7

An Unusual Quest for Revenge

Civilization, Commerce, and Reform

The literature on the latter phase of the Eastern crisis in the 1830s usually concentrates on the policy of one or more of the leaders of the European Great Powers—including Lord Palmerston, Prince Metternich, Count Nesselrode, and Adolphe Thiers. Many fascinating studies have detailed the efforts of these 'great men' to ensure order in Europe and the Levant, how they piloted bureaucratic and military reforms in Istanbul and then brought an end to the crisis by means of their shrewd diplomacy, commitment, or opposition to the Concert of Europe.[1]

In this chapter I will place the emphasis elsewhere, with a prosopographical approach to the experience of the Ottoman statesman and diplomat Mustafa Reşid (1800–1858). He was possibly the first non-European figure to place an almost unwavering trust in the Vienna Order, or at least the late 1830s version of it. Unlike the young Mahmud II and Halet Efendi (see Chapter 4), Reşid espoused the collective intervention of the Powers in Ottoman domestic affairs. It was under his influence, even if not through his sole agency, that the idea of 'civilization' was adopted in Ottoman official lexicology, Ottoman markets were further opened to the global capitalist economy, and the Gülhane Edict of 1839, which pledged to guarantee the life, security, and property of all Ottoman subjects, was promulgated. And it was during his heyday in Istanbul that the future territorial integrity of the sultan's empire was subsumed under the guarantee of the Concert of Europe, and the policy of Russia with respect to the sultan's empire was overturned.

All these overlapped with a moment when the Eastern Question was repurposed as a question of civilization as much as a constellation of strategic, legal, commercial, and religious concerns. The ideology and diplomacy of Mustafa Reşid and his intra-elite struggle against Russophile ministers in Istanbul became a feature of this transformation as decisive and determinative as the ideologies and diplomacy of the aforementioned European statesmen and Mehmed Ali Paşa.

Of course, one ought not to overemphasize the role of a single political figure in the policy-making processes of an empire and the European Great Powers. Yet the story of Mustafa Reşid tells us much about those processes themselves, and how

[1] Webster, *Palmerston*; Šedivý, *Metternich*; Caquet, *The Orient*; François Charles-Roux, *Thiers et Méhémet-Ali* (Paris: Plon, 1951).

Dangerous Gifts: Imperialism, Security, and Civil Wars in the Levant, 1798–1864. Ozan Ozavci, Oxford University Press.
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Ottoman statesmen, especially those who lived and worked in Europe, usually found themselves torn between two worlds—one (Europe) that would appear to them as the champion of values such as 'humanity' and 'civilization' and thus initially mesmerize their 'oriental' observers, before prioritizing its immediate interests at every critical turn, usually at the expense of these values; the other (Ottoman) bogged down in fatal interpersonal rivalries and struggles for office in the Sublime Porte, and thus suffering the absence of coherent, consistent, and stable policies and individual security. Along with his like-minded European and Ottoman associates, Mustafa Reşid became a connector between these two worlds hoping to remedy the issues that existentially threatened the sultan's empire and brought the European Great Powers to the brink of war in the 1830s and later in 1840.

Civilization

Mustafa Reşid was a man with relatively humble origins. Born in Istanbul in 1800, he was the son of a bookkeeper of the revenue records of Sultan Bayezid's imperial mosque. He received his early education partly from his father and intermittently at neighbourhood schools in Davudpaşa. When his father passed away in 1810, his education was temporarily halted, which restricted his knowledge of Arabic and Persian, the benchmarks of Ottoman high culture. Thereupon he was taken under the protection of his sister's husband, Seyyid Ali Paşa of Isparta, a prominent military statesman in the Ottoman world.

When Seyyid Ali became grand vizier in 1820–21, Reşid worked as his *mühürdar* (sealer). He thus started his career in the Sublime Porte in the highest office at the age of 20. He was eventually employed at *Divan Kalemi* and wrote all the official letters of the grand viziers. In this capacity he served in the army with the new Grand Vizier Selim Paşa, who commanded Ottoman forces at the beginning of the Russo-Ottoman war of 1828–9. Reşid also acted as the chief clerk in the peace negotiations with the Russians in Edirne in 1829.[2]

His writings from the front to Istanbul, and his plain yet powerful language, attracted the attention of Sultan Mahmud II. On his return, the sultan specifically asked to have Reşid in his audience, and commended his work before advising him to learn French so that he could involve him in his diplomatic corps.[3] The young man was then placed at *âmedi kalemi*, which was one of the most important offices in the Sublime Porte because it was there that the official reports of the government to the sultan were produced. There, thanks to his progressive ideas, Reşid came into close contact with Pertev Efendi (1785–1837), *kâhya bey* or the

[2] BOA HAT 676/33010.
[3] Cavit Baysun, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa* (Istanbul: Maarif Matbaası, 1940), 3.

minister for civil (internal) affairs, and a disciple of the Anglophile Galib Paşa, who had advocated a moderate and conciliatory policy toward the Great Powers in the 1810s. Pertev showed particular interest in Mustafa Reşid's career.[4] In 1830, he took him as his second scribe to Egypt in a mission to Cairo. And until his tragic death in 1837, in parallel with his own growing influence in the Topkapı Palace, he played a considerable role in Reşid's rise as one of the most prominent statesmen of his time.

