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The Second-Generation Polish Émigrés in Istanbul as Transcultural Agents in the Ottoman Modernising Reforms in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries¹

Abstract

This paper examines the transcultural agency of selected representatives of the second generation of Polish political émigrés to the Ottoman Empire at the turn of the 20th century: chemist, hygiene specialist and general Karol Bonkowski Pasha (1841–1905); general and state dignitary Władysław Czaykowski/Muzaffer Pasha (1843–1907); general and diplomat Hasan Enver Pasha (1857–1929) as well as diplomat, journalist and member of parliament Alfred Bieliński/Ahmed Rüstem Bey (1862–1934). Most of them were born and raised in the multi-ethnic empire, made careers in various fields and often reached the highest positions in the Ottoman state apparatus. They often played the role of transcultural intermediaries during the political and social transformations of the Ottoman Empire in the 19th and 20th centuries. This paper focuses on their involvement in the late Ottoman public sphere by elucidating their place in Ottoman society at the time of transition that characterised the period in question. By tracing the trajectory of these figures' identity entanglements, it examines their attitudes towards attachment to the Ottoman Empire and Poland. It underscores the importance of the Ottoman capital – Istanbul – as a contact zone in this process. It sheds light on various spheres of transcultural agency of these second-generation Polish émigrés in the late Ottoman state and society.

Keywords: Ottoman Empire, multicultural society, cultural boundaries, transculturation, Turkey, Polish émigrés.



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Introduction

The long 19th century was a period of intense migrations of groups of different national, ethnic, regional and professional structures towards the cosmopolitan capital of the Ottoman Empire – Istanbul, Kushta, Constantinople.² There, the trajectories of ideas of national identity and modernisation brought by the émigrés and their descendants intersected. These *go-between*s were involved in the process of shaping the foundations of the future Republic of Turkey while at the same time, they searched for their place in the host state.

Until the 19th century, the role of transcultural intermediaries in the Ottoman Empire traditionally belonged to the Levantines, Jews, Anatolian Greeks and Armenians. Only later they were joined by Polish political émigrés, who had participated in the 19th century national uprisings.³ After the three partitions of Poland in the last quarter of the 18th century, which led to its disappearance from the map in 1795, the Ottoman Empire was one of the key destinations for Polish political émigrés who arrived in Istanbul seeking Ottoman support in their efforts to regain independence. While in the Ottoman Empire, they also participated in the late Ottoman modernising reforms. Thanks to their knowledge of French, education and familiarity with European mores, they gained access to the Ottoman court. These new émigrés therefore upset the balance between the existing ethnic groups, which had resulted from several centuries of negotiations. In that process, they had to forge their own Ottoman identity.

As this paper seeks to demonstrate, the situation was easier for the second generation of Polish political émigrés born in the Ottoman Empire. The chief focus of the current scholarship has been the five decades between the 1830 November Uprising and the 1877–78 Russo-Ottoman War, which were examined as the main period of Polish political activities in the Ottoman Empire (Lewak, 1935; Reychman, 1971; Dopierała, 1988). Much less attention has been given to the descendants of this political emigration in the Ottoman Empire. This paper in this respect complements the scholarship on the Polish political emigration in the Ottoman Empire. The following pages examine the cultural agency of selected representatives of the second generation of Polish émigrés in the Ottoman lands at the turn of the 20th century. Figures under scrutiny are chemist, hygiene specialist and general Karol Bonkowski Pasha

² The name Istanbul is Turkish, Kushta comes from Ladino, the language of the Sephardic Jews and Constantinople is the name used by the Greeks. On the ethnic identifications of Istanbul, see, among others: Herzog, Wittmann, 2019.

³ The first wave of emigrants appeared already after the 1794 Kościuszko Uprising, then after the 1830–1831 November Uprising. Further waves followed: after the 1848 Revolutions, during the Crimean War (1853–1856) and the January Uprising (1863–1864).

(1841–1905), son of Antoni Bonkowski (1788–1848); general and Ottoman state dignitary Władysław Czaykowski/Muzaffer Pasha (1843–1907), son of Michał Czaykowski/Sadık Pasha (1804–1886); general and diplomat Hasan Enver Pasha (1857–1929), son of Konstanty Borzęcki/Mustafa Celâleddin Pasha (1826–1876) as well as diplomat, journalist and member of parliament Alfred Bieliński/Ahmed Rüstem Bey (1862–1934), son of Seweryn Bieliński/Nihad Pasha (1814–1895). Often educated abroad, similarly to the generation to their fathers, they also successfully participated in the reforms of the multi-ethnic empire and made careers in various fields. However, their motivations differed. For the first generation of the émigrés participation in the enterprises connected to the Ottoman modernising reforms was closely connected to the conviction that a strong Ottoman Empire was indispensable for Poland's future independence. As this paper seeks to demonstrate, for the descendants of these émigrés the well-being of the Ottoman Empire, which they perceived as their homeland and which at the time was gradually losing its territories to European colonial expansion and separatist nationalisms, was their priority. Moreover, forms of the cultural agency of the analysed individuals varied depending on the historical moment in which they were active and the degree of identification with their Polish roots.

To demonstrate various aspects of the discussed individuals' transcultural agency in the Ottoman public sphere, this paper mobilises a variety of primary sources: private correspondences, diplomatic correspondences, state records, press articles and published works from the archives and libraries in Poland, France, the United Kingdom, Turkey and Lebanon. Many of them have not yet been used by the previous scholarly works and have not been put into dialogue with each other.

This paper is divided into sections, each of which aims to elucidate the different facets of the transcultural agency of the selected individuals. It starts with the delineation of Istanbul as a contact zone. Next, this study situates the four protagonists of the paper within the Polish community of the late Ottoman capital, explores their connections with its members and analyses their stances towards their Polish ancestry. The following parts situate the selected individuals within the broader picture of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious late Ottoman society and discuss the role of European émigrés in the late Ottoman reforms. The subsequent parts analyse different factors and aspects of the transcultural agency of the selected case studies. These involved cultural-religious syncretism, the ideological legacy of fathers, exclusion and belonging to the so-called "third space", scientific activities as transcultural agency, as well as radicalisation and search for belonging in the period of World War I (WWI) and thereafter when the Republic of Turkey emerged as one of the successor states of the Ottoman Empire.

Istanbul as a Contact Zone

Istanbul was a city where cultural boundaries could be crossed. It was a transcultural hub, a centre of trade and political power, as well as a “contact zone”. As defined by Mary Louise Pratt, it is a social space where different cultures meet, clash and struggle with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination, such as colonialism and slavery and/or their aftermath (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). For people from various geographical and cultural backgrounds the city, located on two continents, provided a productive sphere of activity. The concept of the “contact zone” emphasises not geographical locations but social zones and the interactions between “transcultural agents”. Individuals who act as “transcultural agents”, like those discussed in this paper, function beyond the confines of a single culture. These agents are intermediaries who facilitate interactions, exchanges or collaborations that transcend cultural boundaries among diverse cultural groups. In short, they mediate between cultures and play a crucial role in building bridges between different societies and communities. However, the process of mediation is often only a “side-effect” of their main activities. Referred to by Nikolas Jaspert as “latent brokers”, their identity was inseparable from the so-called “double consciousness”. “Transcultural agents” or “latent brokers” perform their “latent” or “official” task of brokering in the same environment based on the coexistence and interaction of different worldviews (Jaspert, 2019, p. 140).

Istanbul was for centuries not only home to a multicultural society that had inhabited those lands even before the advent of Ottoman rule in 1453 but also an important destination for various groups of political emigration. Among them were consecutive waves of 19th-century Polish political émigrés. Poles counted on Ottoman support for their activities aimed at national independence. Istanbul was thus, from the early 1840s to the late 1870s, a key space of Polish activities against Tsarist Russia (Dominik, 2016, pp. 92–103).

The leading places on the map of Istanbul where Polish émigrés settled were cosmopolitan Pera (today’s Beyoğlu) and neighbouring districts inhabited mainly by non-Muslims: Tatavla and Yeni Şehir (today’s Kurtuluş) and Pangaltı, which are located within the borders of present-day Şişli. The European character of Şişli – home mainly to the Levantine community – ensured that the émigrés more easily adapted to the new conditions. The Polish community took part in the development of this part of the city. For instance, its members participated in the construction of the Georgian Catholic Church of Our Lady of Lourdes, where they funded a wooden altar with an image of the Virgin Mary of Czestochowa (Dominik, 2016, p. 96). Roman Catholic churches, where masses were celebrated in Latin, were noteworthy spaces of contact with other members of the Roman Catholic denomination. Şişli was

also home to organisations aimed at providing mutual assistance. Moreover, most of the Polish émigrés and their descendants are buried in the Roman Catholic cemetery in Feriköy located within the borders of Şişli (Dominik, 2014, p. 29).

It is thus no coincidence that Bonkowski Pasha and his relatives: the diplomat Ernest or the employee of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration Antoni; Muzaffer Czaykowski Pasha and his family; and Hasan Enver Pasha were neighbours. All of them lived in the last two decades of the 19th century in Pangaltı. The situation changed somewhat at the beginning of the 20th century. In 1902, Muzaffer Pasha left for Beirut while his son continued to live in the family home. Hasan Enver, on the other hand, moved to the Asian side of Istanbul following the 1908 Young Turk revolution.⁴ At the time, the number of Poles who lived in Istanbul had been gradually decreasing. Many of its first-generation members had either left for the lands of partitioned Poland, other destinations or had passed away. The community counted around 200 people and consisted mainly of the widows of the émigrés and their descendants (Reychman, 1971, p. 121).

A special contact zone for Istanbul's Polish community was the house of Ludwika and Henryk Groppler, the centre of Istanbul's Polish community, located in the Bebek district on the Bosphorus, which earned the name "Polish village" in the 19th century. The Gropplers' house was even named the "Polish embassy" (1870–1887). The couple had excellent relations with the Ottoman elite. They combined their patriotic activism with running a thriving enterprise - marble and borax mines - and maintaining an open house. Polish visitors to Istanbul, like Adam Mickiewicz, Henryk Sienkiewicz and Jan Matejko, were warmly received there. Polish émigrés were also regulars at the Gropplers (Dominik, 2016, pp. 96–97; Nykiel, 2018, pp. 83–113).

In addition to specific districts, the space where Muslims and non-Muslims met and worked together was the *Bâb-ı âli* (Sublime Porte), initially the seat of the vizier, but in the 19th century a place identified with Ottoman power and the emergence of new ideas around the Tanzimat reforms (1839–1876) (Davison, 1963, p. 35). The term Tanzimat stands for "reorganisation" and the reforms of that period were initiated in response to the challenges faced by the Ottoman Empire, including military defeats, economic troubles and internal strife. The Tanzimat era began in 1839 with the issuance of the Gülhane Edict

⁴ *L'indicateur ottoman, annuaire-almanach du commerce, de l'industrie de l'administration et de la magistrature* (Constantinople, 1888), pp. 142, 265; *Annuaire Oriental du commerce, de l'industrie, de l'administration et de la magistrature. 1889–1890* (Constantinople, 1889–1890), pp. 238, 280; *Annuaire Oriental du commerce, de l'industrie, de l'administration et de la magistrature. 1900* (Constantinople, 1900), pp. 298, 358, 476. Similar data is provided in the subsequent editions until 1914.

by Sultan Abdülmecid I (r. 1839–1861). The edict and the ensuing reforms aimed to modernise various aspects of Ottoman society and government. The key features of the Tanzimat reforms included: equality before the law, judicial and various reforms stretching from the judiciary through the administration and the military to the education system and economy. Europe figured as an important model for these reforms. Accordingly, during the Tanzimat era, transcultural mediation was at a premium given the reforming state's investment in a competent cadre. Over time, however, in the face of external threats, representatives of ethnic minorities began to be seen as potential enemies and collaborators (Davison, 1963, p. 18).

Another contact zone were educational establishments founded in Istanbul by missionaries. Their students received an education based on European models. One such school was the French-language Saint Joseph High School, run by the Lasallian Christian Brothers and located on the Asian side of the Bosphorus in the Moda district. It was attended by Hasan Enver Pasha, who in his memoirs called it “the school of the brothers of Moda” (Enver, 1931, p. 4), and later by Alfred Bieliński (BOA DH. SAİDd 1/640). A key place among these establishments belonged to the Galatasaray High School (*Mekteb-i Sultani*, 1868–1923) located in Pera. It was founded in 1868, during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz (1861–76) and was maintained from the private resources of the ruler. Interestingly, a Pole, Karol Karski (Hayreddin Bey), was involved in its creation (Łątka, 2001, p. 120). The school promoted a Western method of education, with a predominantly French influence. Both Hasan Enver Pasha (Enver, 1931, p. 4) and Alfred Bieliński studied at this institution (BOA DH. SAİDd 1/640).

Polish Connections

When it comes to relations with the Polish Istanbul community and Polish institutions in exile, Władysław Czajkowski/Muzaffer Pasha stands out. From 1866, he was a member of the Istanbul branch of the Union of Polish Emigration (*Zjednoczenie Emigracji Polskiej*) (Łątka, 2005, p. 80). Moreover, he was in ongoing contact with the leadership of Hôtel Lambert in Paris. He corresponded with Władysław Czartoryski before and during the 1877–1878 Russo-Ottoman War in which he served as an officer. These letters are illustrative of Czajkowski's overlapping allegiances to Poland and the Ottoman Empire, to which he referred as “a real fatherland” (*vraie patrie*) and “an adopted fatherland” (*patrie adoptive*) respectively. While he asserted that he was loyal to the Ottoman state, he stressed that he “was and would always remain above all a Pole” and that there were “no sacrifices that he was not ready to make” for the Polish cause (BCz 7262 II, pp. 203–206). The

imminent outbreak of the war awakened in him hopes that the issue of Poland's independence could return to the Ottoman, and even international, agenda. He thus reported to Czartoryski on the developments that were important from the point of view of Polish interests. He went as far as making plans for a possible uprising in the lands of partitioned Poland that would enjoy Ottoman support and would take place under Czartoryski's political leadership. Czajkowski was convinced that Poland would regain independence with Ottoman assistance. He thus argued for a pro-Polish stance from the high-ranking Ottoman dignitaries and was convinced of the moral and material support of the Sublime Porte in case of a rebellion against Russia in the lands of partitioned Poland (BCz 6658 IV). In his response, Czartoryski appreciated the pro-Polish predispositions of the Ottoman political leadership. However, since he was well informed about the situation in the country and among the émigrée community, he was aware of the slim chances of success of a potential revolt. The leader of the Hôtel Lambert also expressed his appreciation for Czajkowski's loyalty to Poland and his readiness to serve it (BCz 6658 IV).

Two decades later, Muzaffer corresponded with Adam Ludwik Czartoryski, who formally owned the Polish settlement on the Bosphorus, Adampol, founded in 1842 on the initiative of his father, Michał Czajkowski and on behalf of Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski. These letter exchanges concerned the fate of the settlement and the improvement of its inhabitants' situation vis-à-vis the Ottoman administration (BCz 6734 IV, pp. 16–19).

Czajkowski used mainly French, but he also spoke and wrote in Polish. He married a Levantine, a daughter of a translator from the Russian Embassy (AMAE NS 108, pp. 219–221). Czajkowski's Polish interlocutors stressed his command of the language and his interest in all the matters concerning his fatherland (Ciecierski, 2016, p. 600). His letters to a Polish noble and traveller Henryk Ciecierski, written not only in French but also in Polish, have been preserved by the Ciecierski family as mementos from the Polish-Ottoman Pasha.

Muzaffer's son, Fuad, was also connected with the Istanbul Polish community through the Benevolent Aid Society (*Towarzystwo Pomocy Dobroczynnej*). However, in Ciecierski's eyes, as a son of a Levantine and an Ottoman non-Muslim official, he was an "opportunist". In his memoir, Ciecierski recounts their first meeting when he asked Fuad if it would be difficult for him to leave his work in the Ottoman civil service. He allegedly replied in French that "as long as he served Turkey, he served it", pointing to an actual lack of attachment to the Ottoman state (Ciecierski, 2016, p. 602).

Karol Bonkowski⁵ was also in contact with the Polish emigration in Istanbul (Łątka, 2005, p. 52). The relations of Bonkowski's with Poles can be described as pragmatic and practical. The case of Karol Bonkowski's brother, the aforementioned Ernest illustrates it well. When he served as an Ottoman consul in Tulcea (Romania), he corresponded with Princess Marguerite d'Orléans – wife of Prince Władysław Czartoryski. Having outlined his siblings' services to the cause of Poland's independence, Bonkowski asked the Princess to financially support his son's education in one of the Istanbul boarding schools. He motivated his plea by suggesting that the Princess, who was known for her "generosity for children born of Polish parents", would "contribute to the upbringing of a little Pole who in the future would be at the disposal of our dear Poland" (BCz 6655 IV).

Konstanty Borzęcki's son, Hasan Enver Pasha, did not know Polish. He corresponded with his father's Polish family in French. Yet, he considered emigrating to Galicia. Hasan Enver not only did not know the language but was also not familiar with the Polish realities. He expressed his concerns in the letters to his Polish family. Ultimately, he decided against leaving the Ottoman Empire.⁶

Non-majority/Minority

The fate of the fathers of the figures here under consideration and the time of their adulthood in the Ottoman Empire coincided with new historical circumstances. In some cases, Polish émigrés of the first wave converted to Islam. This was a deliberate political act of the refugees after the 1848 Revolutions to avoid extradition to Russia. Their children, on the other hand, represent interesting cases of religiously syncretic people or second- or even first-generation converts. In 1856, the Sultan promulgated the Imperial Reform Edict (*Islâhat Hatt-ı Hümayînu*), which was another key edict of the Tanzimat era. This edict introduced 'freedom of religion' and a ban on calling an 'infidel an infidel' (*gâvura gâvur demek yasak*). Henceforth, in theory, one did not have to be a Muslim to work in the Ottoman administration. In fact, already in 1844, Sultan Abdülmecid I banned by law the execution of apostates from Islam. This change in the internal policy of the Ottoman state in the 19th century reached its climax when the old 'system of acceptance of difference' began to disappear

⁵ Bonkowski was also known by different spellings of his name. Among them, one can distinguish: Charles Bonkovski, Bonkovski Pasha and Bongo Pasha. For consistency, in this text, we use the version Karol Bonkowski.

⁶ Enver's letter to Marya Detloff, a cousin from Cracow, from 15 January 1913: "List Envera Baszy" [Letter of Enver Pasha], *Gazeta Narodowa* [The National Newspaper], Lviv, 24 (30 January 1913), p. 2.

and was legally replaced by a system of 17 semi-autonomous *millet* groups. For the Poles, who were looking for a utopian land (in place of a homeland that did not exist on the map), this was indeed a tempting opportunity. Their hope was based on the potential of the full meaning of *millet*, with its definition as: “an autonomous, self-governing religious community, each organised on the basis of its own laws and led by a religious leader who was accountable to the central authority, particularly with regard to the payment of taxes and the maintenance of internal security”.⁷ The concept of the *millet* was an importation of the Western model, in which the non-majority and/or ‘others’ had to be constituted as minorities.⁸

Ottoman national consciousness had begun to take shape before the wave of European Romantic nationalism. However, with the crisis of statehood, the key question emerged. What kind of nation should comprise the population of the new Ottoman state that would undergo a series of modernising reforms? Consequently, Ottomans searched for an ideology that, in the face of threats of territorial losses and loss of political sovereignty, would constitute a unifying bloc for a multi-ethnic society based on the *millet* system (Gara, 2017, p.71).

Transcultural Agents: 19th century European Refugees as Forerunners of Ottoman Modernisation

The 19th Polish political émigrés in the Ottoman Empire also participated in these developments. Historian İlber Ortaylı went as far as dubbing them “the forerunners of Ottoman modernisation of the Tanzimat era” (Ortaylı, 2000, pp.185–191). As Yalçın Küçük argued, the contribution of these newcomers was significant to the extent that “to the representatives of the new Turkish intelligentsia, new ideas were provided and instilled by the former Hungarian and Polish insurgents, some of whom became shopkeepers, butchers and grew into Ottoman society. Contact between them occurred when Turks were their customers who bought newspapers, tobacco or coffee” (Küçük, 1984, p. 679).

The modernising Ottoman state needed specialists in military, engineering and medicine. The new ideology needed publicists and journalists. The recruits for these tasks were representatives of the western-educated Ottoman elite and European émigrés. Accordingly, as they lived on the cultural borderline between Christians of European descent and Ottoman Turks of Muslim origin,

⁷ The definition of *millet* after *Encyclopaedia Britannica*: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/millet-religious-group> [Accessed: 20 January 2024].

⁸ About the *millet* system and its transformations, see: Masters, Bruce, 2009, pp. 383–84; Ursinus, 2012; Braude, Lewis, 1982, pp. 319–337.

the descendants of Polish refugees, who inherited a bicultural formation, made their careers more easily in the Ottoman state apparatus and subsequently, in the newly founded Republic of Turkey. Their skills, which resulted from a syncretic model of upbringing and education, allowed them to participate in the reform process based on European models, strengthening the ideas of statehood, nation and national identity. Given their participation in the transformation of the Ottoman state, they were transcultural agents (Jobs, Mackenthun, 2013), who drew on the resources available to them from two or even more cultures. The milieu of Ottoman Christians and converts of Polish origin during the reform era in which the transmission of European cultural models took place was polyphonic and professionally diverse.

