteenth-century reforms. The *millet* system was supposedly an Ottoman institution to govern the empire's non-Muslim subjects, developed from the tradition of Islamic states. Although it was

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[31] Jun Akiba, "Bringing Order to the Lands of the Tribes: Ottoman Judges in the Arab Frontiers, 1878-1918," paper presented at the 38th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association of North America, 2004, San Francisco; Kühn, "Imperial Borderland," pp. 9-10; idem, "Ordering the Past," p. 215,

[32] The following studies are of interest in this respect: Brinkley Messick, *The Calligraphic State: Textual Domination and History in a Muslim Society* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993); Deringil, *Well-Protected*, 44-67; Roger Owen, ed., New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East (Cambridge, Mass., 2000); Huri İslamoğlu, ed., *Constituting Modernity: Private Property in the East and West* (London, 2004); Yücel Terzibaşoğlu, "Landlords, Refugees, and Nomads: Struggles for Land around Late-Nineteenth-Century Ayvalık," *New Perspectives on Turkey* 24 (2001), pp. 51-82; Jane Burbank, "Legal Culture, Citizenship, and Peasant Jurisprudence: Perspectives from the Early Twentieth Century," in *Reforming Justice in Russia, 1864-1996: Power, Culture, and Limits of Legal Order*, ed. Peter H. Solomon, Jr. (Armonk, NY, 1997), pp. 82-106; and Virginia Martin, "Kazakh Oath-Taking in Colonial Courtrooms: Legal Culture and Russian Empire-Building," *Kritika* 5:3 (2004), pp. 483-514.

[33] Workshop on "Law and Political Economy in the Russian and Ottoman Empires," held at Boğaziçi University, on June 18-20, 2004.

unique to the Ottoman Empire, it was nonetheless comparable to other systems. Historians of Imperial Russia have already made reference to the Ottoman *millet* system in their studies of the Russian system of administering the different religious communities, and these arguments are also stimulating for Ottomanists.[34] But the *millet* system is a controversial subject. The traditional understanding of the *millet* system is as follows: Non-Muslim subjects of the empire were organized into three officially sanctioned *millet*s, namely Orthodox, Armenians and Jews. Each *millet* was an autonomous organization, headed by a clerical leader (the Patriarch or the Chief Rabbi of Istanbul). Appointed by the Ottoman sultan, the *millet* leaders had a wide range of administrative, fiscal, and judicial authority within their respective communities. This framework, however, has been criticized in many respects. Some of the criticisms are that the traditional view only reflected the nineteenth-century situation, and that the consistency of three *millet*s as institutions can hardly be proved.[35] A most recent publication on the *millet* system by Macit Kenanoğlu makes an interesting argument.[36] While he denounces an important part of the existing criticisms, he argues against the alleged "autonomy" of each *millet*. For example, he demonstrates that a "*millet* court" did not exist, and that the clerical leader could hear the case of co-religionists only in his capacity as an arbitrator, whose opinion was not legally binding. Instead of the "*millet* system," he proposes the concept "religious *iltizam* (contract, tax-farming) system."[37] In this system, the clerical leader obtained an appointment from the sultan in return for the payment of a certain sum of money. He was thus entrusted with religious, administrative and fiscal authority, the extent of which was clearly defined by the state. In this respect, his capacity was very similar to that of the tax

[34] Robert Crews, "Empire and the Confessional State: Islam and Religious Politics in Nineteenth-Century Russia," *The American Historical Review* 108:1 (2004), pp. 50-83.

[35] Benjamin Braude, "Foundation Myths of the Millet System," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, 2 vols., ed. Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (New York and London, 1982), Vol. 1, pp. 69-88.

[36] Macit Kenanoğlu, *Osmanlı Millet Sistemi: Mit ve Gerçek* (Istanbul, 2004).

[37] The use of the term "*iltizam*" in this context is not entirely Kenanoğlu's invention. The term was used in the original documents and Halil İnalcık has already pointed out the parallelism between the status of the patriarch and the tax-farmer. Halil İnalcık, "The Status of the Greek Patriarch under the Ottomans," *Turcica* 21-23 (1991), cited in Kenanoğlu, *Millet Sistemi*, pp. 65-66.

farmers (*mültezim*). An important difference was that his duty mainly concerned religious matters, and his authority could be exerted only over his co-religionists. He could exercise certain authority according to the rules and within the limit delineated by the state. In this sense, he was completely within the boundary of the state legal system.

Kenanoğlu's theory is very stimulating one, which I hope will enhance further discussion.[38] A comparative approach is essential for a deeper understanding of the Ottoman *millet* administration. Unfortunately, Kenanoğlu is silent on the *millet* issue after 1856, when the Reform Edict was promulgated to lay the foundation of equality between Muslims and non-Muslims. By this edict, the Ottoman policy toward the non-Muslim subjects made a decisive transformation. It seems that the structure of the *millet* was more consolidated after 1856, because the edict redefined the organization of the *millet* by creating the *millet* councils composed of the clergy and the laymen for the decision-making of the intra-communal matters. Another important change in the *millet* system in the nineteenth century was the compartmentalizing of *millet*s.[39] The Armenian Catholics were officially separated from the Armenian *millet* in 1830, which was followed by the official recognition of the Greek Catholic *millet* in 1848. The Rum *millet* (the Eastern Orthodox church) was ethnically divided in 1870, when the Bulgarian church gained independence. Thus the traditional Ottoman administration of three *millet*s through clerical leaders was no longer valid in the nineteenth century, but the autonomous status of each *millet* (in the administration of justice, education, and others) seems to have become more secured after the 1856 edict.