During the 1830 visit to Egypt, Reşid's potential was noticed by Mehmed Ali Paşa also. The latter asked for him to stay in Cairo and join his staff. But Reşid refused this offer. As mentioned in the previous chapter, three years later, in January 1833, Reşid was again sent to Egypt—this time to make an arrangement with Mehmed Ali during the 1832–3 crisis. During these unfriendly negotiations, he reportedly became a bitter enemy of the paşa. As Ottoman chronicler Mehmed Selahaddin narrates, during the talks at Mehmed Ali's palace in Cairo, Reşid was so shocked and shaken by the paşa's adamant refusal of the demands of the sultan that at the most heated moment of one of the meetings, he would ask to be excused, leave the room, and cry in anger, disappointment, and an intense desire for revenge that came to fill his heart from then on.[5]

Not that his entire career was devoted solely to this quest for revenge. But along the way his cause changed his world-view and the trajectory of his life, and arguably the course and culture of Ottoman politics and security, as he ascended to the highest offices. He went through unique learning experiences during his years of diplomatic missions in Paris and London, where he perhaps too uncritically observed the state of politics in Europe and adopted some of the ideas and ideals of European international political and economic thought, for better and worse.

Mustafa Reşid wanted the Porte to move past the petty issues in which it was caught up, which every now and then threatened both his career and his life. For example, when, in April 1833, as the negotiator of the sultan at Kütahya, Mustafa Reşid agreed to give up Adana to Mehmed Ali without informing the sultan, the furious Mahmud II ordered his execution.[6] It was only by the efforts of intermediaries that the sultan's rage was tamed and his order rescinded.[7]

Such were the conditions under which Ottoman bureaucrats and statesmen led their lives and performed their duties. Gaining the favour of the sultan could at once allow them to swiftly climb the ladder of the bureaucracy and obtain immense affluence and invaluable mansions by the Bosphorus. Losing his favour

[4] Bayram Kodaman, *Les Ambassades de Moustapha Rechid Pacha à Paris* (Ankara: Société turque d'histoire, 1991), 26.

[5] Mehmet Selahattin, *Bir Türk Diplomatın Evrâk-ı Siyasiyesi* (Istanbul: Alem Matbaası, 1306 [1888]), 15; Reşat Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit Paşa ve Tanzimat* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1954), 52.

[6] Baysun, *Mustafa Reşit*, 4.

[7] Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 21.

or angering him might well result in immediate poverty, if not death. Six years later, the Gülhane Edict, which Mustafa Reşid would himself read out and which arguably heralded the *Tanzimat* (reordering) era in the Ottoman Empire, looked to put an end to this vicious system, guaranteeing the property, life, and security of all Ottoman subjects, and particularly the sultan's ministers—introducing a version of the rule of law (shari'a), albeit imperfectly.

After evading death in 1833, Mustafa Reşid remained jobless for a while. He stayed in Istanbul, observed the functioning of the state apparatus, investigated the weakness of Ottoman institutions, and studied Great Power politics. And then, in June 1834, possibly through Pertev's influence, he was sent to Paris as the new chargé d'affaires of the Ottoman Empire. Reşid formed the core of the Ottoman diplomatic corps in Europe in the 1830s together with a certain Nuri Efendi, who was concurrently dispatched to London. The public announcement made at the time suggests that the two diplomats' task was to mend tarnished relations with France and Britain. In fact, their main objective was to obtain compensation for the Hünkar İskelesi Treaty.[8] At the same time, Ottoman agents were ordered to gather intelligence on the Eastern crisis and the aforementioned diplomatic deadlock in which the major Powers, the Porte, and Mehmed Ali were embroiled.

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'Small in size, yet big enough without being obese', a contemporary French writer wrote, Mustafa Reşid Efendi was a 'quite lively, even active' man with a 'clever feel'. His moustache was cut in a brush, and his thick eyebrows slightly hid eyes 'endowed with a great depth'.[9] European statesmen and diplomats who met Mustafa Reşid in person usually became fond of him. According to Metternich, the Ottoman diplomat was 'extraordinarily intelligent, incorruptible and devoted to his native country with a sincere wish to regenerate it'.[10] Ponsonby would introduce him to Palmerston as 'a statesman of high calibre'.[11] An 1839 French memorandum would describe Reşid as a patriotic man, 'fine, circumspect and prudent'.[12]

For his part, Mustafa Reşid's perception of European politics and statesmen was mixed, at least at first. In the summer of 1834, when he set for Paris, he was discovering a new world that he had previously observed from afar or through his correspondence with diplomats in Istanbul. In the next few years, he saw and talked with all key European political figures, along with whom he would play a pioneering role in resolving the inter-imperial deadlock over the Eastern Crisis.