When characterising these individuals, generalisations such as “an Ottoman subject of Polish origin” or an individual “with a Polish soul” should be avoided since we are referring to “multilayered” identities, as Cemal Kafadar pointed out in his search for a contrary model to the “sealed” or “lid” identity. Those of the various communities and peoples under Ottoman rule were shaped by their interactions with each other and with people and ideas from neighbouring regions. The Ottoman identity model was thus fluid and dynamic, often contradictory and ambiguous (Kafadar, 1995, p. 22). The “layers” of *in-between* identity overlapped with each other and “came into contact” in a multilayered form.

The late Ottoman social and environmental realities are best approached by adopting a transcultural perspective – the antithesis of the national approach. Transculturality allows for the study of multi-layered connections, non-linear temporalities, and cultural transgressions. In the case of transcultural agents, their complex/multi-layered identities and mobilising their roots in Western/Polish and Eastern/Ottoman cultures contributed to the spread of ideas of parliamentarism, constitutionalism, democracy and nationalism in the late Ottoman state, and on the eve of the founding of the Turkish Republic.

Factors of Agency and Cultural-Religious Syncretism

At the turn of the century, with the new ideology of statehood and national thought, there were shifts in the previous boundaries of tolerance and intolerance within which Ottoman religious groups coexisted. In the case of many Ottoman subjects with conversion experience in first and even second generations, the category *in between* placed them in Ottoman society in the so-called “third space” as defined by Homi Bhabha (Bhabha, 2004, pp. 53–56). In the later period of the development of Kemalism, the category of “dissenter” (*kâfir*) again caused exclusion, sometimes leading to a double exclusion: by the

original religious group and the new one - those who belong to it, as it were, from birth (Uzer, 2016, p. 98).

Son of Michał Czaykowski/Sadik Pasha and a French woman Leonida (Gabaret), Władysław Czaykowski/Muzaffer Pasha received primary education at the Jesuit College in Belgium (Łątka, 2005, p. 80). After completing higher education at the prestigious French military school Saint Cyr, he was called in the early 1860s by his father, by then a general in the Ottoman army, to join him in Istanbul (BCz 7043 T. 27). There Czaykowski, a Muslim after his conversion in 1850, lived with Ludwika Śniadecka, whom he married according to the Muslim rite, so formally he was a polygamist (Chudzikowska, 1982, p. 229). His children were educated with the financial help of the Polish emigration centred around the Hôtel Lambert (BCz 6658 IV). Władysław's education was overseen by Duchess Anna née Zamoyska Sapieha, mother-in-law of the leader of the Hôtel Lambert, Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, who was involved in social and philanthropic activities in exile. The duchess directed the young Czaykowski to the leading Paris high school Collège Rollin. Then, thanks to her, he continued his studies at the aforementioned Saint Cyr Military Academy (BCz 7043 T. 27). From 1859 onwards, Michał Czaykowski, who served as commander of the Polish-Slavic Sultanic Cossacks' Legion formed during the Crimean War in the Ottoman army, pressured the duchess to have his son leave school early and continue his education at his side in Istanbul (BCz 7043 T. 27). Given the elitist nature of the school, Anna Sapieha strongly opposed this proposal. Despite her explanations regarding the superiority of European military education over its Ottoman counterpart, she was unable to dissuade Sadik Pasha from this decision (BCz 7043 T. 29). Władysław's letters in Polish and French addressed to both Duchess Anna Sapieha and her daughter Anna née Sapieha Czartoryska confirmed his gratitude to the Czartoryski family for their patronage of his education. He stressed in them that as an adult he wished to dedicate himself to work for the Polish cause (BCz 7032 IV T.1, pp. 329–330; BPP 766, p. 20).

While already in Istanbul, the young Czaykowski was initially appointed captain of the legion of the Sultanic Cossacks and then commander of the Polish officers' school. He participated in the reorganisation of the Ottoman army, which he completed in 1885. After that, he was elevated to the rank of general (*pasha*). At the same time, he was appointed commander of the Imperial Stables – a position which required the trust of the Sultan. He was also the chairman of the committee responsible for the organisation of the Hamidiye Corps, an irregular cavalry corps that was formed in 1891 by Sultan Abdülhamid II and operated in the south-eastern provinces of the empire (Akarlı, 1993, pp. 197–198; Łątka, 2005, p. 80).

During his stay in the Ottoman Empire, he adopted the name Muzaffer, but unlike his father, he did not convert. Muzaffer Pasha's story reveals how his Christian and European connections eventually contributed to his professional rise to one of the highest administrative levels – that of a provincial governor. The Ottoman governors elected during this period were a product of the Tanzimat reforms, which aimed to modernise the Ottoman administrative system and to incorporate non-Muslims into the system on an equal basis. The number of non-Muslim bureaucrats thus steadily increased (Braude, Lewis, 1982, pp. 339–368). In 1902, Czaykowski put forward his candidacy for governor of the recently created Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon (*Cebel-i Lübnan Mutasarrıflığı*), whose population was predominantly Maronite Christian. This was an autonomous district created under an international guarantee after the civil war between the Maronites and the Druze in 1860 when France and Britain intervened on behalf of each group, respectively. As a result of the agreement, it was agreed that a non-Lebanese subject of the Ottoman Empire, Christian (locally known as *mutasarrıf*), appointed by the Sultan, was to rule over the province (Akarlı, 1993, pp. 32–33). Muzaffer's profile fitted these requirements very well and, having accepted this choice, he was promoted to field marshal (*müşir*) and given the rank of vizier.

Excellent as a soldier, Muzaffer had no experience as a politician. He surrounded himself mainly with Lebanese liberals averse to the Maronite clergy and associated with the Sunneen Masonic lodge (Sommer, 2014, p. 153). As a *mutasarrıf*, Muzaffer failed to carry out most of his reform projects, among which was to expand the boundaries of the autonomic Mutasarrifate of Mount Lebanon, to reform the courts according to European standards and halt emigration (AMAE NS 108, pp. 233–240).

Numerous complaints about Muzaffer's rule by influential local Maronite families had been received in Istanbul, but were neither supported by evidence nor confirmed by the foreign missions that exercised control over the region (MPA 27/137, 320; MPA 29/138). A document from the Ottoman archives describing this situation, dated 14 January 1905 and issued by the vizier's chancellery, indicates that there was a need to send a special Ottoman official from the Ministry of the Interior to Mutasarrifate to investigate the matter on the ground (BOA Y.A. HUS. 483/37). French diplomats in Beirut initially endorsed the candidacy of Muzaffer and supported his governorship (AMAE NS 108, pp. 219–220). Muzaffer's appointment was also welcomed by the local Maronite Christian population of Mount Lebanon (AMAE NS 108, p. 223). However, French diplomats soon after repeatedly pointed out the weakness of his governance, which they regarded as lacking a coherent direction, and stressed the repeated complaints from the local population to their consulate (AMAE NS 109, pp. 2–9; 72–88; CADN 166/PO/E/271).

As a well-connected Christian, Muzaffer managed to make an outstanding military career. Given his French education, for a long time he also enjoyed the patronage of the French government. In light of the peculiarities of Ottoman society and the army, those Polish Christians, who had weaker connections, facilitated their careers in the army by converting to Islam.⁹ Most often, however, this group occupied the aforementioned “third space”. This concept also extends to the next generation, who are also sometimes subject to so-called in-group marginalisation. This positioning is most evident in the case of the Borzęcki family, both the father, Celaledin Pasha, and his son, Hasan Enver Pasha (Kaim, 2020, p. 238).

Muzaffer Pasha’s sons worked in the Ottoman foreign service. At the height of his career, Fuad reached the post of the consul general in São Paulo – an appointment that took place shortly after his father died in 1907 (BOA BEO 3182/238648; BEO 3293/246931; İ.HR. 409/48). During Muzaffer Pasha’s governorship of Mount Lebanon, he was also often present in Beirut (AMAE NS 109, pp. 136–137). He made his way to the lands of partitioned Poland thanks to his visit to Henryk Ciecierski in Słowiczyn in Podlasie in 1903.¹⁰ He also had some command of Polish (Ciecierski, 2016, p. 593). Muzaffer’s other son, Reşid, who held attaché posts in Rome and the Hague, ultimately proved to be a “failure”.¹¹ His behaviour caused trouble to his father, which, in the opinion of the French consul in Beirut, negatively affected Muzaffer’s position as governor of Mount Lebanon. Among other things, in 1905 Reşid was convicted of fraud that he had committed during his stay in Paris (AMAE NS 109, pp. 246–247; CADN 166/PO/E/271).

Ideological Legacy of Fathers, Exclusion and “Third Space”

Hasan Enver was the son of a couple of converts and, for part of his life as an employee of the Ottoman administration, was a declared Muslim and even held Pan-Islamist views. For the record, he was the son of a would-be priest and former 1848 insurgent from Greater Poland, and later an Ottoman captain

⁹ For newly arrived Slav and Hungarian soldiers who were Russian or Austrian subjects and who were considered deserters because they had fled the Crimean War (1853–1856), a change of religion from Christianity to Islam was a necessity. A large group of refugees decided in most cases to opt for a “camouflage” version of such conversion. Pragmatism also suggested to most of them that conversion was compulsory if they were to command sufficient respect from their subordinates, and if, guided by Polish romanticism, they hoped to remain true to their idea of winning independence for their homeland from the Ottomans. The newly arrived belonged for the most part to trained military cadres. For more on this subject, see: Deringil, 2012.

¹⁰ Private archives of Teresa Ciecierska-Chłapowa made available to the authors of the paper.

¹¹ On Reşid’s service in the Ottoman administration, see: BOA HR. SAİD. 8/2.

of the general staff and head of the cartography department at the Ministry of War, Konstanty Borzęcki, who became famous as Mustafa Celaleddin Pasha. Hasan Enver opted for a military career after his father's death and for the rest of his life identified with his father's views. Celaleddin Pasha was a pioneer of Turkism - the ideological basis of the modern Republic of Turkey. His book *Les Turcs anciens et modernes* (The ancient and modern Turks, 1869) influenced the formation of political thought in the next generation, having inspired Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Turan, 1982, pp. 25–27). It contributed to the conception of a new Turkish language. Borzęcki also formulated the social and political foundations for the reform of the modern Turkish nation and the Turanian concept of the ethnogenesis of the Turks. He thus unwittingly created the historical, linguistic and etymological basis of Turkish nationalism. Remarkably, his theses did not resonate in his time, but only in the 1930s. Moving within the realm of imagined entities: his own identity as an Ottoman Muslim (having transgressed from a would-be Catholic cleric) and an imagined nation, Borzęcki established a close link between personal and national identity (Kolodziejczyk, 2011, p. 127). Isolated from his émigré compatriots, he created a theory of ethnic Turkic ancestry perhaps precisely out of a need for compensation to reconcile his overlapping identity layers within broadly understood European roots.

Hasan Enver, as the son of Borzęcki and Saffet Zeliha Hanım, the eldest daughter of another convert, Ömer Lütfi Pasha, left behind a series of essays entitled *Türklerin menşe'ine dâ'ir* (On the Origin of the Turks).¹² They were maintained in the spirit of his father's works. Similar views that alluded to the ideas of Pan-Turkism and Pan-Islamism can also be noticed in Enver's memoirs and reflections entitled *Mes idées* (My ideas): "Islam is a strong stone of brotherhood that knows neither regions, nor government, nor nationality" (Enver, 1931, p. 21). The then-reigning Sultan Abdülhamid promoted Pan-Islamism as an ideology aimed at uniting the Muslim world in light of Western European and Russian colonial expansion (Karpat, 2002; Landau, 1990). An opportunity to reassert himself in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkist ideas was Hasan Enver's visit to China. He travelled there as the head of an Ottoman delegation in 1901 during the Boxer Rebellion against the Great Powers' interventionism (Karpat, 2002, p. 237; Landau, 1990, pp. 43–44). Two decades later, he wrote about this political mission as follows: "If I went to China and gathered all the Muslims around me, I would create a republic" (Enver, 1931, p. 17).

¹² Enver Pasha's articles from *Umümiye Mecmû'ası* (The General Public Journal) were transliterated from Ottoman into modern Turkish and published in the monthly *Tarih ve Toplum* (History and Society) from January to April 1984.

Despite being a Muslim, Hasan Enver Pasha lived outside the Turkish-Muslim community, in a “third space” just like his father, about whom he wrote: “Could my father, as a convert, not be friends with any Christian? Could he have found among the Turkish-Muslims someone with similar beliefs and mentality? Never!” (Enver, 1931, p. 4). Despite posing as a devoted Muslim, Enver *de facto* maintained close contact with Polish and Hungarian Christians and was known as Edward among them (Karpat, 2004, p.147). He also corresponded with his Polish cousin, the nun Kunegunda (Marianna Borzęcka), to prove the Catholic heritage of his ancestors (Łątka, 1993, p. 90). He considered emigrating. Given his second marriage to a Catholic woman, he may have been planning to convert. Imbued with modernist ideas, after his retirement following the 1908 Young Turk revolution, Hasan Enver Pasha, together with his second wife, Hortence who was of Dalmatian origin, founded a private French-language high school in Erenköy, on the Asian side of the Bosphorus (Ataer, 1976, p. 63).

For some, Hasan Enver’s ‘Christian’ background was valuable, for others it was a reason for suspicion and denunciation. Enver recalls one of his enemies, who called him a spy and sent the following telegram to the palace to prove his alleged disloyalty: “How is it possible for Enver, whose father, grandfather and himself are non-believers, to become the civil and military administrator of the city of Volos?” (Enver, 1931, p. 13). Upon receiving this news, the sultan allegedly hastily contacted Marshal Ethem Pasha to enquire who Enver was. Upon learning that Enver was the son of Mustafa Celeleddin Pasha and son-in-law of Mehmed Ali Pasha, Sultan Abdülhamid II ordered Enver to be promoted to the rank of colonel and to “expel this spy from Thessaly” (Enver, 1931, p. 13).

Epidemics Prevention as a Sphere of Transcultural Agency

Before the open hostility towards Christians, Antoni Bonkowski (1788–1848) found himself among the sultan’s valued Catholic subjects. He was a Polish émigré who assisted Sultan Mahmud II (r. 1808–1839) in the disbandment of the Janissary corps in 1826 and rose to the rank of colonel. He modernised the Ottoman army orchestra by adding European instruments. He also took part in the war against the governor of Egypt Muhammad Ali Pasha in 1832 and 1839. He owed his high position, despite his non-conversion, to the patronage of the French government. As a result of his marriage to Miryam, daughter of an Armenian Catholic clergyman, he had four sons (Lewak, 1936, p. 306).

One of them, Karol Bonkowski Pasha, played a significant role in the Ottoman modernising reforms. He was a scientist, chemist, hygiene specialist, sanitary inspector as well as a general. After graduating from the *École Supérieure de Pharmacie de Paris* in 1865 (Edmond Fremy and Michel Eugène Chevreul were among his teachers), he worked at the Pasteur Institute in microbiology and bacteriology (AN AJ/16/1943; Lewak, 1936, p. 307). On his return to Istanbul in 1865, he took up the post of professor of chemistry at the Class of Pharmacy of the School of Medicine (*Mekteb-i Tıbbiye-i Şahane*). In 1878, he became the Sultan's chief chemist (BOA İ.DH. 930/73679, Arık 2019, p. 58). He received the rank of general (*mirliva*) in 1892 and was appointed inspector general of public health in the empire (*Dersaadet ve Bilumum Vilâyât-ı Şâhâne Hıfzıssıhha Ser Müfettişi*) (Baytop, 1985, pp. 173, 341).

In 1876 he joined the Ottoman Medical Society (*Cemiyet-i Tıbbiye-i Osmaniye*) and in 1879 established and became the first president of the Pharmacological Society (*Dersaadet Eczacı Cemiyeti*) (Baytop, 1985, pp. 215–216, 341), contributing to the institutionalisation of the profession of pharmacist (Gümüő, 2019, p. 121; Baytop, 1985, p. 341; Arık, 2019, pp. 59–61), and was a member of several chemical and medical societies in France and Belgium. In 1897, he became a sanitary inspector in the Higher Military Commission (*Erkân-ı Harbiye Heyeti*) of the Alasonya army (Günergun, 1992, p. 239).

Bonkowski Pasha represented Ottoman Turkey at International Sanitary Conferences: Venice (1892), Dresden (1893), Paris (1894) and Moscow (1897) (CADN 166PO/E/470). In 1893–1895, he introduced the method of modern disinfection during cholera epidemics (Çil, 2023, p.106). Bonkowski proposed the establishment of a “Centre for Disease Control” in the quarantine stations: in 1892 in Edirne, in 1893 in Trabzon, in 1894 in Izmir and in 1902–3 in Syria (Damascus and Aleppo) (Gümüő, 2019, pp. 123–125). In 1897, during the Turkish-Greek war over Crete, he was head of sanitary units and organised hospitals, ambulances sent to the front and helped the Red Cross (Lewak, 1936, p. 307).

Bonkowski's professional background was influenced by contemporary scientific and medical developments in Western Europe. His knowledge, which he owed to foreign studies and international experience, enabled him to introduce sanitary and medical solutions in the Ottoman state. From the legacy that he left behind it is difficult to know to what extent he benefited from the heritage of Middle Eastern medicine, and whether the transfer of expertise in the 19th/20th century was only in one direction, from West to East, and whether Istanbul was also a favourable “contact zone” in this respect.

Radicalisation

Another figure of Polish origin appears on the wave of nationalising Turkishness based on the ideology of Pan-Turkism, Alfred Bieliński, the son of a Christian and former insurgent of the 1848 Revolutions, Seweryn Bieliński/Nihad Pasha and of Mary Sandison, daughter of the British consul in Bursa, Donald Sandison. Sandison had originally been a merchant in Constantinople, and after an unsuccessful bid in 1834 for the position of consul in Thessaloniki, won in the competition for the position of consul in Bursa. In 1868, he married Mary Zohrab, daughter of Constantine Zohrab, an Armenian Catholic merchant from Iran, also an Anglophile. Alfred's mother was therefore also of Armenian-Persian descent.¹³ In this way, Donald Sandison gained connections to the local Armenian commercial elite (Zeytinli, 2018, pp. 31–56; BOA İ. TAL.55/44; BNA, FO, 78/329B).

Alfred was a gifted linguist. His mother tongue was English. He learned Polish from his father. In addition to Arabic, Persian and Ottoman Turkish, he was fluent in French, German, Italian and Greek (BOA DH. SAİDd. 1/640). According to Bieliński's friend and prolific journalist, Celal Nuri İleri, English and French were his main languages of communication. Although his Turkish was allegedly not equally good, till the last days of his life he did his best to master it.¹⁴ He was a translator, journalist, member of parliament and most importantly, a diplomat, who became the first and last Ottoman ambassador to the United States. After conversion to Islam in May 1914, he took the name Ahmed Rüstem.¹⁵ We can guess the motives behind this decision. During the formation of the Turkish nation in the ethno-religious sense, he supposedly wanted to declare his belonging to the newly formulated "Turkishness" by means of his religious allegiance. Loyal to the Ottoman state, Alfred fiercely defended its interests in the international arena. He wrote, among other things, on the so-called Armenian question in his 1918 work *La guerre mondiale et la question Turco-Arménienne* (The World War and the Turco-Armenian Question). The diplomat responded to the anti-Ottoman propaganda carried in the American press. He defended Ottoman policies towards its Christian citizens, especially Armenians, while condemning the European colonial and racist practices of the United States. He first voiced these ideas in an article

¹³ On Alfred Rüstem's mother's Armenian-Persian genealogy, see: Oğuz, 2020, pp. 131–132.

¹⁴ Celal Nuri İleri, "Ahmet Rüstem Bey Merhum II", *Vakit*, 13 October 1934.

¹⁵ "Rustem Bey Converted. Former Turkish Attaché at Washington Abjures Christianity", *The New York Times*, 23 May 1914. See also Ottoman press: *Sabah*, 9 Mayıs 1330; *Tanin*, 9 Mayıs 1330 [22 May 1914].

published in a Washington newspaper *Evening Star* on 8 September 1914.¹⁶ As a result of this polemic, he was dismissed from his post as ambassador and declared *persona non grata* shortly thereafter.¹⁷

These ideas were further developed in the above-mentioned 1918 work. Ahmed Rüstem pointed out the hypocrisy of the West, not limiting himself to conventional anti-imperialist rhetoric and recounting the atrocities Britain committed in its colonies, but also exposing Britain's brutality in Ireland. He also referred to the Russian-Polish theme, mentioning the ruthlessness of imperial Russia in the lands of partitioned Poland following the 1830 November and 1863 January uprisings and during WWI. As for the Armenian events, while Ahmed Rüstem acknowledged the tragedy experienced by the Armenians during WWI, he emphasised that the Turks also experienced great suffering at the time. In his view, the responsibility for this tragedy lay with the Armenian revolutionary committees that mobilised the Armenian masses against Ottoman rule (Ahmed Rüstem Bey, 1918, pp. 65–132).

Given his views expressed in the aforementioned treatise, Ahmed Rüstem represents a complex form of Turkish nationalism emblematic of his time, which characterised the period after the Second Constitutional Era (1908–1918/22). At the same time, some of its idiosyncratic aspects reflect its European origins and a variant of Polish 19th century liberal nationalism. As Doğan Gürpınar notes, his criticism of imperialism had different roots and motivation from those of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) members. He attributes it to his Russophobic views, which made Rüstem an outspoken Turkish nationalist who abhorred the perceived hypocrisy of Europeans and European liberalism (Gürpınar, 2014, p. 198). Deft in rhetorical argument, he reached for rights and freedoms, using European political terminology, and repeatedly emphasised his allegiance to humanitarian values. He did not renounce the ideals of 19th century liberalism.