Parallel to the consolidation of the *millet* privileges, the idea of "Ottoman citizenship" regardless of religion as well as of status and ethnicity emerged during the nineteenth century. Traditionally, only the members of the ruling elite, who were all Muslims, were properly called "Ottoman." The Reform Edict of 1856 radically changed this concept. Non-Muslims were theoretically liberated from the "*dhimmi*"

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[38] See Masayuki Ueno's review (in Japanese) on Kenanoğlu's book, *Toyo-Gakuho* 88 (2006), pp. 268-262.

[39] For the changing relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims and among the non-Muslim communities during the nineteenth century, see especially Bruce Masters, *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Arab World: The Roots of Sectarianism* (Cambridge, 2001).

status by the abolition of the poll tax and other discriminatory treat-ments, although the poll tax was replaced with a fee for exemption from military conscription.[40] Non-Muslims were now admitted to state schools and the bureaucracy. The presence of non-Muslim officials was best established in the Foreign Ministry and to a lesser extent in the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works. Several non-Muslims could be found among the ministers, and more among the vice-ministers. Just as non-Muslims were elected as members of provincial councils from the beginning of the Tanzimat period, they were fairly represented in the Ottoman parliament during the first and second constitutional periods.[41] Although the historical background differs, the cosmopolitan character of the bureaucracy and parliament was common to the late Ottoman and Russian Empires.[42]

It is also important to add that by the early twentieth century it was widely acknowledged among the Ottoman elite that the Ottoman popula-tion was composed of several "elements" (sing., *unsur*, pl., *anasır*), which meant nations or ethnicities in today's terms, as conceptually different from the traditional Ottoman classification of its peoples according to *millet*. Nevertheless, Ottoman official statistics persistently categorized the population according to religion, making no distinction among vari-ous ethnicities and sects of Muslim populations.[43]

Finally, the question of nationalism should be discussed in the global context. The development of Turkish nationalism in the Ottoman Empire owed much to the nationalist movements of Turkic peoples in Imperial Russia. However, Turkish nationalism as an Ottoman state ideology is perhaps more comparable to Russian nationalism, which the

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[40] Conscription was applied to the non-Muslims after 1910.

[41] Enver Ziya Karal, "Non-Muslim Representatives in the First Constitutional Assembly, 1876-1877," in *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire*, Vol. 1, pp. 387-400; Feroz Ahmad, "Unionist Relations with the Greek, Armenian, and Jewish Communities of the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1914," in Ibid., pp. 401-434; Catherine Boura, "The Greek Millet in Turkish Politics: Greeks in the Ottoman Parliament (1908-1918)," in *Ottoman Greeks in the Age of Nationalism: Politics, Economy, and Society in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Dimitri Gondicas and Charles Issawi (Princeton, 1999), pp. 193-206.

[42] Kappeler, *Russian Empire*, pp. 319-321.

[43] For the Ottoman population statistics, see Kemal H. Karpat, *Ottoman Population, 1830-1914: Demographic and Social Characteristics* (Madison, 1985).

Tsarist state adopted in the very late period, and without consistency.[44] The conventional understanding of Ottoman state ideology is that it shifted from Tanzimat Ottomanism to Abdülhamid's Islamism, and then to the Young Turks' Turkism. Today this formula can no longer be supported. The Young Turks are not identified with Turkish nationalists, and the relations of the Young Turks with the non-Turk "elements" of the empire are now being reexamined.[45] There still remains, however, a tendency to regard the Young Turks as the sole agents of the Ottoman government during the second constitutional period, a point that needs reconsideration. As regards the radical measures taken during the war years—wartime mobilization, "nationalization" of the economy,[46] settlement of nomads, immigrants, and refugees,[47] and deportation of "enemy nations"—parallels may also be found in contemporary Russia.

In this chapter I have indicated several points of entry for comparative history, chiefly based on my knowledge of current arguments in Ottoman studies. I think scholars of both the Ottoman and Russian Empires can discuss these issues using the same categories of analysis, although more useful categories would be necessary for a more fruitful comparison. I suggest that scholarly exchange between Ottoman and Russian specialists would promote comparative studies, which would contribute to a deeper understanding of the history of each empire as well as the general conceptualization of empire.

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[44] Kappeler, *Russian Empire*, pp. 344-348.

[45] For the Young Turks and Arabs, see Hasan Kayalı, *Arabs and Young Turks: Ottomanism, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1997); Karpat, *Politicization of Islam*, esp. pp. 349-373. For the non-Muslims, see Ahmad, "Unionist Relations;" Boura, "Greek Millet;" and Fujinami Nobuyoshi, "The Greco-Bulgarian Church Problem and Ottoman Nationhood (in Japanese)," *Slavic Studies* 51 (2004), pp. 97-131.

[46] Zafer Toprak, *Milli İktisat—Milli Burjuvazi (Türkiye'de Ekonomi ve Toplum, 1908-1950)* (Istanbul, 1995).

[47] Problems of the sedentarization of nomads and resettlement of immigrants and refugees were nothing new for the twentieth-century Ottomans. But the Ottoman policy during the war years revealed a clear inclination toward the "Turkification" of Anatolia. See Fuat Dündar, *İttihat ve Terakki'nin Müslümanları İskân Politikası (1913-1918)* (Istanbul, 2001); Erol Ülker, "Contextualising 'Turkification': Nation-Building in the Late Ottoman Empire, 1908-18," *Nations and Nationalism* 11: 4 (2005), pp. 613-636.