[8] 'L'envoi de Rechid-Bey en France', *Moniteur Turc*, 8 July 1834; Roussin to [MAE, Paris], 9 June 1834, AMAE CP Turquie 268/304; Roussin to Le Comte, 8 July 1834, AMAE CP Turquie 268/345.

[9] M. Destrilhes (pseud.), *Confidences sur la Turquie* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1855), 37.

[10] Šedivý, *Metternich*. 927.

[11] Ponsonby to Palmerston, 19 Dec. 1933, TNA FO 75/125; cf. Bailey, *Reform*, 181.

[12] 'Renseignements sur les hommes et les choses en Turquie', 27 July 1839, AMAE CP Turquie 38/191.

The first major European statesman that Reşid met was Metternich. He saw the Austrian chancellor en route to Paris, and received from him the latest updates on the abovementioned ideological divergence among the Powers as well as Austria's support toward the Porte. Metternich informed the young Ottoman diplomat of the conservative principles upon which Austria's policy was based. 'Egyptian affairs', he told Reşid, were 'only a revolt' of Mehmed Ali against his legitimate sovereign. '[W]hatever may be [the] causes [of this revolt] . . . it is the Viceroy that is in the wrong', and Austria was 'ready to defend the integrity of the Ottoman Empire', while Britain and France were not to be trusted.[13]

Pleased to hear of Austrian support but also perplexed at the chancellor's insinuations against the liberal camp, Reşid arrived in Paris in the morning of 14 September 1834, and installed himself at the Hôtel d'Artois in Rue Lafitte. Eight days later he made his first appearance before the French king, Louis Philippe, to whom he presented a letter of cordiality from Sultan Mahmud II. Reşid could not speak French well at the time.[14] During his short conversation with the king, the queen, and their sons, he expressed his desire, through his interpreter M. Cor, to be able to converse with them in French soon.[15]

During his first Paris sojourn, he immediately began to learn the lingua franca of the time from a certain Mademoiselle N., an opera singer in Paris, and mastered it in less than five years. Concurrently, he studied European culture and international politics in depth.[16] For now, his plan was to cautiously dip his foot into the vast waters of European diplomacy, research French statesmen and politicians, understand the intentions of the French government on the issues of Algiers and Egypt, and examine French public opinion, before deciding on his next steps. His dispatches to Istanbul from Paris show the young Ottoman diplomat coming to recognize the importance of the European equilibrium and the Concert for the interest of the sultan's empire in these early months of his Paris mission. And it was then that he came to adopt the idea of 'civilization' that was gaining traction in French political thought.[17] It would be this idea that eventually formed the nucleus of his international political thought, guided Ottoman diplomacy, and even shaped imperial security culture in the following decades.

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The notion of 'civilization', in the abstract, metaphysical sense, was not a European invention per se. From ancient Chinese, Greek, Mexican, or Islamic

[13] Cavit Baysun, 'Mustafa Reşit Paşa'nın Paris ve Londra Sefaretleri Esnasındaki Siyasî Yazıları', *Tarih Vesikaları* 1(1) (1941): 33–4; Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 55, 109.

[14] BOA HAT 714/34088A.

[15] 'Traduction du discours que doit tenir Moustapha Rechid Bey Effendi à l'audience du Roi', 22 Sept. 1834, AMAE CP 269/170.

[16] BOA HAT 714/34101.

[17] Tuncer Baykara, 'Mustafa Reşid Paşa'nın Medeniyet Anlayışı', in *Mustafa Reşid Paşa ve Dönemi Semineri Bildiriler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 1985), 49.

societies to the nineteenth-century global overseas empires, the belief that the world was inhabited by both civilized and barbaric peoples had pervaded history. Yet the term itself was coined and systematically invoked in international political thought after the French and Scottish Enlightenments in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Previously used as a term of jurisprudence, in his 1757 work *L'Ami des hommes*, the French author Victor Riquetti, marquis de Mirabeau (1715–89), came to infuse it with new and diverse connotations such as 'the softening of manners, the education of spirits, the development of politeness, the culture of arts and sciences, the rise of trade and industry, [and] the acquisition of material amenities and luxury'.[18] A decade later, in 1767, the Scottish writer Adam Ferguson employed the word 'civilization' in the English language for the first time.[19]

The idea took hold as a systematic political instrument only after the end of the Napoleonic Wars, and more precisely in the 1830s, in the context of a new wave of colonial competition worldwide. In fact, in the course of the nineteenth century there was hardly any agreement over what the word actually meant. Such terms gained new meanings at the hands of statesmen and later historians, sociologists, and anthropologists, who interpreted them across a large spectrum. As Duncan Bell tells us, in the case of 'civilization', this spectrum involved

> dominant understandings of religion found in a society, levels of technological sophistication, ascribed racial properties, economic dynamism, the structure of legal and political institutions, posited gender roles and perceptions of individual moral and intellectual capacity, or some combination of these.[20]

Yet, despite its manifold uses, the notion of 'civilization' gradually became a political tool to underpin the justification of empire and the acquisition of new colonies before other global Powers, in order to avoid inter-imperial aggression. Moreover, it legitimized the idea of aiding 'the "immature" people of the world reach maturity' through such methods as colonization, the establishment of protectorates, and cross-border 'humanitarian' interventions.[21]

Especially against the backdrop of colonial competition among the European Powers, 'civilization' was conceived as a process—a civilizing process—that

[18] Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilisation: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 26–7; Michel Bruneau, 'Civilisation(s). Pertinence ou résilience d'un terme ou d'un concept en géographie?', *Annales de géographie* 674(4) (2010): 615–37, at 619; Krishan Kumar, 'The Return of Civilization—and of Arnold Toynbee?', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 56 (4) (Oct. 2014): 815–43, 820.