Nevertheless, his disillusionment with the West also caused a transformation in his belief in rights and freedom. The impetus for the growth of his anti-imperialist views was the Russian expansion into Poland, British support for Russia in the Great War and the atrocities committed by the Russians against Polish civilians during WWI. The son of a Polish aristocrat was thus forced to speak in a language that combined the 19th century liberalism with an anti-Western ethos in the fashion advocated by the CUP.

Alfred Bieliński among the many identities available to him chose Turkish, although ethnically he was not a Turk. However, by means of his

¹⁶ "Statement by the Turkish Ambassador [Rüstem]", *Evening Star*, 8 September 1914.

¹⁷ BOA, HR. MTV. 419/34; "Rustem Bey Takes Leave", *The New York Times*, 3 October 1914. See also: Erol, 1973; Wasti, 2012, pp. 781–796; Karacagil, 2022, pp. 142–197.

conversion he wanted to underline his allegiances. If this reading of Ahmed Rüstem's motivation is close to the truth, he underscored it with 19th century ideals, according to which religion came before ethnos. While under Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's rule and the formation of Kemalism, the development of national identity defined by 'Turkishness' (*Türklük*) reinforced references to tribes and civilisations and pre-Islamic roots, the 'new Turk' defined by this complex process had to be loyal to the state regardless of his or her religion. This gradually affected the homogeneity of 'modern' society and seriously challenged the testimony of the collective memory of the Ottoman past. Historian Philip Mansel explains the rapid transformation of cultural pluralism into nationalism by the carrying capacity of national ideas. The social, economic and cultural bonds between *millet*s, built up by the fact of co-existence in the same city, and neighbourhood, became insufficient to satisfy the hunger for the emotions offered by nationalism. The city - Istanbul - was no longer a sufficient environment. People dreamed of their own country (Mansel, 1995, p. 64).

Alfred Bieliński's conversion to Islam in 1914 was an important moment. At this time, many non-Muslim diplomats lost their positions under the suspicion that their "being in contact with foreigners would entail difficulties in confidential matters" (Findley, 1982, p. 364). These were times when the issue of conversion had changed the emphasis from religion to national loyalty, and a convert to either side or a dissenter was a man disavowing his previous convictions and coming over to the side of the enemy.

Ahmed Rüstem's father Seweryn Bieliński was a lecturer at the St Cyr military school in Paris after emigrating following the 1848 Revolutions. His property was confiscated by the Austrians until a political amnesty, but he refused to return to Austria. During the Crimean War, he fought in the Polish Legion and was awarded French, British and Ottoman decorations. He then went on to work in the Ottoman army, where, as Nihad Pasha, he held high positions in the Ottoman state apparatus. He was appointed High Commissioner in Bulgaria (Sofia) after the 1877–78 Russo-Ottoman War and the Treaty of Berlin (1878) (Lewak, 1936, p. 56). He was considered a loyal bureaucrat while being a non-Muslim (Findley, 1982, pp. 355–356).

Between 1850 and 1908, non-Muslims made up twenty-nine per cent of the Foreign Ministry's staff. From 1850 there were only seven of them and in 1892 there were ninety-three. According to Findley, the principles of the 1856 edict were implemented closer to 1880 as reforms seeking ethnic egalitarianism (Findley, 1982, pp. 343, 352). Proficiency in French, equated with intellectual modernity, was given importance. This fluency was demonstrated not only by non-Muslim groups of the empire but also by pro-European Turkish Muslims. This recruitment relied on interpersonal relations and the mix of patronage

connections (*intisab*). These personal recruitment selections thus still had patrimonial features, with the dominance of Greek Phanariotes and Armenian families traditionally present in places, while Christians from Europe represented a relatively new group.

In an 1849 letter written by one of the leaders of the Polish emigration, General Józef (Joseph) Wysocki, and addressed to Seweryn Bieliński in the refugee camp of Vidin, the former vehemently opposed the proposal of conversion to Islam offered by the Ottomans to the Polish insurgents who found themselves within Ottoman borders following the failure of the 1848–49 Hungarian War. He justified it by the fact that Polish refugees were there as representatives of Poland and accordingly, such a move, even if only political, would bring shame on the country and a stain on the Polish name (BK 2455, pp. 35–36).

The 1856 edict introduced “freedom of religion”. Nevertheless, conversions were more frequent during the last quarter of the 19th century. Although the death penalty for conversion had been formally prohibited since 1856, the Ottoman authorities went to great lengths to prevent such conversions (Deringil, 1998, pp. 115–116). Ottomanism was ambivalent towards non-Turkish and non-Muslim Ottoman subjects, oscillating between attitudes of acceptance, assimilation and exclusion. The latter stance was displayed by some advocates of emerging Turkish nationalism of the Second Constitutional Era. The position of the head of the nationalist and Turanian organisation *Türk Ocakları* (Turkish Hearths), Hamdullah Suphi Tanrıöver is a case in point (Uzer, 2016, pp. 22, 37–39). He preached the unity of religion (Islam), and language (Turkish) as the constituent elements of the conception of nation. This less inclusive atmosphere towards non-Muslims may have contributed to Alfred Bieliński’s decision to convert.

Moreover, the descendants of Polish émigrés may have been influenced not only by pro-European or supranational views, but also by “inherited memory” or the “homeland of the fathers”. At times, we observe, as in the case of Ahmed Rüstem, an ideological radicalisation characteristic of the second generation of emigrants. It constituted a way to prove their loyalty. Ahmed Rüstem’s uncompromising pro-Ottoman stance and his conversion to Islam can thus be read as conscious acts of searching for his own identity and a way to affirm his belonging to the Ottoman-Turkish homeland. This radical attitude could have also been caused by a sense of the threat of dual statelessness among the second-generation émigrés - inherited from their fathers - from Poland under partition, and their personal one, from the Ottoman Empire, which as the ‘sick man of Europe’ was threatened by territorial disintegration. Ahmed Rüstem regarded himself as “an Ottoman of Polish origin” or “the son of a Pole who

had found asylum in Turkey”. To explain his attitude to the Ottoman state, he referred to it as “the country in which he was born and in which he in turn was kindly treated” and for which he “did nothing but constantly nourish a feeling of attachment” (Ahmed Rüstem Bey, 1918, pp. III–V).

In the case of the Borzęcki family, the father’s vision of nation was influenced by several circumstances, including his upbringing in a Polish landed gentry family, his stay in a seminary, his disillusionment with the failure of the Greater Poland Uprising, his exile from his homeland, his conversion to Islam, his status as an Ottoman subject, his active role in the Ottoman army, and his role as a journalist and pioneer of the ideology of the budding Turkish nationalism. While Borzęcki’s views display an inclusive, modern, Enlightenment conception of nationhood, based on citizenship regardless of ethnic criteria, and which, as Walicki explained, “originated from the tradition of noble republicanism and developed in 18th century Poland” (Walicki, 2009, p. 444), in Ahmed Rüstem’s case we witness a nationalist radicalisation resulting from the historical and political conditions that characterised the development of an exclusivist Turkish nationalism during the final years of the Ottoman Empire.

Complex Identity Choices of the Bieliński Family

During the Turkish War of Independence (1919–1922) Ahmed Rüstem provided further proof of his allegiance to his homeland. He was present at the 1919 congresses in Erzurum and Sivas in the capacity of the foreign policy counsellor and interpreter by the side of the leader of the resistance movement Mustafa Kemal (Karacagil, 2022, pp. 309–314). He was valued by the future Atatürk because of his knowledge and diplomatic experience in a circle which was dominated by soldiers and lacked diplomats and bureaucrats. Ahmed Rüstem was a member of parliament from Ankara to the last Ottoman parliament and a short-lived deputy to the Grand National Assembly in Ankara (BOA DH. İ. UM. EK., 118/57; DH. İ. UM. EK., 118/81). The year 1920 marked a sudden break in relations with Mustafa Kemal and in September he retired from public services. After leaving Ankara for Western Europe that year, he returned to a newly established Turkey in 1923 (Karacagil, 2022, pp. 336–361). However, as a sign of recognition for his lifelong services to the Ottoman/Turkish state, a bill passed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly in October 1920 granted him a pension, which he continued to receive until his death in 1934 (BCA, 030.18.1.1/6.46.5, 18/1/(1)339).¹⁸

¹⁸ For Ahmed Rüstem’s obituary in the *New York Times*, see: “Rustem Bey dies; Turkish Diplomat”, *The New York Times*, 25 September 1934.

Little is known about the last years of Ahmed Rüstem's life. We know nothing about his descendants or even whether they existed at all. From Ahmed Rüstem's obituary authored by the afore-mentioned Celal Nuri İleri, we only learn that he was married for a brief period of time and spent most of his life as a bachelor.¹⁹ His sisters and brother, together with their mother, moved to the United Kingdom. According to documents from British archives, their British citizenship was restored. Mary de Bilinski [Bieliński]²⁰, mother and widow, who had been born British, assumed Ottoman citizenship through her marriage to Seweryn Bieliński in 1858 and in 1906, as a 72-year-old, was naturalised again as British (BNA HO 144/836/145369, HO 334/74/120). Sister Lilian Estelle de Bilinski, born in 1875 in Istanbul, was also granted British citizenship in November 1906 (BNA HO 144/836/145370). Another sister, Elsie Frances de Bilinski, by an oath of office in 1906, also took British citizenship, and together with her sister and mother settled in a rented villa in Kensington, London (BNA HO 144/834/144643, HO 334/43/16423). They invoked their grandfather, Donald Sandison, as a widely respected aristocrat, who was a guarantor of their rights to British citizenship.

Meanwhile, an extensive dossier from 1914 to 1922 from the British Home Office is devoted to Ahmed Rüstem's brother Seweryn Oswald Bieliński, whose numerous functions in the Ottoman Empire and from 1915 onwards for the British Crown were to provide evidence of his "Britishness" (BNA HO 144/1726/270690, HO 334/94). Oswald was granted British citizenship only in May 1922 (BNA HO 334/94/9167). At the time, he was Director General of the National Bank of Turkey in Istanbul, married in 1921 to a British citizen Adriana Hilda Leibbrandt and resided in Pera (BNA HO 334/94). The citizenship certificate was handed over on 22 May 1922 by the British High Commissioner in Constantinople, Horace Rumbold, who took the oath from Bieliński. Quite remarkably, Ahmed Rüstem is listed in this diplomatic correspondence as a possibly "suspicious person" (BNA FO 383/99). Mentioned in correspondence in light of Albania's 1912 declaration of independence, where he served as an Ottoman minister, he was described as "a rascal though an agreeable one" (BNA FO 800/76/3). Among the documents relating to Seweryn Oswald Bieliński, there is no trace of Alfred Rüstem seeking naturalisation. On the contrary, a note appears that in contrast to his brother, Alfred Rüstem remained a "Turk" (BNA HO 144/1726/270690). Remarkably, Seweryn Oswald had applied for British citizenship earlier, but he was not granted it. He was told that this was not possible until he was a resident of the British Empire. The

¹⁹ Celal Nuri İleri, "Ahmet Rüstem Bey Merhum II", *Vakit*, 13 October 1934.

²⁰ The form Bilinski was often a spelling used by the British, the French as well as the Ottomans for the surname Bieliński.

perception of him as an Ottoman citizen, a country from the opposite camp during WWI, was repeated in further correspondence.

His example is revealing of how he sought to mobilise his British and Polish roots to make a convincing case for his naturalisation. During the British occupation of Istanbul after WWI, he went through the complicated route of the British bureaucracy so that, as the inspector of the Ionian Bank in Athens, he could first land in Alexandria, then under British protection, and then stay for a month in London, where he met the Bank's Board of Directors (BNA FO 383/99). The latter was in correspondence with the British Foreign Office and the Interior Ministry regarding his case. This correspondence stressed his upbringing in a British tradition through his maternal side, his preparatory and higher education at Rugby School, as well as his subsequent work in the British capital in the New Oriental Banking.

As for his periods of employment in the Ottoman Empire, it was highlighted that he worked in institutions that represented British interests such as the Imperial Ottoman Bank. Seweryn Oswald thus asked to be recognised as British, as he was half-English by birth and fully British in terms of language and social and business connections. In the meantime, he also resorted to underscoring his Polish family background to make his case. In the correspondence, he explained that with no prospect of permanent residence in England, to divest himself of his Ottoman citizenship, he became an Austrian subject and registered as a Pole in Galicia (BNA HO 144/1726/270690). Understandably, this status put him in a different light than as an Austrian or Ottoman subject during WWI. At the same time, at the outbreak of the war, he denounced Austrian protection by submitting a note to the Austrian ambassador in Athens and instead stressed his professional connections to British institutions (BNA HO 144/1726/270690). Furthermore, Seweryn Oswald's Polish background and the resulting friendly positioning towards the British Crown was also attested by the key figures of the Polish Information Committee – a leading Polish émigré institution in London (BNA HO 141793, FO 383/99).

Conclusion

Through the case studies, by using a microhistorical approach, we observe individual factors that contributed to the transcultural identity of the hybrid figures discussed in this paper. These included religious syncretism, the social status of their fathers' generation and political legacy; Polish Romantic nationalism or co-existing forms of Ottoman patriotism. Thanks to these biographical microhistories, we can witness the process when the sharp contours of the archetypal émigré gradually blur until finally, a self-perceived

declared ethnic identity assigned to the ruling ideology emerges. Various heterogeneous ethno-religious groups negotiate their Turkishness while it is still in the formative stage, until finally, through a top-down process, they all become citizens of what was planned to be a homogeneous Republic. In all this, Istanbul remains like a foster child of the new statehood and, with all its multi-ethnic resources, ends up in the Turkish foster family.

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The Collective Memory of the Maronite Community in the 21st Century: an Anthropological Perspective¹

Abstract

This paper deals with the question of the collective memory of the Maronite community in the 21st century as reflected by the secular representatives of the community, based on a fieldwork trip to Lebanon in December 2022. The article is divided into two parts: firstly, the main aspects of the collective memory in the field of identity studies are assessed; secondly, the modern Maronite collective memory represented by the political and cultural representatives of the Maronite community is analysed. The paper provides conclusions about the golden age of Lebanon, the perception of the Phoenician legacy and the connections between Lebanon and the Maronites.

Keywords: Maronites, Lebanon, modern identity, collective memory, Phoenicianism.

Introduction

The question of the modern Maronite² collective memory in the 21st century is part of broader discussions that are tied into modern-day Lebanese issues, as most processes in the country cannot be fully understood without reference to intra-communal relations and Lebanese confessionalism³. Each community in the process of collective self-identification provides its own vision of collective memory and each is bound to Lebanon to some extent, yet one has to note that today in Lebanon there are still two levels of memory: a weak collective-

¹ The data for this article was collected during the author's fieldwork trip to Lebanon in December 2022. The author wants to express his sincere gratitude to Dr. Ralph Zarzir, for his help in organising all the meetings and interviews during his stay in Lebanon, and also to all his interviewees.

² In 2023, the Maronites made up around 20-27% or (1 million) of the total population in Lebanon. Since the last census was conducted in 1932, the current estimates vary according to different sources, hence it is impossible to provide an exact number and one can only rely on the approximate calculations.

³ Lebanese confessionalism was established with the declaration of state independence in 1943, distributing power among the local confessions with the aim of creating unity within the state of Lebanon and creating a communal-based political life where each religious community would become a distinct entity with its political representation.

national memory that is supposedly shared across religious backgrounds, and a strong communal memory represented in the form of a narrow sectarian memory, exclusively between members of a religious community (Aboultaif, Tabar, 2019, pp. 97–98).

Analysing the collective memory of the Maronite community is important in an understanding of the idea of modern Lebanon. The community was a key supporter of the new state, advocating Lebanese independence in 1919 when its patriarch Elias Hoayek (1843–1931) went to the Versailles Conference to seek to convince the international community to establish Greater Lebanon⁴ as a separate entity from Syria. Collective memory played a key role in his argumentation of Lebanese distinctiveness (Firro, 2004, pp. 15–16). After Lebanese independence was declared, most modern Lebanese symbols were also introduced by the Maronite community and throughout the 20th century Maronites continued to support and develop the idea of Lebanese distinctiveness based on several pillars, one of which was collective memory, tightly connecting modern Maronite and Lebanese paradigms.

As for Maronite collective memory in the 21st century, three elements should be assessed. Firstly, understanding the concept of the golden age, which is likely to be integrated into the national mythology, as perceived by the members of community. This is crucially important in explaining the source of nostalgia. Secondly, instrumentalisation of the Phoenician legacy, or Phoenicianism, is an important aspect of the Maronite community, having played a significant role in the 20th century – when past motives played a pivotal role in supporting the narrative of Lebanese distinctiveness by linking the modern Lebanese with the ancient inhabitants of a once prominent civilisation. The most important thinkers here were Said Akl (1912–2014), Michel Chiha (1891–1954), and Charles Corm (1894–1963).⁵ Finally, perceptions of the origins of the Maronite community and its relations with Lebanon – with an emphasis on how the Lebanese landscape is romanticised by the members of the Maronite community.

The issues in post-Taif Lebanon⁶ have attracted much attention from scholars, mainly focusing on such topics as international relations, political, economical and social issues and diaspora-related questions. However, the topic

⁴ Expanding the territory of Mount Lebanon to the territory of Greater Lebanon.

⁵ Additionally, it is important to observe that Phoenicianism remained a Maronite (or Christian) phenomenon, mainly developed as a Lebanese nation-building paradigm in opposition to pan-Arab and Syrian nationalism (Mazzucotelli, 2022, p. 55).

⁶ The post-Taif era refers to a period in Lebanese history after the Taif Agreement was signed in 1989 politically ending the Lebanese Civil War and changing the political and social environment in the country and revising the constitution.

of Maronite identity (including the collective Maronite memory), particularly in the 21st century, has barely attracted greater attention in academia. Both Franck Salameh (2010; 2020) and Asher Kaufman (2001; 2004) should be mentioned for their multiple works analysing the Maronite community's historical development and Maronite thought, although mainly focusing on the events of the 20th century. The monography prepared by Michal Moch (2013) about the Maronite and Coptic identity should be mentioned as well, while Moch (2012) also prepared a work about the memories and identities of Lebanese Maronites in the light of political conjuncture. Apart from that, the work of Maurus Reinkowski (1997), providing an assessment of national Lebanese identity in post-war Lebanon, should be mentioned, although the work is also based on processes in the 20th century.

There are several other publications dealing with the meta-sectarian questions in Lebanon. Lucia Volk (2010) prepared a work on the meta-sectarian identity of Lebanon in the light of collective memory. Melani Cammet (2014) and Lars Erslev Andersen (2022) addressed the question of sectarianism in Lebanon, while Maximilian Felsch (2018) introduced the term *Christian Nationalism* and provided an assessment of religious nationalism in Lebanon mainly focusing on the political aspect of the question. Also, Eduardo Wassim Aboultaif and Paul Tabar (2019) assessed the relations between national and communal memory in Lebanon, while Ersun N. Kurtulus (2009) analysed the impact of the Cedar Revolution on Lebanese collective self-identification.⁷

The aim of this paper is to assess some aspects of the Maronite collective memory consisting of perceptions towards the Lebanese golden age, the

⁷ Indeed, there are many more works on the Maronite community prepared by various scholars focusing on different areas related to the Maronite community. For example, Jobe Abbass Jobe prepared a work titled "A Codec Particularis for the Maronite Church" (2007), Malek Abisaab continued the topic about the Maronite Church by preparing a work "Warmed or Burnt by Fire? The Lebanese Maronite Church Navigates French Colonial Policies 1935" (2014), while Sami E. Baroudi and Paul Tabar focused on a more political dimension by publishing the work titled "Spiritual Authority versus Secular Authority: Relations between the Maronite Church and the State in Postwar Lebanon: 1990-2005" (2009) with Paul Tabar alone analysing the Maronite Church's relations with the diaspora in the work entitled "The Maronite Church in Lebanon: From Nationbuilding to a Diasporan/Transnational Institution" (2006). Additionally, Alexander D.M. Henley's several articles, such as "Religious Nationalism in the Official Culture of Multi-Confessional Lebanon" (2017), "Between Sect and State in Lebanon: Religious Leaders at the Interface" (2016), and "Politics of a Church at War: Maronite Catholicism in the Lebanese Civil War" (2008). Two additional works should be mentioned by Emma Loosley entitled "A Spiritual Odyssey: the Maronite Self-Image in the Twenty-First Century" (2005) and Hussein Sirriyeh entitled "Triumph or compromise: The decline of political Maronitism in Lebanon after the civil war" (1998) focusing on the questions of Maronite collective identity. Yet all these works exceed the scope of this paper, which aims at contributing to the field of the Maronite collective memory reflected in how lay representatives of the Maronite community remember.

factual historical references to Lebanese history and the Lebanese landscape as reflected by lay representatives of the Maronite community involved in cultural and political life, based on the author's fieldwork in Lebanon in December 2022. The paper is divided into two parts. Firstly, the author explains the essential aspects of the collective memory in contemporary collective identity construction based on the insights, mainly, of Anthony D. Smith and Duncan Bell and, secondly, he evaluates the findings from his fieldwork trip to Lebanon based on the thematic blocks of the golden age, factual historical references (based on perceptions towards Phoenicianism and additional factual information) and the Lebanese landscape.