[19] Bowden, *The Empire of Civilisation*, 31.

[20] Duncan Bell, 'Empire and Imperialism', in *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth Century Political Thought*, ed. Gareth Stedman Jones and Gregory Claeys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 867.

[21] Ibid.

societies worldwide were to go through in different stages, following in the footprints of European societies to reach the level of enlightenment (the term was eventually replaced with the words 'progress' and 'modernity') in place of barbarism and savagery. In the new age of imperial expansion, European statesmen, international lawyers, and military and naval commanders all employed the concept for their respective ends. Empire and imperialism came to be seen as a moral right, duty, and objective, and as a code of intelligibility and conduct to universalize international law, which grew out of legal positivism.[22] Normatively speaking, civilization became one of the master themes of the century, and the 'dominant ideological and mental framework for interpreting, [transforming] and ordering international relations'.[23]

The idea of civilization has usually been studied in the English-language literature of international and imperial history to discern how 'European' and then Western Powers justified their empire and violence in imperial (colonial) contact zones.[24] Considerably less attention has been paid to the fact that the so-called non-Western ruling elites also utilized the idea it to underpin their empires. While Suzuki has explained Japan's attempts to securitize the imperial civilized identity to legitimize her expansion into Taiwan and China in the late nineteenth century, Makdisi and Deringil have recently shown that the bifurcation of the 'civilized' and the 'savage' also played a considerable role in Ottoman imperialism and Orientalism.[25]

Deringil aptly explains the entry of the term into the Ottoman context as a 'survival tactic', while the Kosovan historian Isa Blumi demonstrates that Ottoman official elites embraced an orientalist attitude toward their periphery to influence at least 'two very distinctive sets of rhetorical battles' that were fought between the competing voices within Great Powers that advocated for or against the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, as well as between expansionist imperialist discourses, both Ottoman and European, overseas.[26]

Both Deringil and Blumi consider these 'tactics' and 'rhetorical battles' with special reference to the late nineteenth-century history of imperialism. In a similar

[22] Anghie, *International Law*, 4; Bell, 'Empire', 867.

[23] Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Approaches to Global History and the Question of the "Civilizing Mission"', *Global History and Maritime Asia Working and Discussion Paper Series*, Working Paper no. 3, http://www.geocities.jp/akitashigeru/PDF/DiscussionPaper2006_01_14Osterhammel.pdf (last accessed 12 Sept. 2017), 16–17.

[24] Bowden, *The Empire of Civilisation*.

[25] Shogo Suzuki, *Civilization and Empire: China and Japan's Encounter with European International Society* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009); Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism'; 'Rethinking Ottoman Imperialism: Modernity, Violence and the Cultural Logic of Ottoman Reform', in *The Empire in the City: Arab Provincial Capitals in the Late Ottoman Empire*, ed. Jens Hanssen, Thomas Philipp, and Stefan Weber (Wurzburg: Ergon in Kommission, 2002), 29–48; Selim Deringil, '"They Live in a State of Nomadism and Savagery": The Late Ottoman Empire and the Post-Colonial Debate', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45(2) (Apr. 2003): 311–42.

[26] Isa Blumi, 'Reorientating European Imperialism: How Ottomanism Went Global', *Die Welt des Islams* 56 (2016): 316.

vein to Türesay's recent article, I will extend the chronology further and contend that the Ottoman idea of civilization and, as a derivative of this, orientalism can in fact be traced at least as far back as the 1830s.[27] Yet I will argue that, here, Mustafa Reşid's experience was pivotal.

As far as has been established, even though previously the Greek revolutionaries had used the term in international diplomacy in the 1810s, the vocabulary of civilization (*medeniyet*) was naturalized in Ottoman Turkish political lexicology, first in an editorial of the official newspaper *Takvim-i Vekayi* (The Chronicle of Events), and then with Reşid's letters from Paris to Istanbul in the 1830s about the same time the notion became rampant in French political thought. By the 1850s, *medeniyetçilik* (civilizationism) emerged as a semi-official ideology of the Ottoman Empire. The ruling elites in Istanbul, mostly protégés of Mustafa Reşid, then came to believe that avoiding being on the receiving end of foreign intervention and European encroachment required classifying their empire as one of 'the civilized' societies of the world, or at least pretending that it was so (see Chapter 11).[28] In the beginning, however, the adoption of the nineteenth-century idea of civilization in Ottoman political thought did not result simply from the desire to fend off European encroachments into domestic politics. The historical reality was quite the contrary.