The Methodology of the Research

The work is based on the data collected during the author's fieldwork trip to Lebanon in December 2022, where he conducted 19 semi-structured interviews. Among the interviewees were political and cultural representatives of the Maronite community whose occupations include teaching staff of universities and schools, lawyers, doctors, political activists, politicians, entrepreneurs, ex-military personnel – all these individuals can be defined as active and visible members of the community, willing to speak and share their ideas and having means at their disposal to influence the masses. The reason for choosing the elite or intelligentsia for the interviews is based on the assumption defined by Miroslav Hroch (2012) that the elite is largely responsible for developing and spreading modern collective identity to the masses and although the latter is crucially important in collective identity construction, it is the intelligentsia that turns certain ideas into a coherent concept and spreads them within the community and society through various instruments. The questionnaire was prepared based on the historical development of Maronite thought applied to a theoretical framework drawn from the collective memory field. Interviewing research participants provided an opportunity to directly speak with people active within the Maronite community in Lebanon and learn their perceptions towards various important questions, with such perceptions in turn likely to be spread more widely within the community.

In line with the ethical standards of the research⁸, the participants were first briefed on the purpose of the research and given the researcher's self-

⁸ The empirical field research was carried out according to the document 'Guidelines for the assessment of compliance with research ethics' on academic ethics and procedures approved by the Ombudsmen of the Republic of Lithuania. Guidelines for the assessment of compliance with research ethics. Retrieved from: <https://etikostamyba.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/V-60-Del-Atitikties-moksliniu-tyrimu-etikai-vertinimo-gairiu-tvirtinimo-su-pakeitimais> [Accessed: 15 July 2023]

introduction, also gaining permission for using audio recording. Considering the importance of protecting the privacy and safety of the research participants, several aspects should be marked. It has to be stated that the author clearly understands that Lebanon has been through very difficult times, with political uncertainty and deep financial crisis taking place simultaneously; apart from that, the Maronite community is relatively small in numbers and most of the active members are easily recognisable based on descriptions of their professions, age or gender even without providing names; moreover, several research participants agreed to participate in the research only when anonymity was granted. Consequently, none of criterion which could allow identification of the interviewees and their ideas is provided in the work. Each interviewee was provided a random number with the research participants being identified by the formula *Interview No X*.

In the interviews, the author followed an order of some thematic blocks, one of which was collective memory. He usually started with a question about the golden age, followed by the worst age of Lebanese history and the role of the Maronites in these periods. Later he proceeded with a question about Lebanese ancestors, in most cases switching to the topic of the Phoenician legacy and its impact to modern day Lebanon. Afterwards, he moved to a question about the origin of the Maronite community and finished this thematic block with a question about the main historical differences between Lebanon and other entities in the region and Maronite relations with Lebanon. Also, in most of the interviews, relations between Lebanon and Maronites in general were discussed.

The interviews were conducted in English, heavily supplemented with French and Arabic words. All the interviews lasted approximately one hour. Most of the interviews were conducted in Beirut. In the text the author prefers quoting the interviewees instead of paraphrasing them, letting them speak for themselves with his sole intervention being the application of punctuation.

1. Collective Memory and Identity Construction

The collective memory, as one of the key elements in identity construction of each community aspiring to claim its vision of collective identity, as a topic has been developed by many scholars since the famous lecture of Ernest Renan titled *Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?* given in 1882 at Sorbonne University. There is no a single community without any reference to its history – in each case there will always be some references to the past highlighting certain points of it. The concept of the *collective memory* was developed by French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who argued that it is impossible to separate individual

memories from the society at large because collective memory is always mediated through complex mechanisms of conscious manipulation by elites and unconscious absorption by members of society (Verovšek, 2016, pp. 3–4). For a better understanding both these mechanisms and the ways the collective memory acquires its role in identity construction, several aspects should be considered.

Firstly, the collective memory is one of the pillars of the modern collective identity serving a universal function for communities to bind its members. As Smith argued, “memory, almost by definition is integral to cultural identity, and the cultivation of shared memories is essential to the survival and destiny of such collective identities” (Smith, 1999, p. 10). The shared (or collective) memory is different from history in a way that there are many existing collective memories and only one history. In history, communities are not considered to be unique with the historical facts and context making everything comparable and equally important while the collective memory focuses on distancing and emphasising the uniqueness of the self (Assmann, 2011, pp. 24–30). These relations can be summarised with the quote of Anthony D. Smith:

Ethno-history,⁹ we may recall, differs from history in that the latter is concerned with a more or less disinterested and professional enquiry into the past, whereas the former stands for the members’ own records and memories of a community and its own rediscovery of an ‘authentic’ communal past or pasts. In the latter endeavour, the communal past appears as a series of original moral lessons and imaginative tableaux, which vividly illustrate the identity and uniqueness, and the centrality and essential goodness of the community – whatever the shortcomings of its individual members (Smith, 2010, p. 151).

The memory is always accompanied by the national myth aiming at explaining the genesis of a certain community or a nation, also connecting the past and present and preparing the future projections. The definition of the national myth was provided by Bell who wrote that:

We should understand a national myth as a story that simplifies, dramatizes and selectively narrates the story of a nation’s past and its place in the world, its historical eschatology: a story that elucidates its contemporary meaning through (re)constructing its past. [...] they [myths] subsume all of the various events, personalities, traditions, artefacts and social practices that (self) define the nation and its relation to the past, present and future. Myths are constructed, they are shaped, whether by deliberate manipulation and intentional action, or perhaps

⁹ Anthony D. Smith considered the collective memory to be a part of ethno-history.

through the particular resonance of works of literature and art (Bell, 2003, p. 75).

However, memory is much more complex than myth, because memory can function in opposition to myth by representing a conceptually distinct category, while the most referred to memories may not be the ones that are privileged in mythology (Bell, 2003, pp. 76–77). Therefore it is more appropriate to refer to memory instead of a narrower concept of myth, the most important aspect of which is the concept of a golden age, providing a sense of nostalgia and which has to be necessarily separated from today (Smith, 1986, pp. 174–176).

Secondly, the collective memory always has its factual roots in history, because, as Smith observed, some primordial assumptions, such as the vitality of a pre-modern identity, stimulates a greater possibility to form the modern nation. For Smith, nationalism actually creates nations where they are not present, but for this certain signs, serving as the basis for reference, are needed (Smith, 1999, p. 71). However, some aspects of the constructivist approach should be considered as equally important contributing factors explaining how certain ideas are accumulated, then instrumentalised and, finally, spread to the masses. In this process, the cultural and political representatives of the community, consisting of, according to Hroch, intellectuals, governors, representatives of free professions (such as doctors, advocates, lawyers, artisans), priests, teachers, noblemen, townsmen and intelligentsia, are responsible for the construction of identity (Hroch, 2012, pp. 87–99). To sum up, political and cultural representatives can stimulate and develop cultural identity of the masses by instrumentalising various domains (for example, collective memory) of the modern collective identity, but identity cannot be formed out of nowhere; it needs certain cultural qualities that can be used by a nation or community as an axis for its cultural symbols (Smith, 1986, pp. 212–214).

Finally, the memory always has a spatial dimension which is called *ethnoscape* (Smith, 1999, pp. 150–154) or *lieu de mémoire* in French (or *place of memory* in English) as proposed by Pierre Nora. Jan Assmann also emphasised, the key is references to time and place for a community and its collective memory, because the inhabited space or landscape starts to be perceived as home by the community with various artefacts providing an image of stability, supplemented by the symbolism (Assmann, 2011, pp. 24–30). Bell contributed that, “the spatial dimension tends to be rooted in particular constructions of an often-idealised bounded territory, for example a romanticized national landscape” (Bell, 2003, p. 76) while Smith provides a more detailed definition about the landscape and its role in the memory:

How does this association between the group and the terrain come about? More particularly, how do ethnoscaples emerge? At its simplest, the terrain in question is felt over time to provide the unique and indispensable setting for the events that shaped the community. The wanderings, battles and exploits in which ‘our people’ and their leaders participated took place in a particular landscape, and the features of that landscape are part of those experiences and the collective memories to which they give rise. Often the landscape is given a more active, positive role; no longer merely a natural setting, it is felt to influence events and contribute to the experiences and memories that moulded the community. This is especially true of ethnoscaples, where the landscape is invested with ethnic kin significance, and becomes an intrinsic element in the community’s myth of origins and shared memories (Smith, 1999, p. 150).

The collective memory is an essential factor contributing to identity construction, with a golden age, some factual information and landscape aspects interacting when analysing the collective memory of a community as the key domain of modern collective identity construction and in the following pages the author provides an analysis of the Maronite community and its representatives regarding collective memory. Additionally, before moving on to analysis of the Maronite collective memory, it must also be noted that it is not only direct references to the three above mentioned aspects that can be observed in the domain of collective memory, but also the distinction between *self* and *other*, in practise meaning that collective identities, as well as collective memories, are partially relational and composed of comparisons and references to other entities (Wang, 2017, p. 18). Consequently, when analysing the interviewees, not only the directly described cultural features, but also distancing from other entities should be considered as contributing factors.

2. The Maronite Collective Memory

2.1. The Golden Age

With the first question in the historical block of the interviews about the golden age of Lebanese history, the author aimed at understanding which period of Lebanese history is considered to be the source of nostalgia for the Maronites he talked to. The aim of analysing this aspect is based on the fact that the perception of the golden age, as a part of the national mythology, provides an explanation about the formation of the community, its place in the world and the source of nostalgia binding the members of the community. Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that the predominant majority of interviewees

(16 out of 19)¹⁰ consider the golden age of Lebanese history to be (at least, partly) the years from the declaration of independence (1943) to the outbreak of the Civil war (1975) with small date variations. In each case the economic prosperity of Lebanon at the time was emphasised by the interviewees as the main contributing factor to a golden age. For example, one of the most detailed answers to the question reveals that the economic prosperity of Lebanon between 1943 and 1975 as the main contributing factor to the perception of the golden age of Lebanon:

The economic golden age after World War II when Lebanon was nicknamed the *Switzerland of the Middle East*.¹¹ So, at that time [the United States] dollar was equivalent to two Lebanese Lira. We were more powerful than the French franc and the Deutsche Mark. The golden age from an economic point of view came after our independence from France, which was in 1943, but the last soldier left Lebanese soil in 1946. Between 1946 and 1970 we lived in rising prosperity (*Interview No 14*).

However, it was not only the economic state of Lebanon at the time, as indicated in the above passage, that was the main contributing factor in the perception of Lebanese prosperity, with social and cultural factors also playing an important role in establishing the image of the golden age, as is reflected in another passage:

The golden age of Lebanon was in the 1960s. It was flourishing, it was the *Switzerland of the Middle East*. I think it was jam – everything was open, you had the biggest universities, the biggest actors, it was a place for vacation, it was the jam of the Middle East (*Interview No 1*).

¹⁰ Two interviewees expressed their doubts about the worst or best periods in general. One of them elaborated the continuum of evolution which leads to improving things (*Interview No 6*), while the other added that “I don’t think there is a golden age and the worst age. Every ten years we are encountering similar things at different level. [...] Every 20 years we have crisis between religions starting with the 1950s, so nothing is changing, so the golden age in Lebanon maybe it was in 1950s as there was lots of money, we were the *Swiss of the Middle East* but still politically it was not stable even at that time” (*Interview No 19*).

One interviewee elaborated on a period beyond the 20th century by highlighting the rule of Fakhr al-Din in the 17th century as the golden age of Lebanese history, claiming that “we had to wait until the Ottomans arrived in 1516 and got rid of Mamelukes to come back there to live, out of these caves and villages and valleys, to rebuild these villages. And at the same time, you had this new system of the Ottomans who had allowed people to rule themselves, and Fakhr al-Din saw that Maronites with their new college were becoming extremely prosperous and so there was this marriage between military force of Druze Fakhr al-Din and intellectual force of the Maronites, and this is how this Modern Lebanon would start here.” (*Interview No 15*).

¹¹ The motive of the *Switzerland of the Middle East* often appeared in the interviews.

In addition to economic and social factors, expressed by most of the research participants, two interviewees, although highlighting the period of 1943–1975 as the golden age of Lebanese history, also elaborated the establishment of Greater Lebanon in 1920 as a more important aspect for the Maronite community. One of these two interviewees indicated that “from a political point of view, it was after World War I when we had the identity of Great Lebanon. Compared to previous circumscriptions, it was our Great Lebanon“ (*Interview No 14*), while the other perceived the establishment of Greater Lebanon to be a reward following the previous years of famine¹² by saying that:

For Maronites, the best [period] was immediately after WWI. Why? Because at the time the war had killed 30% of the Maronites and they wanted to give them a reward – not a reward, something back. This area was attacked a lot. I know why because I was responsible for the Church here. 60% of the village died here from the famine. So after that they wanted to give a prize. To pay the price. They asked the patriarch to do the negotiations for Lebanon for a big [Greater] Lebanon. And everybody was thinking that Maronites must decide on that. That was era when Maronite were in charge of Lebanon (*Interview No 7*).

What is more, it is also worth noting that one more interviewee claimed the golden age of Lebanese history to be the times of *mutaşarrıfıyya*¹³ (and not the period 1943–1975) and the reason for such claim is mainly related to the political neutrality¹⁴ of Lebanon at the time:

The best thing that they [Maronites] have done is apply neutrality, they came to the resolution that they are going to distinguish themselves from what is happening around them and they are not going to fight Arabs, Turks or the Western world. And this is why we hear that this was a golden age of Lebanon. And this example just proves a point that properly enforcing rules and laws and keeping neutrality can solve all the problems in the region and people can live happily (*Interview No 8*).

Just as the perception of the interviewees about the golden age of Lebanese history was almost univocally expressed to be the years between 1943–1975 with small date fluctuations, the perception of the worst age of Lebanese history

¹² The Great Famine of Mount Lebanon of 1915–1918 resulting in decline of Lebanese population by half (Hakim, 2013, p. 223–224).

¹³ A period of Mount Lebanon Governorate 1861–1918.

¹⁴ The concept of political neutrality at the time as defined by the interviewee should be assessed in the light of the tense political atmosphere of the 1950–1960s and the Lebanese civil war afterwards.

was almost univocally¹⁵ (16 out of 19) dated to be at some point between the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1975 and recent times. It is also necessary to note that most of the research participants, when asked about the worst age, provided longer and more developed answers compared to those elaborating perceptions of a golden age, mainly, the author assumes, due to the fact that the perception of the worst period overlap with their lifetimes. The author believes that the following quote not only reflects the general perception of the interviewees about the worst age of Lebanese history, but also explains how the once lived golden age turned into the worst age, separating those days from current times, and how this is also connected to personal experience:

Unfortunately, I did not live in the golden age, I was too young. When the war started, I was a little boy, I was 4-5 years old. So the golden age I hear about from my parents, let us say, or what I read from the history of Lebanon. I really missed it personally as an experience. But of course I lived in the worst part of Lebanon. Since forty years now living wars, troubles, crisis, occupation, whatever you want. So no, I did not live in that period. What I lived through is really not the best part of it (*Interview No 3*).

One must note that – as indicated in the passage above – in many other interviews both war atrocities and social, political and economic issues that hit Lebanon afterwards (oftenly mutually interconnected) – were highlighted as the main contributing factors in perceptions of the worst era, with different details provided by the interviewees. One of these interviewees, apart from the war years, emphasised the last 15–17 years are the worst period of Lebanese history, also comparing these two periods, with plenty of details provided:

The worst period of Lebanon, besides the war, which was hell, I think the last 15–17 years. These are the worst. If you want to narrow it down, it is the last few years. But it started 17 years ago when [was] Rafiq [Hariri] assassinated. The worst era of Lebanon – it is this one. The one I have been awake during. Even when our parents tell us, for example, that the war of the 1975 was very bad, but what they used to say is there was money. You used to know that even if you are being hit in this area or that by bombing, you would know where to hide. There was money. There was fun. It was joyous even if they were at war. Now it is depressing. Most people will emigrate from the country 70 years, maybe for 50 years, after the war. And we are going backwards

¹⁵ In addition to the two interviewees not believing either in golden or in worst ages, one interviewee contributed to the discussion by saying that the worst period of Lebanese history was the era of Mameluke rule (1282–1516) (*Interview No 15*).

everyday. Inflation, the poverty rate, the unemployment rate, all of that, so I think this decade is the worst in Lebanon (*Interview No 1*).

Another interviewee, asked about the worst period of Lebanese history, highlighted social factors, referring to the post-Taif era by emphasising political aspects connected to the Maronite community's position in Lebanese political affairs:

I would say post-1990, after the Taif Agreement. My personal view is that Maronites lost the war during that period – some people will tell you that the war was the worst time but, in my opinion, the results were very bad too. After the Taif Agreement, the political role of Christians diminished, they had less influence, and there were particular actors who increased their role after this event. I would say that one the worst periods was between 1990 and 2005, especially for Christians, taking into account all internal aspects of the Syrian occupation, which was imposing for people. I am not saying that it is much better now but I think that is when the problems started – the Christians lost the war and all of these problems happened (*Interview No 10*).¹⁶

As can be deduced from the passages above, the worst period of Lebanese history, as perceived by research participants, was at some point between 1975 and now, with different aspects depending on the interviewee, with only one interviewee directly linking the worst era of Lebanese history to the current times, saying, “if you wanna add the worst, it is 2020-21 after the explosion¹⁷ and the lira's collapse versus the [United States] dollar. It is complimentary” (*Interview No 17*).

To sum up the author's findings on perceptions of the golden age and the worst age of Lebanese history, it can be clearly stated that the interviewees almost univocally claimed the Lebanese golden age to be the years between the declaration of Lebanese independence in 1943 and the outbreak of the civil war in 1975, with the worst period either the civil war itself or the years following the end of the civil war in 1990.

¹⁶ Another interviewee shared a similar opinion, claiming the worst age of Lebanese history to have lasted “from 1990 to 2005 because we were occupied by the Syrian regime, and this is the worst part,” also noting that the political representation of the Maronites in Lebanon became weaker after 1990: “before 1990, being Maronite and being Lebanese was equal. But after the Taif Agreement, no, the Maronites lost the power because the president doesn't have power anymore” (*Interview No 11*).

¹⁷ The interviewee referred to the explosion in the Port of Beirut on 4 August 2020.

2.2. The Phoenicianism and other findings

The second aspect the author wanted to analyse regarding the Maronite collective memory was the interviewees' perception towards the Phoenician legacy and Lebanese history in general. The aim is to analyse this aspect aware of the fact that collective memory in every segment has to have factual roots in history. Phoenicianism appears in the research for a reason, namely that it was actively developed in the 20th century by the Maronite community, and consequently, analysis of the collective memory of Maronites in the 21st century must be complemented by the insights into the Phoenician legacy today.

Phoenicianism has never been a monolithic concept and has never been supported by the entire Maronite community and, as elaborated by many intellectuals in the 20th century, acquired various forms. The study revealed that among those individuals from the Maronite community the author interviewed, the perception of Phoenicianism provides a much more diverse variety of answers compared to those when asked about the golden age, at the same time reflecting the variety of ideas in the 20th century.

Only three research participants directly supported the idea of Phoenicianism as the core concept of both the Maronite and Lebanese identity, sharing similar views to those of the Phoenicianists of the 20th century, saying either "in reality we are Canaan, Phoenician, Lebanese. We are not Arabic people" (*Interview No 2*), or "they were some kind of traders and they created the first alphabet so yes, we are proud to be Phoenicians" (*Interview No 17*), or "being Phoenician is more important than being Maronite" (*Interview No 12*).

At the same time several interviewees consider the Phoenician legacy as a matter of historical textbooks without any further connections to current times,¹⁸ telling the author either "basically, after these many centuries and decades have passed I do not think we are directly related to the Phoenicians" (*Interview No 3*) or "to tell you the truth, we do not care. We do not care if you were a Phoenician" (*Interview No 8*). The other interviewee provided a more detailed answer sharing the same principle:

I am not sure if we go and dig in the past to find and reveal if we are Phoenicians or we are Canaan descendants of Saint John Maroun. I do not think this will change a lot. Our mission has really changed and we are at the much more advanced and complex stage of defining targets

¹⁸ One interviewee told the author not willing to bind Maronites to any specific historical entity at all: "It is a very problematic topic, I believe that we are part of this area, we didn't come from somewhere, we are not Phoenicians, Arabs, we want to be related to this area – I am somebody who is tied to this area, I am not somebody who came from abroad to live here" (*Interview No 10*.)

and objectives and I think this discussion is useless for the moment (*Interview No 6*).

Yet, as it can be seen from another interview, although Phoenician motives are matter of ancient history without any connections to the modern-day Lebanese, occasionally these motives are used by Lebanese people in their daily conversations, as it can be seen from the example below:

This is [Phoenician] really an old history, *ya 'ni*¹⁹, it is not like we live it as an identity. As Maronites, it is much more recent history and more recent identity that we have, so it is different. I do not think the Phoenicians determined our history – it is not something really present unless it is genetic and we have the genes, let is say Lebanese are they know how to do these, they are good at commerce, you know, these kind of things. They are good salesmen, it is just said for fun. It is a very very old history, *ya 'ni*. I do not think that we can claim that today it is part of our actual identity (*Interview No 1*).