While living in Paris in 1834, Mustafa Reşid found himself in an intellectual and political milieu where the idea of 'civilization' was widely absorbed into French liberal and positivist thought, especially since the publication of François Guizot's 1828–9 lectures at Sorbonne on the history of European civilization.[29] Guizot argued for the existence of a universal civilization progressing across a unilinear timeline, a civilization of those who led and those who followed, and of the global role European empires ought to play, civilizing others as the spearhead of progress. An unmistakable position of superiority was thus attributed to Europe, while Asia, which was usually considered to be the 'cradle of civilisation', was associated with decadence and barbarity. It was excluded from the field of civilization 'by identifying it with a glorious past, but dead'.[30]

The one exception to this stark split between the 'civilized' West and the 'barbaric' East manifested itself in French liberal and Saint-Simonian thought of the 1830s in the heroic achievements of Mehmed Ali. I must note that the politics

[27] Özgür Türesay, 'The Ottoman Empire Seen Through the Lens of Postcolonial Studies: Recent Historiographical Turn', *Revue d'histoire modern et contemporaine* 60(3) (2013): 127–45.

[28] Gökhan Çetinsaya, 'Kalemiye'den Mülkiye'ye Tanzimat Zihniyeti', in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasal Düşünce 1. Tanziatın Birikimi ve Meşrutiyet*, ed. Tanıl Bora and Murat Gültekingil (Istanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), 55–6; Fuat Andıç and Süphan Andıç, *The Last of the Ottoman Grandees: The Life and the Political Testament of Âli Paşa* (Istanbul: ISIS Press, 1996), 35.

[29] Franck Laurent, 'Penser l'Europe avec l'histoire. La notion de civilisation européenne sous la Restauration et la Monarchie de Juillet', *Romantisme* 104 (1999): 53–68, at 53.

[30] Ibid.

of the July Monarchy, which had been formed after the 1830 revolution, encouraged the romantic admiration of the Napoleonic legend, even though, before 1848, the legend 'did not channel into Bonapartism'.[31] This is important to remember because, although there had been for many years a growing political and economic interest in Egypt, during the first decade of the July Monarchy, Mehmed Ali came to be identified in France with Bonaparte and what he stood for.

As Caquet writes, this was partially because the paşa's 'personal trajectory was marvellously suited to the Romantic age . . . Like Bonaparte, the Pa[ş]a had first been a soldier; like Bonaparte, he was a charismatic figure; like Bonaparte, he was identified with a new regime' which he had established in Egypt, 'tearing it from its centuries-old bandages'.[32] Like Bonaparte, he attempted to conquer Syria. Bonaparte had failed to capture the castle of St Jean d'Acre from Jazzar Paşa in 1799, whereas Mehmed Ali would control this unattainable castle (see Chapter 5), which attracted admiration and sympathy in France and revived memories of the Napoleonic campaign.[33]

What mattered also was the role French agents played in the modernization of the Egyptian army and the valiant accounts of French commanders such as Colonel Sèves, once a junior officer in the *Grande Armée* and now the second-in-command of the Egyptian army in Syria.[34] All subsequent news of Mehmed Ali's glorious victories over the sultan, who in French eyes represented the ancien régime, were thus greeted by many in France with enthusiasm.

Mehmed Ali played his part in honing French sentiments. In Alexandria, banquets and parties were given to celebrate the July Monarchy.[35] While awaiting the Ottoman imperial army in Konya in December 1832, his son Ibrahim played *La Marseillaise* to increase the morale of his army. Moreover, the paşa subsidized French journals to propagandize on behalf of his campaign, portraying him as an eastern counterpart of Bonaparte. He would boast of having been born in the same year as Bonaparte (though, according to his biographer, he was actually born in 1770–71, not 1769).[36] And he dispatched the three obelisks to New York, London, and Paris to paint Egypt as a distinct entity from the rest of the Ottoman and wider Islamic world—as a unique civilization, that of the pharaohs, that needed to be considered differently. Here was the extension of the propaganda war that he had waged against Istanbul in the 1830s. And it worked. Mehmed Ali was perceived, at least in French thought, as an exceptional figure, beyond the uncivilized peoples of the East.

[31] Stanley Mellon, 'The July Monarchy and the Napoleonic Myth', *Yale French Studies* 26 (1960): 70–78, at 71.

[32] Lucien Davéziés, 'Mohammed-Ali-Pacha', *La Revue des deux mondes* (Sept. 1835): 443; cf. P. E. Caquet, *The Orient, the Liberal Movement, and the Eastern Crisis of 1839–41* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 52. See also Gaultier-Kurhan, *Méhémet Ali*, 39–40.

[33] Cadalvène and Barrault, *Histoire*, 1–2.

[34] Caquet, *The Orient*, 53.

[35] Jerome Louis, *La Question d'Orient sous Louis-Philippe* (Paris: SPM Lettrage, 2015), 39.

[36] Fahmy, *Mehmed Ali*, 2.