However, based on the data the author collected on the fieldwork trip, it can be stated that most of the interviewees, although neglecting the direct influence of the Phoenicians to the Lebanese inhabitants today, expressed some level of connection to the Phoenician legacy, mainly based on the historical geographical presence and some features inherited from the ancient Phoenicians visible today, for example: “since we are coming after the Phoenicians, if you want, our ancestors, so we were also open to the sea. We were sailors and adventurous in our DNA” (*Interview No 5*). A more detailed opinion, neglecting the direct Phoenician influence, yet, at the same time, accepting its partial legacy to modern-day Lebanese was provided by another interviewee, who noted that:

You can find a lot of theories. Some say that Maronites are Phoenicians, others say that no, Phoenicians left this land during some wars during the Arab conquest. So I am not sure if we are the Phoenicians. Maybe we are not the Phoenicians but what we know is that we are retaining from the Phoenicians an eagerness to be open, to be open for the west, to be open to strangers, and to collaborate with other civilisations. We keep this in our mind. Maybe it is our sun, maybe its our sea that dictate this, not genetics only. And we have from Saint Maroun this capacity to struggle and not to give up before getting what we believe in. And finally, we have some needs in this region that we feel that we can close a gap that exists in the needs and that's a whole fusion of all of

¹⁹ A very popular Arabic verbal form used in daily language, meaning “so”, “that is”, “namely”.

this genetics, history, needs and role model from Saint John Maroun (*Interview No 6*).

As can be observed from the example above, apart from the Phoenician element being commented by the interviewee, the research participant also emphasised the influence of Saint John Maroun in the formation of modern-day Maronite and Lebanese people, a motive that appeared several times and is commented on below.

Additionally, it is also crucially important to note that some interviewees, when discussing Phoenician motives and their use in modern Lebanese discourse, revealed that this question is affected by the political circumstances of the 20th century, which eventually led to the outbreak of the civil war:

It was at the time of the war between the Christians and the Muslims. Not to say that because West Europeans and Americans confuse Arabs and Muslims. Arab is not Muslim. [...] It was used only against Arabism. Not to be Arabic, you are Phoenician. But this is during the war between the Christians and the Muslims. Because, I told you, all the Western countries confuse Arabs and Muslims because being Arabic does not mean you have to be Muslim, like our ancestors who were Arabic but Christians (*Interview No 19*).

Another interviewee contributed to the topic by describing these discussions about the Phoenician legacy to be based on religious or social factors at the same time having no relevance today:

You will always have in Lebanon different versions and these different versions are always related to religious or social beliefs. And if you do your interviews, you will see that more Christians will try to identify themselves as descendants from the Phoenicians and more Muslims will see themselves as Arabs. This is the story that will never end in Lebanon: are we Phoenicians or are we Arabs because it is an identity thing. In my opinion, it does not make sense. I mean OK, Phoenicians were here and we are descendants from the Phoenicians but the later cultures and generations and people were coming to Lebanon over the thousands of years so that's not very contemporary (*Interview No 16*).

Indeed, the data collected during the interviews support the claim that Phoenicianism has always been a complex topic in Lebanon with different approaches expressed by Maronites with plenty of different aspects emphasised by interviewees. Based on this variety of answers, several further remarks should be made on the topic of Phoenicianism and historical perceptions by the Maronites because, when talking to the interviewees about the ancestors of

Lebanese people and the other history-related questions, the author observed three repeatedly highlighted aspects by the interviewees that he was not expecting before his trip to Lebanon and that should be elaborated as important to the self-perception of the Maronite community. Firstly, several interviewees emphasised the importance of both Saint Maroun and Saint John Maroun²⁰ claiming them to have been key people in the historical development of the community, especially in bringing Christianity to Lebanon. Such an example can be found in the following quote:

I think the Maronites were the main people who lived in Lebanon at the beginning. So you know when *Mar*²¹ Maroun came to Lebanon, he came from Syria and he spoke with the people here and they were not Christian at the time. He brought the good news from Christ and he baptised them. The main people living in Lebanon, the first religious people are the Maronites. The others came later (*Interview No 7*).

Secondly, the term Canaan²² appeared several times in the interviews, binding the modern Maronites and the ancient Canaan civilisation, therefore it can clearly be stated that the Canaanites also play a certain role in the self-identification of the Maronites. For example, one interviewee said that:

Ethnically, all Maronite people think that they are Canaanite. Canaan means Phoenicians. The others think they are Arabs. So there is some deviation between the Maronites and the others. They identify themselves as Canaanite (*Interview No 9*).

Thirdly, the motive of the mixture of both Lebanese society with its 18 communities and multilayered Lebanese history appeared in almost every interview as one of the main features of Lebanon and its history. For example, one interviewee used the metaphor of a mosaic:

Look, Lebanon is like a puzzle. It is mosaic. So you can find Phoenician roots in it, you can find some Arab, you can find some European from the Crusaders and you can find a little Armenian minority. So it is a mixture (*Interview No 9*).

²⁰ Saint Maroun (d. 410 AD) is considered to be the founder of the Maronite community, however, he himself had never reached Lebanon; Saint John Maroun (628-707) was the first Maronite Patriarch in Lebanon.

²¹ *Mar* is an Aramaic word (used in Syriac as well) to name the Saint, consequently, “Saint Maroun” is an English version of “Mar Maroun” in Syriac.

²² Canaan was a Semitic-speaking civilisation during the 2nd millennium BC on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Another interviewee also emphasised the mixture of Lebanese history, although considering it not to be the key aspect of Maronite identity, while at the same time claiming the Maronites to have originated from this region:

It is a mix of cultures, we come from many areas. Maronites are from this area and because this area is a mix of cultures, we have Phoenician roots, but I do not know why people put labels on their historical backgrounds. My point of view is that we are part of this area, part of these Arab countries – Christians for a long time refuse to say that they are Arabs, this is not because of a geopolitical aspect, but a political aspect, because saying that you are Arab equals Muslim, and they do not want to say that they are Arabs because they do not want to be absorbed (*Interview No 10*).

Finally, one interviewee, when asked about the ancestors of the Lebanese people, provided the following answer, which aptly summarises the essence of the Lebanese political system and, the author believes, no further comment is needed on this passage:

Every person is Lebanese who works correctly for this country and every confessional – maybe he is Muslim like as-Sulh²³, maybe he is Maronite like Camille Chamoun²⁴, maybe he is Shia like Kamal Asaad²⁵, maybe he is Shia like Sabri Hamadeh²⁶ – every person has done good work for Lebanon I can call them our ancestors (*Interview No 18*).

To sum up, it can be stated that the variety of different ideas expressed by the interviewees towards the Phoenician legacy and its role in Lebanon today combined with additional factors expressed by the interviewees cannot be reduced to a single definite outcome with plenty of different perceptions provided. The author finds that highlighting cultural and historical Lebanese diversity is a more apt concept defining Maronite perceptions towards Lebanese history.

2.3. Maronites and Lebanon

The third question the author wanted assess from the interviews in the thematic bloc of collective memory was the connections between Maronites and Lebanon (particularly, Mount Lebanon) and reflections on these connections by

²³ Riad Al Solh (1894–1951), Prime Minister of Lebanon 1943–1951.

²⁴ Camille Chamoun (1900–1987), President of Lebanon 1952–1958.

²⁵ Kamel Assaad (1932–2010), Legislative Speaker of Lebanon 1964, 1966, 1970–1984.

²⁶ Sabri Hamadeh (1902–1976), Legislative Speaker of Lebanon 1943–1946, 1947–1951, 1959–1964, 1964–1968, 1968–1970.

the Maronite people. The aim of analysing this aspect is based on the fact that the perception of the landscape provides an understanding on the connections between it and the community, complementing each other. When discussing this topic, every interviewee confirmed inseparable relations between Lebanon and Maronites, while elaborating different aspects of these connections. Firstly, they can be defined by the generally shared idea that the modern state of Lebanon was created by Maronites. For example, one interviewee told the author that: “in Lebanon, Maronites have a power to become president, they participate deeply in social and political life and they are the builders of Lebanon from the beginning” (*Interview No 9*), while another interviewee told the author that: “if you have to think of Lebanon, you have to think of the Maronites, because we are the reason that Lebanon is Lebanon” (*Interview No 2*). Similarly to these ideas, another interviewee contributed to the discussion in the following way:

You know, there is a common belief and it's very deep in our subconscious thinking, that Lebanon has been made to create a land or to find a land for this Maronite community to exist. So we have it in our deep belief and it is a reality anyway (*Interview No 6*).

While some interviewees, as indicated above, expressed more general considerations about the Maronite and Lebanese connections, another interviewee was more precise in referring to historical details by emphasising the Maronite efforts at the Versailles Conference in 1919 amid attempts to convince the international community about the establishment of a Lebanese state when discussing the Maronite role in the Lebanese affairs:

It is the creation of Lebanon, because as you know before World War I we did not have Lebanon as a country. We had Mount Lebanon, the city of Tripoli, city of Saida, the city of Beirut but pertaining to the Ottoman Empire. We did not have a country. The patriarch at the time went to Paris at the end of WWI and managed to convince the international community that Lebanon has its own identity despite it not having fixed borders. Maronites have been the leaders and founders of its known surface until now (*Interview No 14*).

One more interviewee, similarly to the previous research participant, elaborated historical details from the same period and the Maronite contributions to it by highlighting the extension of Lebanon from Mount Lebanon to the Greater Lebanon and the Maronites' role in this extension by claiming that while modern Lebanon was established by Maronites, Lebanon is for all:

You know that the Maronite is the reason Lebanon was founded, you know that. Lebanon was only Mount Lebanon. But when the opportunity was given to Hoayek, Lebanon was expanded. We think that Lebanon is for all. It is not for Maronites alone. But when Lebanon was Mount Lebanon, we were the majority, but after we have East and the West we are not the majority. To put our hat in good place and make us feel that we are and will be in Lebanon for all the years to come, they gave us the presidency of Lebanon (*Interview No 2*).

Similarly to the idea expressed above, another interviewee emphasised the coexistence between different religions in Lebanon to be a spirit of the idea of Lebanon. Overall, the idea of coexistence, as well as the idea of multilayered historical and cultural character of Lebanon, was expressed multiple times:

They [Maronites] are, let to say, the real spirit of the idea of Lebanon. This idea is coexistence between Muslims and Christians. And Christians were, *ya'ni*, mainly Maronite at that time, they were predominant in numbers but, honestly, I cannot see anymore a difference between Maronites and the other communities (*Interview No 3*).

Apart from the fact that Lebanon is for all, it is also important to observe that Maronites all over the world are united by a common ancestry in Lebanon and Lebanon has a particular meaning for all Maronite people across the world:

Lebanon was made and built and the idea of Lebanon was for Maronites. So you cannot find a Maronite elsewhere. His origin must be from Lebanon. Any Maronite in the world must have a Lebanese origin (*Interview No 7*).

In addition to this idea, it also has to be noted that, as one of the interviewees observed, Lebanon is a necessary condition for the Maronite community to exist anywhere in the world:

Of course, the Maronites played a huge role there as well – for example, if we look at their flag, the cedar, it became the flag of Lebanon. Historically, they used to be equal to Lebanon, even now we say that Maronites cannot exist without Lebanon, it is impossible. Maronites in Australia or in any other place would disappear if Lebanon disappears (*Interview No 15*).

Secondly, relations between the Maronites and Lebanon can be defined by the attachment of the Maronites to the land and mountains in Lebanon in particular, with these mountains as one of the main assumptions making Lebanon unique in the region. One more interviewee told me that geography

was the main factor in the historical formation of Lebanon, shaping its cultural character:

Geography played a role. It is obvious because we are a country that is open to the sea, we are totally different from countries that are totally deserted and two hundred kilometers away is the desert. So this geography plays a role. This is why Lebanon was more like an open country for different civilisations and different cultures and this is why Lebanese people who are more culturally diversified than the Arabs around us. This is why the Phoenicians were in Lebanon because of the country, because they would not live in a desert. So they can export. So Lebanon, by geography, is very important for its cultural identity (*Interview No 16*).

Another interviewee, similarly to the previously expressed idea, stressed geography and the mountains, claiming these elements to be essential factors for preserving the Maronite identity:

Without the geography there would be no Lebanon. It is the geography which was the natural fortress where the Maronites were able to come and hide and to preserve their identity. This is how they were able to preserve. [...] Every time when invaders were pushing to exterminate them, they would go up up up more and more to the upper mountain. Whenever they had an opportunity, they expanded again (*Interview No 5*).

In addition to the mountains, the author also observed that the land is also an essential factor shaping the Maronite identity and character:

I think the Maronites have a history of being under pressure. They were hardworking people, they were great at this *teraz*²⁷ and in Lebanese case this comes from the culture of the Maronites because they came not to comfortable places with beaches, they had to create their own place, grow crops, food, trees, and essential things to survive, and that is why they live in remote areas with mountains, snow, which naturally protected them. I think these are the main character ideas of the Maronite: being attached to the land but also having a background that they need to defend it – it comes from their history where they faced a lot of attacks and pressure, not just from Muslims, but also Christians, who were killing each other, based on the question on what do you believe and trying to figure out which way of believing was right (*Interview No 10*).

²⁷ The interviewee referred to a specific way of agriculture by using terraces in a mountainous area.

Life in the mountains created differences between Maronites and other Christians of Lebanon. Historically, the Maronite community was living mainly in the mountains while the other communities lived in the cities: “in the past, the Maronite used to live in the mountains, you know, the Orthodox used to live in the cities” (*Interview No 19*), additionally, another interviewee added that: “you cannot feel the Maronite identity in Beirut” (*Interview No 16*). Together with the Maronites, the Druze people were also living in the mountains: “Druze and Christians are completely mountaineers, Mediterraneans, they are local, they originate from this land” (*Interview No 15*). One more similar opinion, explaining the Maronite identity through the difference with the other, can be found below:

The Maronites are more related to mountains than cities. Historically, the Orthodox were in the cities, the Maronites were in the mountains. Historically, they are not the aristocrats. They are peasants. The poor people who lived in the mountain and were fighters (*Interview No 3*).

To sum up, it can clearly be stated that Maronites and Lebanon are bounded by an inseparable connections both historically and culturally and the aspect of landscape, which historically has formed the cultural character of Maronites, was emphasised univocally by every interviewee the author talked to as one of the key elements to the modern collective Maronite identity.

Conclusions

After analysis of the 19 interviews made during author’s fieldwork trip to Lebanon in December 2022 based on collective memory methodology, the author would like to provide the following quote provided by one of the interviewees that, he believes, reflects and summarises the general opinion expressed by most of the individuals he interviewed:

I think the idea of Lebanon links to the Maronites. More than the Phoenician. The Lebanon that you find now in this model was created by Maronites, they came from Syria and lived in this mountain nature to defend themselves from any other army that tried to occupy this country. I think the Maronite community has the right to honour them for creating this country (*Interview No 18*).

The above quote reflects the general view of the Maronites expressed in the interviews and noted by the author. Indeed, there were additional aspects provided by the interviewees covering various topics of Lebanese history and their role in the Maronite collective memory today along the three theoretical domains discussed in this article: the perceptions towards the golden age,

relations with factual history and with the landscape. The main findings along each of these segments shall be discussed more in detail:

Firstly, it should be noted that the majority of the interviewees described the golden age of Lebanon to be the period of 1943–1975 with small date variations. This period marks both social and economic prosperity of Lebanon, labelling Lebanon the *Switzerland of the Middle East*. The golden age ended with the outbreak of civil war in 1975, starting the worst period of Lebanese history, which, according to some of the interviewees, continues up to the present;

Secondly, it should be noted that the perceptions of factual history, another important topic, provided a great variety of opinions. The first topic the author wanted to analyse due to its importance in the 20th century, Phoenician motives, in the context of the 21st century in Lebanon is still a complex topic, reflecting different approaches of the individuals of the community. For some, it is an essential element of Lebanese history; for others, it is a matter for historical textbooks; for most of interviewees it is an important, yet one of many aspects of Lebanese history. On top of that, the study suggests that three additional elements – Saint Maroun and Saint John Maroun (as the pioneers of Christianity to Lebanon), references to Canaan (as the ancestors of Lebanese) and the mosaic of Lebanese history and society (both elaborating the multilayered history of Lebanon and currently officially 18 communities residing in Lebanon) – are considered to be essential factors in shaping the modern-day Lebanese identity;

Thirdly, the research reveals that every interviewee expressed an opinion that Maronites are the ones responsible for the establishment of modern-day Lebanon and both Maronites and Lebanon are inseparable from each other. Moreover, there is a specific connection between Maronites and mountains in Lebanon, spiritualising these relations.

To conclude, it is important to state that claiming this study's findings to represent the full voice of the whole Maronite community would be too ambitious a task. The study reflects an opinion of an influential part of the Maronite community and its secular representatives, capable of influencing the masses within the community. Because of this influence and means at their disposal of the Maronites the author interviewed, the ideas shared with him in the interviews are likely to reach the masses and influence them, yet it is up to each individual to choose self-identification. However, the author believes that his study assists in revealing the collective Maronite identity in the 21st century for, at least, two reasons. On the one hand, the collective memory is one of the pillars in modern collective identity construction. On the other hand, this

study contributes to the understanding of the current processes in Lebanon in the light of Lebanese reconciliation. The latter is a complex process with the 18 officially recognised communities acting within Lebanese confessionalism, though, considering the historical Maronite role in the formation of modern collective Lebanese identity and the lack of works in the field, the very likely collective lay Maronite voice in the 21st century is a necessary component to be discussed.

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Colonial Encounter and Imperial Legacy in Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown*

Abstract

The article explores the issues of colonial encounter as well as imperial legacy on the basis of Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* novel from 1966. The imperial project was heavily promoted by the authorities in the 19th century, but the dissolution of the Empire between the 1940s and the 1960s led to the emergence of a critical type of historical fiction crafted by British writers who experienced the imperial system at first hand. *The Jewel in the Crown* exemplifies complex attitudes as well as archetypal patterns among the colonisers and the natives in British India. The analysis shows that the coloniser is a failed figure who is unable to understand and co-exist with the colonised.

Keywords: Paul Scott, archetypes, colonialism, India, imperial legacy, the coloniser.

Introduction: Reassessing Colonial India

According to Edward Said, the West's condescending attitude towards the East is reflected in the shipment of oriental goods and putting them on display in Western museums (Said, 2003, p. 7). In this manner, the artefacts would undergo objectification; they would be labelled as mere souvenirs from the Far East. However, an attempt at putting the whole Empire on display should not go unnoticed either. Some people may long for, or hate, the British Empire today, but the Empire itself is no longer present in the public spotlight. On the other hand, the situation was different at the turn of the 20th century. The colonial endeavour was an integral part of daily existence of not only officials and administrators, but also of ordinary citizens. As John M. Mackenzie puts it: "Thousands of British families had friends or relatives [...] who had served [...] as civil servants, teachers, missionaries, engineers, [...], and of course as soldiers in the British army" (Mackenzie, 1999, p. 212). The number of people immediately involved in the process of acquiring and managing colonies may have been relatively small, but many Britons were affected indirectly. In order to keep the public engaged, the government used various means at hand in order to make "the Empire become an integral aspect of British culture and imagination" (Mackenzie, 1999, p. 213). From popular literature through

consumer marketing to cinema newsreels, the colonial struggle was advertised for the citizens at home and, most importantly, for their children who were to carry on the imperial duties in the future.

Indeed, the 19th century marked fervent promotion of the imperial project, whereas the second half of the 20th century saw a renewed interest in British colonial history. India achieved its independence in 1947, whereas colonial outposts in Africa were being gradually transferred to the natives in the 1960s. Conscious promotion of the Empire at the stage of its dissolution made no sense, yet the realm of culture focused on the subject of distant territories that (not so long ago) used to belong to the Crown. Fervent critics of these works may categorise them under an umbrella term “Raj revival genre” (Roy, 2013, p. 257), yet one has to be careful when differentiating between these cultural representations so as not to fall into the trap of generalisation. Rampant release of a great number of publications, movies, and radio dramas in now de-imperialised Britain cannot be equalled to such promotional projects of the past as imperial exhibitions and advertisements. We have to take into account that Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre’s *Freedom at Midnight* (1975) or Christopher Hibbert’s *The Great Mutiny* (1975) are non-fictional accounts, the purpose of which is to shed light on the most important moments of Indian history. The same applies to a 1974 BBC programme *Plain Tales from the Raj* and *Echoes of the Raj* (2000), which aimed at documenting the testimonies of men and women who lived in British-ruled India and presenting them for a generation of viewers unfamiliar with the Empire (Roy, 2013, p. 258). Such presentations were not simply meant to evoke longing and nostalgia for the colonial glory days, but to record history for posterity.¹

In terms of fiction, however, we can notice a variety of different utterances ranging from radio dramas (*Shadow of the Moon*) through stage plays (*Phaedra Britannica*) to literature (*The Raj Quartet*, *The Siege of Krishnapur*, and *The Far Pavilions*). Preoccupation with colonial themes within the British film industry reached its peak in the 1980s when such popular adaptations premiered as *Staying On* (1980), *A Passage to India* (1984), *Kim* (1984), or *The Jewel in the Crown* miniseries (1984). Indeed, the abundance of works of fiction in the 1970s and 80s shows a considerable degree of interest in colonial themes, from the side of animators of British culture. Interest in colonial themes did not amount, however, to a conscious agenda that “sought to introduce the seemingly forgotten heroism of imperial Britain to contemporary youth” (Roy, 2013, p. 259). One may arrive at such a presupposition upon superficial inspection of these popular adaptations, yet a closer analysis contradicts this notion.

¹ Similar activities are carried out by The British Library in London which has a substantial audio/visual catalogue (*The British Library* 2021).

In *Delusions and Discoveries: Studies on India in the British Imagination 1880–1930* (1972), Benita Parry writes that “There were thoughtful and humane men in the Anglo-Indian community as well as mindless authoritarians, and generalisations must inevitably shrink the range of experiences which they knew as individuals” (Parry, 1972, pp. 1–2). According to the researcher, postcolonial interpretations of the British presence in India should not look upon them as overconfident tyrants but victims; in other words, “displaced persons in India” (Parry, 1972, p. 2). She explains further that the colonial encounter can be best understood in terms of a psychological crisis. Indeed, the British arrivals were perplexed by the radically different lifestyle, philosophy, religion, and ethical conduct of the indigenous people (Parry, 1972, p. 4). At times, they tried to resist and fight the undesirable elements, such as the abuse of women; yet, the spiritual allure of the other-worldly frontier crept into their minds and led to either disenchantment or appreciation of India.

It is very easy to regard literary works written after the dissolution of the Empire, and composed by writers who experienced the imperial system at first hand, as merely nostalgic hagiographies of the saintly lives of the colonial officers. In any case, they shed light on the complicated Anglo-Indian relationship with the benefit of hindsight. This article explores an attempt to understand the British post-imperial experience of India and the ways in which the colonisers perceived their legacy through the analysis of Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966). The reason as to why this particular novel was chosen as subject for analysis stems from its relevance in the world of today. Many British publications before the 1940s and 50s constitute mainly memoirs and travel accounts, whereas postcolonial novels after the year 2000 focus mainly on the theme of diasporic lifestyle in First World countries.

As it was already outlined, the second half of the 20th century marks a resurgence of British interest in former colonies and indigenous cultures; however, this period is also the beginning of postcolonial literature as we know it today. The decade of the 1970s in particular is the crucial moment of shifting the narrative voice from the centre (Europe) to peripheries (the colonies). This is also the case with India. The early literary works were originally written and published in English, which means that they solidify the durability of colonial legacy in India in the form of language. That is not to say, however, that the writers consciously fight the figure of the coloniser within the linguistic field. More likely, they counteract the coloniser's phantom, which is reflected through the English language. What is more, postcolonial literature presents specific perspectives on the British coloniser and Indian colonialism. Given the fact that *The Jewel in the Crown* was published in the 1960s (at a period in-between appraisal and evaluation of the Empire), it is worth exploring the

attitude of the author (positive or negative) towards the coloniser, where exactly he localises the character (stereotypical white outsider, symbolic embodiment in the form of a land, a native, or a female), and how he evaluates the coloniser's tenure at the exotic frontier.

***The Jewel in the Crown* (1966) by Paul Scott**

The origins of *The Jewel in the Crown* and the entirety of *The Raj Quartet*² go back to the early 1940s when Paul Scott, a member of the Intelligence Corps, was reassigned to Indian Army Service Corps, which was gradually reclaiming the Burmese territories from the Japanese occupation. The young officer was initially surprised at the sight of the colony he had never seen before. To him, India was indeed a land of extreme differences posited alongside each other: the rich and the poor, the Civil Lines and crowded streets, private schools and children of beggars. Nevertheless, the subcontinent greatly enchanted Scott with its plurality of customs, colours, and deities. Upon his return to Britain after the end of World War II, his admiration for India found an outlet in a literary form. Although working primarily as a literary agent for other authors (including M. M. Kaye), Scott managed to write and publish such novels as *Johnny Sahib* (1952), *Six Days in Marapore* (1953), *A Male Child* (1956), and *The Chinese Love Pavilion* (1960). In addition, he penned the following radio plays: *Lines of Communication* (1952) as well as *Sahibs and Memsaahibs* (1958). Scott's literary pieces frequently featured such themes as interracial love and family drama set amidst the turmoil of imperial servitude. Having relied on personal experiences from army excursions, he tried to map out the uneasy moment of colonial encounter and its implications; however, his novels did not gain wide acclaim in the United Kingdom.

Even though Scott initially attempted to distance himself from using India as the main framework for his stories throughout the early 1960s, he eventually returned to his creative *modus operandi* in 1965. The writer started visiting old friends, both Indian and English, and interviewing them. These conversations eventually inspired him to take a trip to the Republic of India and see how the country changed after 20 years. His personal analysis of the relations between the coloniser and the colonised resulted in the novel *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966).

As it is stated at the beginning of the novel, *The Jewel in the Crown* revolves primarily around the event of rape. On the 9th of August, 1942, a certain Daphne Manners was brutally violated by a gang of thugs in the

² The series consists of the following four novels: *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966), *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), *The Towers of Silence* (1971), and *A Division of the Spoils* (1975).

Bibighar Gardens, Mayapore.³ Through multiple perspectives⁴ and different narrative forms (interviews, letters, diary entries or conversation reports), we follow the unnamed British narrator who investigates the case of Miss Manners and gathers all testimonies together. On the basis of this research, it appears that Daphne Manners was involved in a secret relationship with Hari Kumar, an Indian educated in England who was forced to return to the colony due to his father's suicide. The superintendent of the local police unit, Ronald Merrick, by complete coincidence targets Hari Kumar as the primary suspect. Being personally prejudiced against India, the police officer imprisons the man and subjects him to humiliating tortures in order to elicit a confession. Nevertheless, Hari remains silent. The truth is that he was with Daphne in the Bibighar Gardens, making love to her, until both of them were suddenly attacked by unidentified assailants. Daphne, in order to protect their relationship, makes Hari promise that he will never reveal the fact that he was present at the scene. Even though the most likely participants of the rape are later rounded up, Daphne is unwilling to confirm their involvement so as not to incriminate Hari as well.

Evidently, the main plot line of the novel functions as an intertextual response of Paul Scott to E. M. Forster's critically-revered *A Passage to India* (1924): "This is the story of a rape, of the events that led up to it and followed it and of the place in which it happened." The author also adds that "There are the action, the people, and the place; all of which are interrelated but in their totality incommunicable in isolation from the moral continuum of human affairs" (Scott, 1998, p. 10). For the characters in the novel, this horrible act of violence has not only the literal but also the symbolic meaning.

The story begins with a historical context rather than the suffering of Daphne Manners. The readers are told that the events are set in the year 1942, just as the Japanese took over Burma and Mahatma Gandhi's movement of civil disobedience started gaining wider recognition. The socio-political situation in British India became so tense that the colonists as well as the natives realised the status quo initiated by Queen Victoria in 1858 could not last indefinitely.

The heroine of the first chapter is Miss Edwina Crane, a missionary teacher who, albeit being English, vehemently supports the struggles of Gandhi. Her

³ This is actually a fictional city created by Paul Scott for the purpose of the story. From its description, it can be inferred that Mayapore is located somewhere in the North of India, either in Punjab or United Provinces (Scott, 1998, pp. 58, 104).

⁴ In order to ensure clarification within the analysis, I enumerate the primary characters of the novel: Daphne Manners, a woman raped in the Bibighar Gardens, Edwina Crane, a teacher who is attacked by rioters while travelling; Hari Kumar, Miss Manners' love interest; Lady Chatterjee, the influential owner of the McGregor's House; and Ronald Merrick, the Superintendent of Mayapore.

admiration for Indian independence movement shows in the poster presenting Gandhi, which she hangs in her classroom. However, her idealism is soon put to the test. While travelling from Dibrapur to Mayapore, she and a fellow teacher, Mr Chaudhuri, are stopped by rioters championing the Quit India campaign. The conflict gets out of hand and, in an attempt to save Miss Crane, Mr Chaudhuri opposes the men, but they drag him out and beat him to death. Miss Crane is also abused and thrown into a ditch. After regaining consciousness, she approaches the dead body of her colleague: “‘Oh God, forgive us all.’ [...] ‘There’s nothing I can do, nothing, nothing,’ [she] turned away and began to walk with long unsteady strides through the rain, past the blazing car, towards Mayapore” (Scott, 1998, p. 68).

By describing this incident, Paul Scott actually criticises “the coloniser who refuses.” Albert Memmi rightfully observed that such a figure is an idealist (Memmi, 2003, p. 67), and Scott also adds that this type of a person may have pure intentions, yet he or she should also be aware of the fact that the Other may not always recognise and appreciate the upright values: “For her the only hope for the country she loved lay in the coming together at last of its population and its rulers as equal partners in a war to the death against totalitarianism” (Scott, 1998, p. 46). Miss Crane initially champions the quest of Mahatma Gandhi, but she learns the hard way that the respected leader has no control over the masses lost in nationalist frenzy. In a utopia that Miss Crane envisages, the rioters would recognise that she poses no threat to them, but this is not the case in the real world. To them every white individual is a target, and Miss Crane escapes alive from the showcase of racist brutality only due to Mr Chaudhuri’s sacrifice.

After this ordeal, Miss Crane replaces a portrait of Gandhi with a painting simply called “The Jewel in Her Crown,” which presents Queen Victoria on the imperial throne, receiving tributes from Indian noblemen. She utilises the painting as an educational resource to teach children English in her classroom. Undeniably, the jewel which is given to the Queen is a symbolic representation of India, the greatest colony of the Empire. Edwina Crane’s act of switching the paintings marks her disenchantment with Mahatma Gandhi and his philosophy of nonviolent disobedience. The truth is that the public never fully listens to its leader. As a result, the prospect of peaceful co-existence between the British and the Indians on equal terms definitely seems more unattainable than ever before. Miss Crane’s presuppositions were too idealistic and could not withstand the brutal confrontation with reality. She decides to switch sides due to her disappointment, which denotes that the British think they know India, but this is not the case at all.

Nevertheless, there is still hope for a cross-cultural encounter or even a relationship, as it is visible in the case of Daphne Manners. She used to work as an ambulance driver during the bombing of the United Kingdom. Having been diagnosed with a heart condition, she had to refrain from her activity in emergency services; and after losing her family in the course of the war, she went to India to live with her only living relative, Aunt Ethel Manners. The woman criticises English sentiments toward the war in the following fashion: "I can't, as most of the English here do, blame the Indians for resisting the idea of war, a war they have no proper say in." She continues that "After all I've seen the real thing [...] but most of the people who lay down the law here about beating the Jap and the Hun [...] haven't even heard a rifle fired in anger. British India is still living in the nineteenth century. To them Hitler is only a joke" (Scott, 1998, p. 107).

During Daphne's sojourn in Rawalpindi (a real city located in Punjab Province, currently in Pakistan), Aunt Ethel quickly realises that the girl has a hard time getting into the social life of local community, especially due to her boyish demeanour and unattractive appearance. Therefore, Daphne is sent to Mayapore to live with a certain Lady Chatterjee. Miss Crane personally regarded the Indian noblewoman as an "overwesternized" kind of person (Scott, 1998, p. 42); however, the missionary teacher had never visited her mansion known as "the Macgregor House,"⁵ located at the edge of the Civil Lines, which was allegedly the place where "English and Indians came together as equals" (Scott, 1998, p. 42). Without a doubt, Lady Chatterjee, nicknamed by Daphne as Auntie Lili, has strong ties to the British administration because her late husband, Sir Nello Chatterjee, established the Mayapore Technical College. This does not mean, however, that the woman is a privileged elitist at the service of the colonial power.⁶ It is quite the contrary; as later actions and remarks of Lady Chatterjee show, she bridges the gap between high-class colonisers and nationalist natives.

Ironically, it is at the McGregor's House that Daphne encounters Hari Kumar. Similarly to Lady Chatterjee, Kumar is also well versed in British

⁵ The narrator details the origins of the household in the second part of the novel. Originally, it was built in the 18th century by an Indian prince as a gift to a classical singer he fell in love with. After the singer's death, the prince passed away out of grief and his son took over the princely kingdom. Due to exploiting his subjects and poisoning an Englishman, the son was dethroned and his state taken over by the East India Company. The house was uninhabited for decades until a certain Scotsman by the name of McGregor rebuilt the premises. In addition, he burnt down the son's stand-alone house which he perceived as an atrocity. Unfortunately, the Scotsman was killed together with his wife during the Sepoy Rebellion.

⁶ Such an attitude goes against Partha Chatterjee's conviction that reaching an understanding between the coloniser and the colonised is simply impossible. The natives are only bought with privileges but they are never allowed into the ruling class (Chatterjee, 2012, pp. 188, 271).

culture. This is primarily due to the fact that Hari spent his youth in Britain. His father was a prosperous businessman in Didbury, whereas Hari attended a public school in Chillingborough. Young Hari was not treated with hatred and disdain by his fellow students, but he was fully accepted as a member of the school community. What is more, Hari made friends as well. In particular, he stayed in close contact with Colin Lindsey, who never judged young Hari on the basis of his skin colour. The two supported each other and frequently exchanged letters. When Hari was forced to go back to India due to his father's untimely death,⁷ Colin stayed in contact, even though the friends were no longer able to see each other. Hari is brought back to his native homeland by his father's relatives and stays together with Mrs Gupta Sen, a widow and a sister of Duleep Kumar, who always wanted to raise a child. Because of her motherly attitude, she becomes Aunt Shalini to Hari: "In her self-effacement he saw evidence of a concern for his welfare [...]. He could not help knowing that in her odd, retiring way his Aunt Shalini was fond of him" (Scott, 1998, p. 260).

Due to his upbringing and education in England, Hari considers himself to be an Englishman. He is not Hari Kumar, but Harry Coomer, born and bred in the United Kingdom. His father actually came up with the corrected spelling and Aunt Shalini embraced it. Like the colonial administrators from Carl Jung's memoirs, Hari/Harry cannot help but dream about his European homeland: "Home. It still slips out. But this is home, isn't it, Colin? I mean I shan't wake up tomorrow at Chillingborough or Sidcot, or in what we always called 'my' room at Didbury?" (Scott, 1998, p. 242). In view of research by a social psychologist Richard Nisbett on the difference between the mentalities of people from the West and the East, we could say that Hari Kumar's mindset is driven by rationality and belief in personal agency. He rejects to embrace the reality in a holistic manner, which is visible when he expresses distaste towards less-than-civilised conditions in his supposedly "native" homeland:

I detest the others. From their point of view I'm unclean. They want me to drink cow-piss to purify myself of the stain of living abroad, crossing the forbidden water. Purify! I have seen men and women defecate in the open, in some wasteland near the river. At night the smell of the river comes into my bedroom. In my bathroom, in one corner, there is a hole in the floor and two sole-shaped ledges to put your feet on before you squat. There are always flies in the bathroom. And cockroaches. You get used to them, but only by debasing your own civilized instincts. At first they fill you with horror. Even terror. It is purgatory, at first, to empty the bowels. (Scott, 1998, p. 241)

⁷ Mr Duleep Kumar committed suicide because his business venture went bankrupt.

In consequence, Hari refuses to accept the *harmony* of India which mixes ancient customs with dubious superstitions in a setting that suffers from poor sanitary standards. Kumar is unwilling to perform his role of a benevolent, effeminate, god-obeying Hindu within the grid of person-to-person dependency⁸ because he had experienced a completely different world where there is no place for magic, spirituality, and disregard for hygiene. Therefore, Hari's stay in India invokes a playful spin on Abdul R. JanMohamed's "The Manichean Allegory." The researcher claimed that the colonial environment frightens the colonists, which in turn, makes them fall back on racial prejudices in order to avoid experiencing a personality crisis. Ironically, Hari Kumar is, in biological terms, a native of India, yet he acts not like the oppressed Other but the stereotypical representation of the "coloniser who refuses." Consequently, Paul Scott's novel eludes JanMohamed's accusation that European writers primarily demonise indigenous people in literature. Hari is actually a hybrid torn between two radically disparate dimensions, but by no means is he a symbolic "mediator" who provides a remedy for "the Manichean opposition" (JanMohamed, 1985, p. 66). In fact, the situation is much more complex than that. Hari may indeed look up to the imperial *modus operandi*, yet he experiences a great deal of prejudice as well.

Halfway through the novel, it is revealed that Colin arrived in India due to his army service. Hari is exhilarated and worried at the same time. He is afraid that his best friend will feel deep repulsion upon witnessing the dirty and overcrowded hustle and bustle of Mayapore. Nevertheless, Hari is also convinced that Colin will see and accept "the real India" (Scott, 1998, p. 277); that is to say, all the luxuries of the Civil Lines, such as the recreational clubs, administrative facilities, lavish bungalows, and railway stations. While eagerly awaiting a letter from his English friend, settling the details of their meeting, Hari accidentally encounters Colin Lindsey, now a captain in the ranks of India Command, at a cricket pitch. Colin consciously averts his eyes and does not recognise a childhood friend. Devastated Hari rushes back home and attempts to convince himself that that man he saw definitely was not Colin at all, for the real Colin would have surely written to him if he happened to be near Mayapore.

This sad situation serves as an exemplary instance of Edward Said's division between the ruler and the Other. Hari is not at fault during this unexpected encounter on a colonial ground. It is the imperial environment which used and subsequently transformed Colin Lindsey into a hegemonic figure of the

⁸ As Richard Nisbett explains, there is no single, non-Western concept of "I" (Nisbett, 2004, pp. 49). A resident of Southeast Asia functions in relation to other people, performing specific social functions. Being independent of the social web of connections is impossible.

oppressor. People who were or seemed to be equals about 10 years before in England assumed and performed the polar opposites of power relations in the colonies. Sister Ludmila, a missionary running a free clinic for the poor, tries to explain this incident by attributing the tense situation in British India to the impending invasion of the Japanese soldiers in the East. Nevertheless, nothing at all can excuse Colin's shameful behaviour. The man has evidently adopted racist and contempt of his military superiors and fellow officers. In his eyes, Hari ceased to be a friend and instead became a dehumanised object (part of Indian setting) unworthy of any attention whatsoever.⁹

Incidentally, the encounter with Colin happens on the same day as the tragic event at the Bibighar Gardens. In consequence, Hari drinks during the night together with the colleagues from the *Mayapore Gazette*, his place of employment. The next day, he is spotted by Sister Ludmila patrolling a wasteland near the river where Hari slept. She informs Superintendent Ronald Merrick about this unusual encounter, and the police officer immediately targets Hari as the prime suspect in the case of assault on Daphne Manners.

Ronald Merrick, the representative of law enforcement in Mayapore, is shown as a vile and petty human being. His social background is that of a lower-class commoner; thus, a colonial post in India allows Merrick to alleviate his personal insecurities. Among Indian natives, the police officer feels the need to exercise his power and demonstrate that white people are, without a shadow of a doubt, bound to rule over the inferior races of this world: "[T]here was nothing straightforward about Mr. Merrick. He worked the wrong way, like a watch that wound up backwards" (Scott, 1998, p. 139).

What is more, Merrick actively seeks to improve his position within the British social strata. Frequently, he stylises himself to be, in his own words, "only a grammar school boy" whose family is composed of "pretty humble sort of people" (Scott, 1998, p. 111), but the officer secretly envies those who are better off and have higher education. The desire to be recognised by the elite makes him strive for Daphne Manner's favours. Nevertheless, the woman finds the officer repulsive and rejects his advances. This in turn only fuels Merrick's hatred towards dark-skinned people and the whites who associate with them.

It is revealed in the second volume of *The Raj Quartet*, *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), that Hari Kumar was sexually molested and subjected to torture by Ronald Merrick. The researcher Steven Earnshaw claims that: "When Merrick tortures Kumar to extract a confession, he self-consciously re-enacts his view of the relationship between England (Britain) and India as

⁹ At least, this is what Hari and the readers infer on the basis of this situation because the narrator does not grant us access into Colin's mindset.

one of master-servant imbued with sado-masochism” (Earnshaw, 2013, p. 61). It can be inferred that apart from displaying a racist attitude towards the Other, Ronald Merrick is, in fact, also a latent homosexual. Back in Britain, in the world of Victorian virtues and public order, the officer was forced to suppress his desires, but in India he could indulge in the forbidden behaviour because the colony itself was the dark territory of the strange and the unexplained. If he regarded himself as an individual placed within the Jungian realm of the unknown, the Superintendent felt psychological permission to release his inhibitions and engage in devious activities. In this manner, Merrick re-enacts the archetype of the Outlaw. Paradoxically, although his social role is to protect and serve, Merrick’s true nature is that of a vengeful misfit with a destructive, near borderline psychotic frame of mind, who strives to be at the top of the dominance hierarchy¹⁰ and rule over others.

That being said, Paul Scott still manages to introduce some ambiguity around the character of the Superintendent. In subsequent parts of *The Raj Quartet*, more (mis)adventures of Ronald Merrick are revealed. For instance, in *The Day of the Scorpion* (1968), he is promoted to the post in military intelligence and spends a lot of time in the company of the Laytons. What is more, he tries to save his friend, Teddie Layton, from an ambush set up by the Indian National Army.¹¹ The attempt is unfortunately futile and leaves Merrick permanently disfigured. In *The Towers of Silence* (1971), he is given Miss Crane’s painting of “The Jewel in Her Crown,” which makes him ponder on the relationship between the British and the Indians. To the officer, Queen Victoria depicted in the painting appears to be a motherly figure looking after her innocent and uneducated Indian children.

Ultimately, Merrick marries the widow of his friend, Susan Layton, but happiness is short-lived as the woman loses her sanity due to personal trauma. In *A Division of the Spoils* (1975), the Superintendent himself is ruthlessly killed by unknown attackers (presumably Indian nationalists) while engaging in a homosexual act with a native adolescent. His corpse is found in a bathroom with a word “BIBIGHAR”¹² written on a mirror.

¹⁰ The dominance hierarchy stands for a social order with a linear or non-linear ranking in which dominant units control those below them. The term is often applied in biology, but also has its use in psychology (*Britannica.com* 2021).

¹¹ A military organisation led by Subhas Chandra Bose, and supported by the Empire of Japan, which sought to liberate India from British rule during World War II (*Britannica.com* 2021).

¹² The word not only refers to the Bibighar Gardens, the place where Daphne Manners was raped but also functions as an intertextual reference to the Siege of Cawnpore in 1857 when British women and children were rounded up and executed by the Sepoys. The word itself literally means in Hindi “the House of the Ladies” (Matthews, 2015, <https://www.mimimatthews.com>).