For Mustafa Reşid, observing in Paris the 'Egyptian extravaganza' that revolved around the persona of Mehmed Ali, and encountering there the idea of 'civilisation' was at once a source of immense frustration and inspiration. He was appalled to witness the association of Egypt with advancement in France while the Ottoman Empire at large was scorned. Consequently, he settled on a less cautious and more dynamic policy, fighting his own narrative battle to unravel the 'misperceptions' of Mehmed Ali and Egypt in Paris. He repeatedly maintained to his French interlocutors, such as the prime minister, Maréchal Étienne Maurice Gérard (1773–1852), General Armand Charles Guilleminot (1774–1840), the former ambassador to Istanbul, and Émile Desages (1793–1850), the French *président du conseil*, that Sultan Mahmud II and the Porte were the real, unique mediums of 'civilization' in the east. As he once put it, unlike Cairo, Istanbul had remained unwaveringly loyal to 'civilization', which Mustafa Reşid defined in a dispatch in the moral and political sense as 'the principles of the cultivation of people and the execution of order'. Espousing a unilinear conception of time in a similar vein to Guizot, he argued that progress in Istanbul was perhaps slow but stable, and that it was the real guarantee of the unity of the Islamic world.[37] According to Reşid, the sultan desired to undertake new reforms with the purpose of ensuring the prosperity of the Ottoman population, regardless of their religion and race.[38]

In November 1834, the Ottoman diplomat wrote to the French foreign ministry about the intended 'improvements and reform in the administration of the [Ottoman] Empire', which had been 'tirelessly' under way with the purpose of the development of '*des principes feronds de la civilisation**',[39] and which would take further effect by means of the establishment of post offices, roads, and a straight line of railway between 'Scutari to Nicomedia, over eighteen leagues in length, with post houses'. The 'imperial will' was to render all these advantages 'common to the other parts of the Empire'.[40]

In this new narrative, Mustafa Reşid despised Mehmed Ali and his Egypt as the 'other'. He knew that Mehmed Ali was playing the field to make use of the differences among the Powers, and possibly attract France and Britain to his cause against the Russian-backed sultan.[41] Stunned and distressed, Reşid wrote back to Istanbul, perhaps too bluntly, that he found the plans of Mehmed Ali 'inappropriate' even for 'an ignoble old man', and that he took these as a sign of the fact that the paşa had now become 'senile' and 'doddered'. In his interviews

[37] Cavit Baysun, 'Mustafa Reşit Paşa'nın Paris ve Londra Sefaretleri Esnasındaki Siyasî Yazıları', *Tarih Vesikaları* 1(4) (1941): 283–296, at 291; Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 69.

[38] Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 115–16.

[39] The asterisk is in the original text.

[40] 'Mémorandum adressé au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères par l'Envoyé Ottoman le 25 novembre 1834 après son entrevue avec M. Desages, le 24 du même mois', AMAE CP 269/270.

[41] Mavroyeni to [Istanbul], 28 Oct. 1834, BOA HR SYS 1910/47; Ponsonby to Reis Efendi, 23 Nov. 1834, BOA HR.SYS 933/1/53.

with French statesmen and bureaucrats, the Ottoman chargé d'affaires maintained that after Mehmed Ali 'pegged out' (*geberdikten sonra*), the troubled situation of his rule (referring to the ongoing anti-Egyptian revolts in Syria) would worsen under the leadership of his son Ibrahim Paşa, who was 'morally weak' and incapable.[42]

Mustafa Reşid's rhetorical bifurcation here between the allegedly unsteady and untrustworthy politics of Mehmed Ali and his son Ibrahim, on the one hand, and the unwavering but slow progress of the Porte, on the other, was possibly the earliest case of the notion of 'civilization' being adopted as a distinct line of demarcation between Istanbul and its periphery. Even though the idea of 'exteriority' had already been used to distinguish the imperial capital and the provinces, with the introduction of the notion of the civilization into the political lexicon, this idea was incorporated into a new formula.[43]

This was a milestone in the history of Ottoman orientalism.[44] Mustafa Reşid's rhetorical turn, which has up to now remained unexplored in literature on Ottoman orientalism, was a hybrid product of the propaganda battle between Cairo and Istanbul and his encounter with the French (Guizotian) idea of civilization in Paris.

This situation displays remarkable parallels to the fact that, in the late 1790s and the 1800s, at the request of Sultan Selim III, Ottoman statesmen had written several pamphlets on the military strength of their empire in the French language and to a European audience, in order to ensure their empire's (ontological) security by positioning it among the powerful actors of the global order.[45] As of the mid-1830s, the notion of civilization was adopted, and became a major rhetorical frame for Ottoman statesmen, by and large with the same purpose. The resolve was to situate Istanbul among the civilized imperial Powers, not simply by way of highlighting its military strength, and not as yet to fend off foreign encroachments, but instead, in this particular moment, to obtain Great Power support, or at least to sever French endorsement of Mehmed Ali. While at the turn of the century the Ottoman statesmen had sought to influence European policy-makers, in the 1830s they also had to address European public opinion.[46]

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By the end of 1834, Reşid's one and only political achievement in Paris was directly linked to this objective. He managed to gain for the Ottoman cause

[42] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 69.

[43] On the notion of exteriority, see Marc Aymes, 'Provincialiser l'empire. Chypre et la Méditerranée ottomane au XIXe siècle', *Annales. Histoire, sciences sociales* 6 (2007): 1313–44, at 1317.

[44] Makdisi, 'Ottoman Orientalism', 769. [45] See Ch. 2.

[46] On the semantic history of the notion of 'civilization' (*medeniyet*) in the Ottoman world, see Tuncer Baykara, *Osmanlılarda Medeniyet Kavramı* (Istanbul: IQ Yayıncılık, 2007).

writers like Jean-Marie Jouannin and Serge Evans, who published articles attempting to unravel the pro-Mehmed Ali propaganda in the French press.[47] And when the Ottoman chargé d'affaires felt persuaded that his presence in France was no longer necessary, he requested of the Porte on 9 November 1834 that he might return to Istanbul.[48] He left Paris in early 1835, having met Austrian and French statesmen, studied the European international system, and familiarized himself with the idea of 'civilization'.

Upon his arrival in the imperial capital in April 1835, Mustafa Reşid was granted an audience with the sultan and his son Abdülmecid, to whom he detailed the situation of politics in France as well as international relations in Europe more widely. Even though Mustafa Reşid's mission to Paris was hardly a diplomatic success, Mahmud II was fascinated by the knowledge his young diplomat amassed. He thereupon ordered the latter's reappointment to Paris at the rank of ambassador.[49] The sultan furthermore asked Mustafa Reşid to write a *mazbata* (report) about possible measures to be taken to deal with the issues of Algiers and Egypt. The whereabouts of this report is today unknown, as is the details of its content. But we do know from a *hümâyun* that the sultan was pleased with Mustafa Reşid's suggestions, as he praised his new ambassador for his diligence and devotion.[50]

It is usually assumed that the report called for a series of new reforms aimed at strengthening the empire internally, as a means to present the Ottoman Empire as among the 'civilized' nations of the world and obtain international support against Mehmed Ali.[51] This is because, less than half a year later, a new period of bureaucratic reforms began in the Ottoman Empire, first with the reorganization of the ministries along European lines—the Reisülküttâb became the foreign minister (*hariciye nazırı*), for instance—and later the various *defterdars* (provincial treasurers) were gathered under the ministry of finance (*maliye nezareti*).[52] All these were in effect the beginning of a new *Tanzimat* (reordering) era in the Ottoman Empire, even though the official declaration would have to wait another four years.

While the new reforms were under way in Istanbul, Mustafa Reşid set off for his first Paris embassy in October 1835; the next year he was swapped with Nuri Efendi, the ambassador to London, due to the latter's health problems in the British climate. But Reşid could obtain almost no diplomatic success in either of the two capitals except perhaps improving relations with Britain that had been tarnished due to the infamous 'Churchill affair' in 1836.[53] He was disappointed by

[47] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 77–9; Mavroyeni to [the Porte], 14 Apr. 1835, BOA HR. SYS 1911/8.
[48] BOA HAT 832/37550; also in Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 66–7; Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 111.
[49] BOA HR.SFR.3 1/1. [50] Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 72.
[51] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 69.
[52] Ali Akyıldız, *Tanzimat Dönemi Osmanlı Merkez Teşkilatında Reform (1836–1856)* (Istanbul: Eren Yayıncılık, 1993), 26.
[53] Baysun, *Tanzimat*, 728, 730; Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 80, 83. The Churchill crisis emerged out of an accident, when a British subject, William Churchill, accidentally killed an Ottoman subject during a hunting party and the Ottoman authorities arrested him. Lord Ponsonby's insistent demand for the

Palmerston's unwillingness to help the Porte's cause on the Algiers issue for fear of upsetting London's French allies. Reşid reminded him, and was at pains to report back to Istanbul, that the Powers had formed an alliance during the 'Greek mischief' (*Yunan fesadı*) in the 1820s to prevent bloodshed in the name of humanity. Now in Algiers, while blood was being shed for unjust reasons (referring to the French invasion of Algiers and the anti-colonial war the Algerian inhabitants had waged against France), they were doing nothing: 'the European states are not caring about the sins committed in Algiers, . . . [is it] because they do not see [the Muslims] as humans?'[54]

This was precisely the confusion that most Ottoman statesmen, less prejudiced against the liberal European Powers and more eager to develop cordial relations with them, grappled with. Yet they almost never had any other choice but turn for aid to the same Powers they suspected. The prospects of obtaining Great Power support for the sultan's designs against Mehmed Ali were grim in Europe. Dominated by Russophiles, the political situation in Istanbul was even more dangerous for Reşid.