The character of Ronald Merrick represents the duality of human nature. The readers can notice that the officer commits bad deeds, but he is also capable of carrying out heroic acts as well. However, the coloniser is blinded by a false set of presuppositions towards the Other, which ultimately lead to the man's damnation. In other words, it is up to an individual to work against wrongdoing and change his or her fate for the better. Ronald Merrick ultimately fails to work against wrongdoing and change his or her fate for the better; yet, in contrast to wishful thinking of Bruce Gilley¹³, it is impossible to frame this colonial figure as an all-positive or all-negative character. Some researchers claim that the colonial officer functions as "a viciously unflattering self-portrait" of Paul Scott, who was struggling with his own bisexuality and never dared to reveal this secret to his wife (Paterson, 1993, p. 115).

Still, the original novel provides us with a standpoint of righteous characters, such as Lady Chatterjee. This noblewoman treats her houseguest, Daphne Manners, with extreme courtesy, and does everything in her power to release Hari Kumar from his confinement. That is not to say that she approves of the relationship between Daphne and Hari. Lady Chatterjee perceives Hari with a sort of disdain in view of the fact that he considers himself to be a member of the British elite. Paradoxically, Lady Chatterjee oscillates between the same social spheres as well, but has never given up her Indian identity:

Westernised though she was, Lady Chatterjee was of Rajput stock, a Hindu of the old ruling-warrior caste. Short, thin, with greying hair cut in European style, seated upright on the edge of a sofa, with the free end of her saree tight-wound around her shoulders, and her remarkably dark eyes glittering at you, her beaky Rajput nose and pale skin proclaiming both authority and breeding, she looked every inch a woman whom only the course of history had denied the opportunity of fully exercising the power she was born to (Scott, 1998, p. 42).

Indeed, Lady Chatterjee is proud of her Indian heritage and gives the allure of being a skilled woman of politics, similar to Indira Gandhi. Incidentally, she likens herself to Indira's father, Jawaharlal Nehru, whom she considers to be the representative of traditional, *non-westernised* India. She reflects on the post-partitioned Republic in the following fashion:

¹³ Bruce Gilley is a political science expert and an author of a controversial article from 2017 called "The Case for Colonialism" which presents an unpopular opinion about the legacy of colonialism and the effectiveness of postcolonial reworkings. The article was originally published in the *Third World Quarterly* journal, but it was taken down due to the fact that the editor started receiving death threats. The text was later republished on the main site of the National Association of Scholars.

I am not a Hindu but I am an Indian. I don't like violence but I believe in its inevitability. [...] [I]t doesn't worry me in the least that in the new India I seem already to be an anachronism [...]. You could say that the same thing has happened to Mr. Nehru for whom I have always had a fondness because he has omitted to be a saint. I still have a fondness for him because the only thing about him currently discussed with any sort of lively passion is the question of who is to succeed him. I suppose we are still waiting for the Mahatma because the previous one disappointed and surprised us by becoming a saint and martyr in the western sense when that silly boy shot him.¹⁴ I'm sure there's a lesson in that for us. If the old man were alive today I believe he'd dot us all one on the head with his spinning wheel and point out that if we go on as we are we shall end up believing in saints the way you English do and so lose the chance of ever having one again in our public life. I have a feeling that when it was written into our constitution that we should be a secular state we finally put the lid on our Indianness, and admitted the legality of our long years of living in sin with the English. Our so-called independence was rather like a shotgun wedding (Scott, 1998, pp. 79–80).

In consequence, Lady Chatterjee¹⁵ implies that perhaps the British were never meant to be in India. Due to their very presence, they had irreversibly changed this land. With the moment of embracing the state of being independent from the colonisers, the country is bound to follow, at least on the level of politics and economics, the principles of rationality and European secularity in order to survive in the post-World War II reality. The realm of spirituality, the one that frightens the Western newcomers so much, is meant to be rejected. Indeed, Lady Chatterjee is quite right that new generations of independent Indians are keen on adopting the trend of Americanisation, as described by social psychologist Richard Nisbett; nevertheless, this does not mean that communicating in English, wearing baseball caps, or driving automobiles made in Europe automatically represses traditional modes of indigenous lifestyle (Nisbett, 2004, p. 221). The history of India since 1947 has shown that there is still a space for the spiritual realm in the public sphere. From ritual bathing in

¹⁴ Lady Chatterjee refers to the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi which took place on January 30, 1948 in New Delhi. A Hindu fundamentalist, Nathuram Godse, fired three bullets at point-blank range. The assassin was sentenced to death in 1949.

¹⁵ It can be inferred that the characters' names in Paul Scott's novel are highly emblematic. Lady Chatterjee may serve as a reference to D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley*. Daphne Manners goes against the social *manners* of the British community by displaying her devotion to Hari, whereas Ronald Merrick desires power, as implied by his surname.

the Ganges to the *Durga Puja*¹⁶ festivities, Indian people continue to underline their peculiar position at the threshold of the modern and the traditional.

Daphne Manners herself exemplifies the colonial encounter that can result in an unexpected, yet positive outcome. It turns out that the woman is actually pregnant. In view of the gruesome gang rape, the fatherhood of the baby is very much unknown; however, Daphne believes that the father must be Hari Kumar. She wishes to be with her loved one and create a family, but in view of the controversial court trial in the course of which she does not identify any assaulter, the British community excludes Daphne from their sphere. Ultimately, she gives birth to a child but dies in the process because of a pre-existing heart condition, which she developed during the war. The child called Parvati is taken care of by Ethel Manners and Lady Chatterjee, who conclude together that Hari, indeed, must have been the natal father. Aunt Manners explains as follows:

She is a sweet and pretty child. Her skin is going to be pale, but not nearly pale enough for her to pass as white. I'm glad. As she grows older she won't be driven by the temptation to wear a false face. At least that is one thing she'll be spared — the misery and humiliation experienced by so many Eurasian girls. I intend to bring her up as an Indian, which is one of the reasons I have called her Parvati. (Scott, 1998, p. 469)

Yet, the birth of Parvati also has its counterbalance in the form of Miss Crane's death. After her ordeal, she gradually loses touch with reality, mumbling nonsensical things, and constantly repeating "I'm sorry it's too late. [...] There's nothing I can do" (Scott, 1998, p. 428). Edwina Crane eventually commits suicide in a manner resembling the barbarous ritual of *suttee*. That is to say, similarly to oppressed Hindu widows, she immolates herself. Miss Crane's tragic fate is a grim foreshadowing of what is going to happen to other white *memsahibs*¹⁷ in subsequent novels. The heroines suffer from insanity, abortion, and betrayal; however, in spite of various forms of maltreatment experienced in the Raj, they come to realise that the imperial colony is not granted to the British for all eternity. It is only a matter of time for the indigenous people to come and take back what once was rightfully theirs. Nevertheless, we may ask: at what cost? Daphne Manners was brutally raped, Hari Kumar wrongfully accused, and Edwina Crane lost her faith in the Anglo-Indian symbiosis.

¹⁶ An annual Hindu festival serving as a tribute to the goddess Durga. Indian women paint on their foreheads the *sindoor* sign (mark of a married female) with vermilion powder (Suhasini, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com>).

¹⁷ *Memsahib*: a Hindu term used to describe a white, foreign woman (*Merriam-Webster.com* 2020).

Ethel Manners in one of her letters to Lady Chatterjee admits the moral responsibility of the colonisers in setting in motion the Partition when, in fact, the very opposite was needed. The East and the West clashed together on this desolate land with a harsh climate, and the British should have done everything in their power to prevent nationalist violence, to undo “little pockets of dogma and mutual resistance” (Scott, 1998, p. 474). The reality turned out to be otherwise, but there is still hope for future reconciliation between the two cultures, as Lady Chatterjee takes it upon herself to raise a representative of a new postcolonial generation, untainted by historical shortcomings:

Dinner is the only meal Parvati has with the family, such as the family is: that is to say Lili Chatterjee and young Parvati, the two of them. When there are no guests there is this picture to be had of them sharing one end of the long polished dining room table [...] the old woman and the young girl, talking in English because even now that is the language of Indian society, in the way that half a century ago French was the language of polite Russians (Scott, 1998, p. 94).

Conclusions

Paradoxically, Paul Scott's instance of historical fiction is extremely critical and reproachful of the coloniser and the colonial endeavour. In *The Jewel in the Crown* (1966), readers are presented with the image of India as a territory in deep political turmoil plagued by World War II and the unrest propelled by the civil disobedience movement. The colonisers themselves appear to be oblivious to these factors; that is, until a disaster strikes. Miss Crane witnesses the death of her Indian friend, whereas Miss Manners is brutally raped by a gang of assailants. Hari Kumar is targeted as the prime suspect in the case of Daphne Manners, and he is tortured by the vicious Superintendent Ronald Merrick. In the end, Daphne's child, the fruit of an interracial affair raised by the noble Lady Chatterjee, serves as a promise of hope and change for the better in a land consumed by racial prejudice and violence. The coloniser is not an archetypal representative of “the Hero” or “the Sage” who has a remedy for all the topical problems. In fact, the imperial representative, according to Paul Scott, is directly responsible for crippling the Indian subcontinent by setting in motion the process of the Partition. As exemplified by the character of Merrick, the coloniser can be a lower-class individual suffering from envy and prejudice towards the native. There is no place for mutual understanding between the Westerner and the Other, and it is up to Manners' daughter (and her generation) to usher in a new era of respect and rapprochement in the postcolonial reality.

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REPORTS AND REVIEWS



Review: Nicholas L. Danforth, *The Remaking of Republican Turkey: Memory and Modernity since the Fall of the Ottoman Empire*, Cambridge 2022: Cambridge University Press, pp. 251.

On October 29, 2023, Republican Turkey marked its centenary. This event was an excellent opportunity to reflect on the history of modern Turkey. It encourages current scholarship to make a new summary and objective insights into the political, religious, cultural and intellectual development of the last century.

In trying to articulate their vision researchers engage in a process of rethinking. This process is recursive because it involves constant reflection and revision. There are many scholarly works which refer to the rethinking, remaking, rediscovering, reimagining of Turkey's past from different angles, including its engagement with modernity.¹ Memory and historical awareness appear here as important categories that help us explain who we are through the narratives we create about the past. As Charles Taylor puts it, "to have some idea of who we are, we must have some idea of who we have become and where we are going" (Taylor, 2001, p. 94).

In this context Nicholas Danforth's book *The Remaking of Republican Turkey: Memory and Modernity since the Fall of the Ottoman Empire* is an interesting revisionist study, which connects modern Turkey to the dynamics of specific time and space. The book creates the opportunity to re-discuss the historical dilemmas of Turkey. It examines Turkish encounters with modernity, its achievements and failures and raises broader questions about cultural memory. In the end, it facilitates an assessment of today's outcomes and to some extent anticipates future trends.

¹ To mention only two of them: *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*. 1997. Sibel Bozdoğan and Resat Kaşaba (eds.), Seattle: University of Washington Press; *Remaking Turkey: Globalization, Alternative Modernities, and Democracies*. 2007. Fuat E. Keyman (ed.). New York: Lexington Books.

The Remaking of Republican Turkey is Danforth's first book and a collection of his previously published articles. Danforth, received his M.A. from the School of Oriental and African Studies and his B.A. from Yale. He completed his Ph.D. in history at Georgetown University. He has published research's works on American modernity propaganda in Turkey, the use of the Ottoman past in Turkish politics, and reviewed academic literature about history writing on modern Turkey in journals like: *Diplomatic History*, *Middle Eastern Studies* and *Nationalities Papers*.² As a policy analyst he has written about Turkey's history, foreign policy, U.S. relations with Turkey and Middle East, for publications including: *The Atlantic*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *The New York Times*, *War on the Rocks*, and *The Washington Post*.³ Furthermore, he has covered the issue of Turkey's foreign policy for Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP), the German Marshall Fund of the United States, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, and the Bipartisan Policy Center.⁴

Here Danforth's book *The Remaking of Republican Turkey* is a fine guide to delve deeper into the issue of the Turkish modernity. A major insight of the book concerns the logic of modernization – full of multi-layered paradoxes, political inconsistency and social tensions. Moreover, the book tells the story of perpetual struggle between different versions of modernity: authoritarian and democratic, imposed and adjusted. The main theme, besides modernity, is memory culture that demonstrates contrasting representations of the national past by consciously created continuities as well as ruptures with the historical legacy.

The author provides quite a complex picture of mid-century Turkey, taking the considered period 1945–1960 (the beginning of the multiparty era and the country's first coup d'état) as an important turning point in the history of Turkey's social and political development. Danforth explores the historic legacy

² Danforth's selected publications: 'Malleable Modernity: Rethinking the Role of Ideology in American Policy, Aid Programs, and Propaganda in Fifties 'Turkey'. *Diplomatic History* 2013, 39 (3), pp. 477–503, DOI:10.1093/dh/dhu012; 'Multi-Purpose Empire: Ottoman History in Republican Turkey'. *Middle Eastern Studies* 2014, 50 (4), pp. 655–678, DOI:10.1080/00263206.2014.892481; 'The writing of modern Turkey'. *Nationalities Papers* 2013, 41 (6) pp. 1136–1146. DOI:10.1080/00905992.2013.801418

³ For example: 'The Outlook for Turkish Democracy: 2023 and Beyond'. *The Washington Institute. Policy Analysis*. March 2020, available at: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/outlook-turkish-democracy-2023-and-beyond> (Accessed: 11 November 2023) ; "The End of History and the Last Map". *Foreign Policy*. 14 February 2020, available at: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/02/14/map-cartography-shaped-war-peace-end-of-history/> (Accessed: 11 November, 2023).

⁴ Nicolas Danforth's biography available at: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/person/nicholas-danforth> (Accessed: 11 November 2023).

of that period to examine how Turkish thinkers embrace and consolidate the idea of democratic modernity in Turkish political discourse (p. 37). Moreover, he claims that “the Turkish and American experiences of the early Cold War period reveal that both the power and persistence of modernization discourse depended upon its flexibility” (p. 39).

Although the uniqueness of the 1950s and the significance of the Adnan Menderes era (the first democratically elected prime minister of Turkey) are widely acknowledged among the wider scholarly community and have already been analysed profusely, Danforth provides a fresh perspective on that period. He argues that “present-day thinkers misunderstood what was so unique about the country’s mid-century politics” (p. 1). As such, he encourages readers to adopt a more nuanced analysis and interpretation of Turkey’s relationship with Western modernity than those offered by the more established standard historical narratives on the mid-century Turkish transformation.

Danforth’s inquiry focuses on the interplay between democracy and modernity. Readers follow Democratic Party’s (DP)⁵ modernisation efforts interwoven with the American plot of ready-made modernity. In Danforth’s assessment standard narratives are sometimes too simplified and entangled in a binary approach with well-known dichotomies such as Eastern tradition and Western modernity, Muslim versus secular, benighted masses contra enlightened elites. By recognising the incoherence of the modernity discourse in Turkey (its internal heterogeneity, contradictory attitudes towards Westernisation), Danforth sheds new insights on the “creative confusion” within a performance of Turkish modernity, where the past and space are constantly remodelled and appropriated.

The book addresses this intellectual ferment (*fikir humması*) by examining the ideas and views of mid-century politicians, artists and intellectuals who made efforts to overcome tension between Islam, democracy and modernity. In their expressed outlook, they tried to reconcile contradictory vision of Turkey’s Eastern and Western identities. In fact, being aware of the widely recognised, but at the same time questioned binary/duplicity, they articulated a kind of constructive and unique model of synthetic modernity.

Although at the first glance subtitle of the book *Memory and Modernity since the Fall of the Ottoman Empire* appears too broad for the selected period of research, it is justified by Danforth’s references to the ideas and politics of 20th-century Turkey and his exploration of the historical significance of the late Ottoman period. He deftly moves between close-ups of the 1950s and a broader perspective on the beginnings of the Republic of Turkey, as well

⁵ Democratic Party was the first political force that gain power from the Kemalist Republican People’s Party (CHP).

as contemporary attachment to “updated” Ottoman past. All that is set in the historical framework of the long-term Westernisation process and debate.

Moreover Danforth’s book is also a perspectival recount on memory. Though the category of memory itself is not considered theoretically, Danforth through the politics of memory and commemoration illustrates how the empire’s memory was politicised. He explores competing national stories, its alternate reading through the century and explains today’s attachment to the past and Ottoman nostalgia. Danforth provides examples from popular culture and a broad range of Kemalist historiography. All of these are enlivened by interesting historical anecdotes and supported by citations from press reports from those years.

The book consists of seven chapters. Through each chapter Danforth carefully examines different aspects of mid-century Turkish modernity, which - according to him - has been misunderstood, such as: democracy, American policy and US modernisation propaganda, Westernization debate, different readings and appropriation of the Ottoman past, Orientalism, regional identity and relations with the Arab world. In the last chapter he explores religious change perceived as a “self-consciously modern religious revival” (p. 9) in the post war era as a part of a global phenomenon.

In his wide ranging and ambitious work Danforth is deftly channelising his scientific and journalistic background into the writing process on the remaking of Turkey’s story. As a historian he uses a range of primary and secondary sources retrieved from archives and libraries, including diplomatic documents, diverse newspapers, magazines and periodicals, published works as well as political cartoons. In the introduction (p. 9) Danforth makes general remarks about sources and the richness and significance of Turkish periodicals and newspapers, which he quotes extensively. However, it would be useful to explain why the author selected and considered particular titles of newspapers and magazines as useful sources for his historical inquiry. Additionally, brief information on each newspaper and magazine (the publishing period, socio-political profile and circulation if known) would put matters right. For example, in chapter three and subsequent ones, Danforth refers to the *Akbaba* (Vulture) magazine and depicts its cartoons, and only in chapter six does he describe its general profile.

Numerous studies (Akman, 1998; Arat, 1998; Brockett, 2011; Konar and Saygili 2021) have confirmed that content analysis of religious, scientific, historical, political, humorous magazines and journals helps us grasp the different flavors of intellectual orientations of that era alongside its historical significance. As such Danforth draws complexity of modernity by exposing cultural infiltration and ideas diffusion, which was indeed aptly visualized by

the print culture in the analyzed period as well as beyond it. As we know, the 1950s were a decade marked by the development of the Turkish press. The cartoon selected by Danforth from the children's magazine *Çocuk Haftası* (Children's Week) as the book cover image presents a clear visual message of mid-century historical narrative that incorporates the use of the Ottoman past to spark a child's curiosity in learning about Ottoman ancestors.

In the first chapter, entitled *A Nation Votes: Democratic Modernity for Masses*, Danforth presents the DP's model of modernity in which democracy is identified with progress. In the DP's rhetoric, Turkey's political transformation was traced back to the 19th century Tanzimat reforms (social, political and institutional modernisation) to the electoral victory of the DP in Turkey's first free election in May 1950. By analysing the ideological outlook of key Turkish politicians from opposite political parties, like Adnan Menderes and Bülent Ecevit, Danforth focuses on the differences between DP and CHP rhetoric and their understanding of democracy, economy and society (here both sides recognise the seminal role of the intelligentsia and elite in guiding the nation and promoting nationalism through the people's culture).

Thanks to this approach, we are able to trace how history and modernity were used in the name of political and national will and link it to Atatürk's broader legacy as well as the ideological winds of the 1950s. These are important aspects of the Turkish political tradition, which was formed on the axis of the modernisation paradigm and the evolution of democratic ideals. So the first chapter explores to what extent the ruling elites have reworked their attitude towards Western modernity and how Turkish modernity has attuned with the rest of the world, especially with the efforts and propaganda of Cold War America. This theme gains momentum in the second chapter of the book in which Danforth presents the determination of the US government to improve Turkey's modernisation and implant the American version of modernity with all its pros and cons.

For the second chapter of the book Danforth chooses the apt title *Turkey Attends the American Classroom* borrowed from the *Voice of America* show. In this way he emphasizes both Turkish dreams of becoming a "little America" (*küçük Amerika*) under Democratic Party rule in the 1950s, as well as the performative nature of American modernity. Danforth accentuates Turkish and American convergence as well as divergence of thinking about economic, legal and political matters. Here one can find interesting observations about the complexity and multidimensionality of the American modernisation program which accurately reflects the ideology and culture of the Cold War.

Additionally, Danforth guides readers through the often abstruse nature of the American logic of modernisation, which is interpreted as inconsistent but

at the same time flexible/pliable whole. Yet Danforth's argument also shows the profound ambiguity of Turkey's democratic progress. He admits that the US model of democratic modernity was malleable enough and could mean different things for Turkish politicians, but also for Americans themselves (p. 69). As such we could venture to say that modernity's flexibility was also its strength. In the US-Turkish relationship, both sides believed in Turkish democracy and political maturity, but – as Danforth rightly notes – American backing for the DP was not a matter of faith or trust but rather an outcome of mutual benefits and intended (military and economic) goals.

In chapter three, *Asia in Europe, Europe in Asia: The Possibilities of Synthesis*, Danforth meticulously illustrates various possibilities for a civilisational synthesis that would go beyond well recorded binary debates about East and West, old and new, modernity and tradition. His analysis focused on the Turkish intellectual current from this period represented by thinkers who “sought to chart out the middle ground” and embrace their own authentic culture. Danforth compares narratives of intellectuals such as Peyami Safa (whose name is identified with *Türk Düşüncesi*/ Turkish Thought), İbrahim Kafesoğlu (who published in *İstanbul* journal), and Bülent Ecevit (who published in *Ulus/Nation* – the newspaper owned by the CHP). Even though they represented different intellectual traditions and ideological spectrums, they never gave up on the cultural synthesis of East and West in their visions and discourse. They all tried to break this dichotomy by deconstructing and transcending it. As Danforth rightly noted later in this chapter, Turkish thinkers benefited from their ability to play European and American modernities off against each other. He quotes mid-century travelogues in which Turkish travellers contrasted American and European models of modernity with admiration and disrespect. There is no doubt that in that time the Turks valued the American model more. It can be ascertained that in narratives of mid-century writers the epicentre of modernity changes from the West to America.

In the third chapter, *I am Ashamed of Both of You* (pp. 87–96), named after mocking cartoon of satirical *Akbaba* (Vulture) magazine (p. 89), Danforth raises broader questions about femininity, emotions and identity. He shows the dilemma of being a modern Turkish woman in the context of the debatably Western model of womanhood and the synthetic approach that had its roots in the Kemalist era. Here as Danforth put it, “the Turkish woman appears as simultaneously modern in relation to oriental or Islamic backwardness, but also as chaste and modest in relation to the excesses of European and American sexuality” (pp. 88–89).

To illustrate the desired role model of modernity presented within a synthetic vision, Danforth refers to such newspapers and magazines as the

Muslim newspaper *Doğru Yol* (True Path), *Kadın Gazetesi* (social and political women's weekly) and a humorous perspective of *Çapkın* (literally Womaniser) and *Akbaba* magazines. Although they differed in the manner in which they spotlighted political and social matters, all of them – like a mirror – reflected the atmosphere of those years and gave important clues about competing visions and thoughts on Turkish modernity. Thus, one might draw conclusion that the synthetic model was much needed as long as it sought to overcome a blind imitation of the West as well as absurd hyper-Westernisation attitudes.

Chapter four discusses the legacy of the Ottoman Empire in republican Turkey. As the main part of the title *Multipurpose Empire* tellingly suggests, Danforth guides readers through the meanders of the Ottoman politicised past and national history writing. Thanks to deep commitment of republican academics and the mission entrusted to them to design “proper” historical awareness, readers can trace how the Ottoman past was constantly tailored and re-interpreted. Danforth mentions *inter alia* the legacy of anthropologist Aziz Şevket Kansu and devotes a long passage to Afet İnan – a pioneering women historian and prominent icon of the Kemalist era. In this overview, Danforth juxtaposes competing visions of historical narrations that sometimes reject and at other times glorify the Ottoman legacy in accordance with accepted the historiographical line.

Discussing official historiography in Turkey, Danforth refers to Büşra Ersanlı's “theory of fatal decline” (p. 102) which aptly explains the official periodisation of the empire. According to this approach, the early Republican historians' narrative described two contrasting phases of the Ottoman Empire historical progress: the praised period of rise (namely the Golden Age phase lasting until the reign of Süleyman the Magnificent, 1520–1566) and condemned period of fatal decline and stagnation.

In the subchapter *Fetih 1953*, Danforth interprets the symbolic meaning of the celebrations of the 500th anniversary of the siege of the Byzantine capital, Constantinople, by Mehmed II (Fatih Sultan Mehmet) and his army on May 29, 1453. He captures the atmosphere surrounding the celebrations by referring to anecdotes and media. Moreover, by tracing various narratives Danforth deconstructs the political rhetoric used around the Fatih's legacy and commemoration of the Ottoman past not only in May 1953 but also today's neo-Ottoman vision.

In fact, the subject of memory explored here brings to mind John Bodnar's famous work on Americans efforts to create public memory, which regularly resulted in tension between popular, vernacular interests and official, elite forces (Bodnar, 1992). Indeed, in the case of Turkey, attempts to build

consensus on historical ideals also provoke such tensions, and the desire to construct a politically useful vision of the past is strong and visible.

For Danforth, there is another important dimension behind Ottoman nostalgia. In the modern world, where there are many conflicts, the multicultural Ottoman past comes to the fore. Danforth persuasively suggests that the Ottoman discourse on religious and cultural tolerance – romanticised and known not only in Turkey – fits perfectly to rhetoric promoted by transnational institutions. As an example he points to the European Union, which since the 1990s encouraged multiculturalism and the new concept of co-existence (pp. 124–125).

In chapter five, entitled *Making the Past Modern: Popular History in Print*, Danforth explores the intersection of modernity and Turkish national historical awareness. He discusses the way in which the past has been transformed and history modernised. Moreover, the chapter examines mid-century Turkish writers and artists' engagement with the culture of popular memory. Danforth follows their determination “to elevate Turkey’s history and culture to the level of its Western counterparts” (p. 137). He analyses Turkish efforts to change foreigners' perceptions of Turkey as an oriental country. In this context he discusses the tourist literature, perceived as an important marker of modernity. Unfortunately, as Danforth rightly notes, the architectural rearrangement of the 1950s was not always good. And, by implication, it has served elite or official aims more than democratic purposes. Architects and urban planners undertook a programme of reconstruction and renovation of monuments that they wanted to embed in a modern context at the expense of destroying those considered less valuable. The interplay of space and history, urban landscape and memory in this context seems to be apparent.

Chapter six, *Ottomans, Arabs, and Americans: Geography and Identity in Turkish Diplomacy*, addresses Turkey’s cultural policies and foreign relations in the 1940–1950 period. Here Danforth describes how geography and history shaped diplomatic relations during the early Cold War struggle. He offers a renewed look on the rhetoric behind Turkey’s geopolitical interests and its well-known “anti-imperial instincts” (p. 153). This refers to the ongoing discussion at that time about Turkey’s membership in NATO and its symbolic meaning in the context of geographical identity. But it also concerns changes and departures from Turkey’s previous neutralism in foreign relations (including not joining any alliances) and distancing from the East.

Thus, Turkey’s admission to NATO in February 1952 was an act of active cooperation with the West and rapprochement with Middle Eastern countries by appealing to religious and cultural affinity. In this chapter, Danforth examines three cases (the Suez Crisis, nationalization of Iranian oil under Prime Minister

Mohammed Mosaddegh and tensions between the United States and Libya). Citing diplomatic documents, he proves that both American and Turkish diplomats willingly accepted the metaphor of Turkey as a “bridge between the East and the West” (regardless of Turkey’s actual diplomatic importance/relevance in these events), although they understood its meaning differently.

At the end of the chapter Danforth provides a description of caricatures from covers of satirical magazine *Akbaba* that illustrates anti-Arab prejudice. Ironically, the reader can only follow the cartoons’ descriptions and not see the visual elements from the images.

In the final chapter of the book entitled *The Path to Progress and God: Islamic Modernism for Cold War*, Danforth provides insights into the religious sphere seen as another extremely important element of social space, identity and self-determination. In an interesting way he explores debate on Turkish religious revival, the limits of secularism and the shortcomings of modernity in the context of the Cold War. This allows us to see Turkey’s religious transformation as a response to a global challenge.

In order to understand the Turkish experience, we need to see it as being part of a wider, inclusive modernity. Danforth provides fresh insight into the religious debate of the 1950s, allowing readers to grasp the essence of religious change in Turkey as defined and assessed through the prism of the constraints of modernity and Western patterns. It refers to the writings of the theologian Ahmed Hamdi Akseki (1887–1951), who was president of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and promoted the revival of Islamic piety in a modernist approach. Danforth also quotes extensively from religious media, including the magazines *Selamet* (Salvation) and *Islam’in Nuru* (Light of Islam). What came to the fore in these debates was the need to renew one’s own religious discourse towards a self-conscious approach to Islam and an attempt to grasp the true essence and role of religion in contemporary society.

Compared to its interesting and factual introduction, the ending seems a bit terse. In the conclusion, Danforth basically reviews various perspectives (scientific as well as journalistic) about the essence and nature of the Turkish transformation shown from different angles, pointing at subjectivity, political overtones, partiality and the clash of opinions. Arguably there are manifold ways in which the past shapes the present and is fashioned by present perceptions. Moreover, Danforth points to the potential of new study areas that are shaped by different trends and are becoming increasingly popular among new generation of researchers. The issue he defines is whether they will redefine perceptions of Turkish history by connecting it to shared national version of history or to the dynamics of differentiation and the contemporary condition of modernity? Moreover, will they manage to clarify future experience based

on historical awareness that produces contradictory claims within insight of vernacular modernity?

Either way, Danforth's historical narrative makes readers more critical and sensitive to different flavours and nuances of a constructed and reconstructed Turkish past that is more ambiguous and complex than is often assumed. To summarise, Danforth's book places Turkey in the broader context of geopolitical tensions during the Cold War and bipolar system, which played a formative role in shaping contemporary Turkish politics. It emphasises the importance of the American concept of development and the Turkish willingness to adopt the American version of modernity – but with some flexibility and mixed feelings on both sides. It illustrates the nuances of modernisation in all dimensions and reveals its unclear rhetoric and sometimes not straight logic.

The book is a “must-read” for those trying to understand Turkish struggles, social hardships and compromises resulting from the raw determination of modern development. Danforth reexplores the gripping history of the social and political transformation of the nation that sacrificed and rediscovered its once historical authenticity in favour of a cultural synthesis and still ambivalent symbiosis of “modern selfhood”. Therefore, it is a valuable contribution to existing academic literature on Turkey.

At the end we should consider the validity and contemporary conditions of modernity after 100 years of the Turkish Republic or more broadly reflect on the quality and maturity of Turkish democratic modernity. How strong is the interplay of the values and ideas crafted by Turkey's own political culture and historical awareness? Or the extent to which these values and ideas have been connected and emerged as a consequence and outcome of what Arif Drilik (2017) calls global modernity?

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HEMISPHERES

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18th AfryKamera African Film Festival in Poland

The AfryKamera African Film Festival is an annual event that aims to promote and showcase the diversity, richness and creativity of African cinema. This paper highlights the various aspects and impacts of the festival on filmmakers, audiences and the wider cultural landscape. This year's edition ran from 12th to 17th December in Warsaw, Poland. Throughout the duration of the six-day festival, attendees had the opportunity to view a diverse selection of over 50 films, including features, documentaries and short films. The films were categorised into various subject divisions. The festival was held this year at both Kinoteka in Warsaw and, for the first time in AfryKamera's history, at the Film Culture Centre of Andrzej Wajda.

The motto of the festival in 2023–2025 is “African Gaze”, and the main theme of the 18th edition was “Woman”. As the festival organisers explained, “we will show films created by women and about women, we will support debutants and appreciate artists with longer experience. We want to loudly emphasise the roles of women in African culture and art and create a safe zone full of female energy in which we will talk about feminism, development and the power of women”. The current edition exhibited remarkable diversity in terms of the geographical origins of the works and the range of topics addressed. A curated selection of numerous productions from Senegal, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, and Cameroon were chosen.

The first key motif, “Woman”, resonated strongly with the legacy of Safi Faye (1943–2023), the pioneering Senegalese filmmaker who achieved the distinction of being the first African woman to create a feature film that was commercially marketed. She sadly passed away in 2023 in Paris, France, and was interred at her ancestral village, Faidal. The special set of films titled “One&Only: Safi Faye”, curated by Wanjiru Kinyanjui, was devoted to her notable accomplishments. Four of her films were showcased: *Kaddu Beykat* (A Letter from the Village, 1976), *Fad'jal* (Come and Work, 1979), *Man sa Yay* (I, Your Mother, 1980) and *Selbé: One Among Many* (1982). Three of them were set in her family village, Faidal, located south of Dakar, the capital city of Senegal. Kinyanjui, during the opening ceremony of the festival, expressed

the importance of Faye's work. The ancestral village of Faye, the individuals she captured on film and their perspectives hold equal significance in her films, alongside the economic, cultural and historical challenges faced by the people depicted in her films. The post-colonial struggles that Africans encounter, regardless of their location, in relation to culture, religion and economy, were applicable to numerous African nations and populations. The films of Safi Faye and many other Africa-based films are rarely shown on the African continent. The main obstacle is distribution across the continent, something that it is anticipated to worsen in the future.

The second key motif, titled "Beyond Nollywood", and curated by Nadia Denton, was dedicated to contemporary Nigerian cinematography. Denton coined the phrase "Beyond Nollywood" in 2014 to describe a novel cinematic style emerging from Nigeria. Regarding film productions, it encompassed genres such as art cinema, documentaries, animation and experimental films with a unique film style, differing from the more conventional and commercial works of Nollywood. The set included motion pictures such as: *Queer Nigerians* (which chronicles the experiences of five LGBTQ Nigerians residing in the United Kingdom as they record their lives using audio diaries; directed by Simisolaoluwa Akende, 2023); *Burkina Babes* (an homage to the resilience and variety of African women, presented through a collection of short photo essays, directed by Kagho Crowther Idhebor, 2022); *Mami Wata* (the story of a tranquil island community called Iya, where the inhabitants are content and harmonious, devoted to the worship of the sea goddess Mami Wata; directed by C.J. 'Fiery' Obasi, 2023); *Return to Chibok* (the cinematic adaptation of Helon Habila's visit to Chibok, as described in his book "The Chibok Girls", directed by Branwen Okpako, 2022). The shows were accompanied by a Q&A discussion with Branwen Okpako and Simisolaoluwa Akande, moderated by Nadia Denton. According to Denton, "the group of brave Nigerian filmmakers and women filmmakers created a new film aesthetics, that promises to be a bridge between West Africa and the rest of the world", hence the genre "Beyond Nollywood" has the potential to establish itself as one of the most significant film genres originating from the African continent.

Short films also deserve particular consideration, categorised this year into three subject groups: "Afriqueeer", "Diaspora" and "Continent". The curated collection "Afriqueeer", overseen by Miki Smoluchowski, featured pictures showcasing the broad LGBTQ+ African community. Each film explored themes of gender, love and sex from a unique perspective: *Egungun*, directed by Olive Nwosu, Nigeria, 2021); *How Not to Date While Trans* (directed by Nyala Moon, USA, 2022); *Prayers for Sweet Waters* (directed by Elijah Ndoumbe, UK, Republic of South Africa, 2021); *For Love* (directed by Joy Gharoro-

Akpojoto, UK, 2021); *Ifè* (directed by Uyaiedu Ikpe-Etim, Nigeria, 2020). Conversely, the “Diaspora” collection addressed societal concerns affecting Africans from a worldwide standpoint. This collection comprises several films created in places such as the United Kingdom, Guadeloupe, Reunion, Belgium and France: *Teju’s Tale* (directed by Teniola Zara King, UK, Nigeria, 2021); *Here Ends The World We’ve Known* (directed by Anne-Sophie Nanki, Guadeloupe, 2022); *Pema* (directed by Victoria Neto, France, 2022); *Sèt Lam* (directed by Vincent Fontana, France, Reunion, 2022); *Hématome* (directed by Babetida Sadjo, Belgium, 2022). The last collection – “Continent” – was completed with productions from Rwanda (within the theme “Focus” Rwanda) and Cape Verde: *Mirror, Mirror* (directed by Sandulela Asanda, Republic of South Africa); *Sumara Maré* (directed by Samira Vera-Cruz, Cape Verde); *The Envoy of God* (directed by Amina Abdoulaye Mamani, Niger/Burkina Faso/Rwanda); *Mãe Pretinha* (directed by Patricia Silva, Cape Verde, Poland); *Bazigaga* (directed by Jo Ingabire-Moys, Rwanda/UK); *Terra Mater* (directed by Kantarama Gahigiri, Rwanda, Kenya).

Importantly, the festival served as a platform for cultural exchange, allowing filmmakers, actors, and industry professionals to present their work, share experiences, and network. Many workshops, panel discussions and Q&A sessions were organised in order to foster dialogue and collaboration between African and international filmmakers and the Polish audience. For instance, Q&A sessions were held with several prominent artists and directors of full-length fiction productions and documentaries: Cyrielle Raignou (the Cameroonian director of *The Spectre of Boko Haram*, 2023), Nisrine Benchara (the actress in *Queens*, 2022), Angela Wanjiku Wamai (the director of the Kenyan production of *Shimoni*, 2022), Merle Grimme (German director of *Clashing Differences*, 2023), Cheryl Isheja (the actress in *Mother Land*, 2023) Brenda Akele Jorde (the director of *The Homes We Carry*, 2022), Myriam U. Birara (Rwandan director of *The Bride*, 2023), Aïcha Chloé Boro (the director of *Al Djanat*, 2023), Ellie Foubmi (the director of *Our Father, the Devil*, 2021) and Babetida Sadjo (the director of *Hematoma*, 2022; actress in *Our Father, the Devil*). The festival offered a valuable educational experience for audiences by presenting films that address social, political and economic issues specific to Africa. Through thought-provoking narratives, documentaries and online or offline discussions, the festival helped raise awareness about African realities, challenges and accomplishments, contributing to a more informed and empathetic global perspective.

Significantly, the festival also showcased two Polish-produced films. The set titled “Through Polish Lens” consisted of *Blessed by Sunlight* (directed by Sebastian Karolak, UK, Kenya, and Poland) and *Singeli Movement: Greed*

for *Speed* (directed by Jan Moszumański-Kotwica, Poland, Tanzania). The first production explored the subject of albinism in Tanzania, while the second production was a documentary created in partnership with Ugandan record company Nyege Nyege Tapes. It focused on Tanzania and the electronic music genre called Singeli.

Currently, we are observing a significant change in the film industry, as there is a growing presence of African women. This transition is a subject of intrigue for scholars, film practitioners and audiences alike. An important event enabling interesting interaction with viewers was a discussion panel entitled “Unsettling the Narratives: Women, Film & Positioning of African Woman of the Future”, hosted by Dr. Ezinne Ezepeue – a lecturer on film at the University of Nigeria, where she teaches film studies, Nollywood studies, and documentary filmmaking. The panel gathered distinguished guests: Wanjiru Kinyanjui (filmmaker, writer, jury member and curator at the festival), Branwen Okpako (director of *Return to Chibok*), and the aforementioned Babetida Sadjo. According to Ezepeue, the film, a potent form of expression and impact, served as both a gratifying source of observation and a means of imparting moral guidance, shaping the identities of women. Over time, the portrayal of women in films transformed into clichés, creating a cinematic perspective that sought to confine women to predetermined positions, rather than empower them to shape their own futures. Women internalised society’s expectations and norms through movies, which reflected systematic mechanisms aimed at perpetuating their subordination. “Our panel serves as a vital convergence of African filmmakers to explore how this transformation is, in turn, shaping and impacting African women. Our discussion will cast a critical light on women in cinema, unsettle existing narratives, and interrogate anticipated future outcomes from African women reclaiming their stories and redefining their destinies”, said Ezepeue.

As is traditional, the festival featured a variety of interdisciplinary events, including dance, music, performance art and special shows for children. The festival’s ceremonial inauguration was further enhanced by the appearance of renowned vocalist Ewa Ekwa, while the workshops were offered by Aleksandra Lemba (a dancer, psychologist, facilitator of psychosocial skills workshops, the trainer of “Toward Movement” dance and movement workshop) and Kasia Sylla (a violinist, vocalist, and music educator, the trainer of “Sound Bath”). The AFreaks concert, held on December 16 in Warsaw SPATiF club, also honoured the importance of women artists. AFreaks is a format that was launched in 2022 to highlight the role of music in African cultures and traditional and contemporary art. In this year’s edition the experimental electronic musical performance was made by Shannen SP (British DJ, vocalist,

and curator), Cheryl Isheja aka Binghi (Rwandan singer, songwriter, actress, and DJ of electronic music), Polish-Nigerian singer Ifi Ude and Polish DJ Kitty Sarcasm.

The inaugural film festival in the Central and Eastern Europe region, which showcases African cinema and is the biggest event in Poland celebrating African cultures, garnered significant attention from a wide audience. It attracted a diverse group of individuals who were captivated by the intricate cultures of Africa, including members of the intellectual, artistic and diplomatic communities. The festival actively supported and promoted the work of African women filmmakers, recognising their significant contributions and highlighting their unique perspectives on various societal issues. By providing a platform for these voices to be heard, the festival contributed to the overall empowerment of women in Africa and the African Diaspora. Through film screenings, workshops, and networking events, the festival facilitates cross-cultural collaborations and encourages the sharing of experiences, ultimately enriching the global film landscape.



Authors' Biographies

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1. “Istanbul versus Constantinople: Between Remembering and Amnesia through Displacement”, in: *Heteroeuropeanisations: (In)capacity to Stay Marginal*, Part Six. The Historical Spiral ‘from Christianisation / Islamisation through Europeanisation to Re-Christianisation / Re-Islamisation’ and Some of Its Losers’, ed. by Yordan Lyutskanov, Benedikts Kalnačs and Gaga Shurgaia, Università degli studi di Napoli “L’Orientale” Dipartimento di Asia, Africa e Mediterraneo ISMEO – Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l’Oriente, Series Minor XCII, Part 2 (v II), Napoli/Neapol 2021, pp. 501–572.
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5. *New Turkish Cinema – Some Remarks on the Homesickness of the Turkish Soul*, „CINEJ Cinema Journal” 2011, Special Issue, pp. 99–106

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Other aspects of *sharī‘a*, such as those dealing with the rights of religious minorities, women’s rights, and human rights in general, also need to be revised and reconsidered. Contextualisation of the Qur’ānic stipulation and examination of its linguistic and stylistic structure – as discourse – would reveal that the jurists’ work was basically to unfold the meaning of such stipulation and to re-encode this meaning in various social contexts (Abū Zayd, 2006, p. 95).

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- **Non-English Sources (translations of the titles in brackets)**

Lipczak, Aleksandra. 2020. *Lajla znaczy noc* [Layla Means Night]. Cracow: "Karakter".

- **Translations of non-English Sources**

Tokarczuk, Olga. 2021. *The Books of Jacob*. Translated by Jennifer Croft, London: Fitzcarraldo Editions.

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