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The intra-elite struggles at home took a new turn while he was in London. First, Serasker Hüsrev was dismissed from his post in November 1836 due, allegedly, to his old age but in fact because of his quarrels with his former protégé Akif and Said Paşa, who had become the sultan's sons-in-law.[55] Hüsrev's dismissal meant a schism in the Russophile camp among the Ottoman ministers. Russian representatives in Istanbul considered Hüsrev to be the most trustworthy figure, but now the signatory of the Hünkar Iskelesi Treaty of 1833 was no longer at the centre of power.[56]

Making use of the weakening of the Russophiles, when Pertev managed to have his protégé, Mustafa Reşid, appointed as the new foreign minister on 13 June 1837, the Russian ambassador to Istanbul, Butenev, interpreted the news as a sign of the sultan's desire to break free from the tsar's influence. In Russian eyes, during his embassies in Paris and London, Reşid had become the 'main vehicle' for pro-British policies. The reforms initiated at his suggestion in 1835–6 were clear indicators of this new orientation.[57]

release of Churchill resulted in Ottoman foreign minister Akif Paşa's resignation. But the Russophile camp in Istanbul, as well as the sultan, resented the British attitude at the time, which fanned hostilities between pro-British and pro-Russian Ottoman ministers.

[54] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 83.

[55] Pisani to Ponsonby, 2 Nov. 1836, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E483/4F/1; Pisani to Ponsonby, 15 Nov. 1836, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E483/4F/9.

[56] Maria N. Todorova, *Angliya, Rossiya i Tanzimat* (Moscow: Nauka i Izkustvo, 1983), 130; Carter V. Findley, *Ottoman Civil Officialdom* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989), 75.

[57] Butenev to Nesselrode, 18 Nov. 1835, AVPRI, f. Kantselyariya, d. 47, ll. 253–7; cf. Todorova, *Rossiya*, 130–31.

The hidden rivalry between the arguably pro-British and pro-Russian factions, one led by Pertev and the other by Akif and Said Paşas, thereupon broke open and turned into a ruthless struggle and intrigue.[58] It resulted in Pertev's dismissal from the cabinet for purportedly having been involved in an attempt to assassinate the sultan, which was in fact a ploy of Akif Paşa, who then seized his post as the interior minister. Listening to Akif's insinuations, Mahmud II eventually had Pertev and his associates executed in Edirne without mercy in November 1837.[59]

Just about the time his patron Pertev's life was taken, Reşid was approaching the Balkans on his way to Istanbul to take up his new post. He was devastated by the news.[60] His mentor was no more, and in Istanbul there awaited a powerful network of Russian agents and pro-Russian ministers, Akif and Said Paşas, amongst others. Reşid's life, not to mention his entire political career, was now in danger. He was not sure how the sultan would receive him, as his European mission had not procured his empire any gains and, above all, Pertev was his patron.

But not long after his arrival Mustafa Reşid was relieved to realize that, despite the execution of Pertev, Mahmud II still had little sympathy for Russia and for that matter, pro-Russian policies, and he was still fond of the new foreign minister. As a matter of fact, despite all opposition, Reşid was elevated to the rank of paşa in January 1838. He then formed in Istanbul a most unlikely inter-elite alliance against the Russophiles Said, Akif, and Halil Rifat. One such ally was the latter two's 'father', Hüsrev, whom they had sidelined in 1836.[61] Rıza Efendi, another figure favoured by the sultan and his mother, Valide Sultan, also joined Reşid's camp.

With the momentum of his return and new alliances, Mustafa Reşid secretly communicated with the sultan, almost on a daily basis, all his concerns about the imperial state through an agent called Mustafa Kani Bey, who had been specifically appointed by Mahmud II for this purpose.[62] The shift in his position of power can be discerned also in the dispatches of foreign diplomats such as Lord Ponsonby, who, at the beginning, found Mustafa Reşid to be a man 'timid and afraid of Russia'. But, shortly after, he changed his tone: 'There is no other man [than Reşid] capable of conducting at all to the taste of the Sultan a large part of the affairs of the Government.'[63]

By the spring of 1838, Mustafa Reşid's sway in the Sublime Porte was supreme. The sultan promised him new measures that would ensure the security of the life, liberty, and property of Ottoman subjects, which would allow, first and above all, relatively more freedom for Ottoman statesmen to perform their duties. And then

[58] 'Note by Ponsonby', 12 June 1837, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E631/49.
[59] Findley, *Ottoman*, 76; 'Pertev Mehmed Said Paşa', IA, 235. [60] Selahaddin, *Evrak*, 19.
[61] Çelik, *Şeyhü'l-Vüzerâ*, 336–43. [62] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 100.
[63] Webster, *Palmerston*, 536.

he led the passage of a series of reforms including the establishment of new bureaucratic bodies such as *Meclis-i Vâlâ'yi Ahkâm-i Adliye* (the Supreme Council of Judicial Ordinances) and *Dar-i Şurâ-yi Bâb-i Âli* (the Consultative Assembly of the Sublime Porte) in March 1838. Hüsrev was named the head of the *Meclis-i Vâlâ*. It consisted of five members who were tasked with preparing the laws and regulations that would enable the reforms which the sultan then called '*tanzimat-i hayriyye*' (auspicious reforms), as well as editing the mandates drafted by *Dar-i Şurâ-yi Bâb-i Âli*, which, at Mustafa Reşid's request, were gathered twice a week in the presence of the grand vizier, serasker, grand admiral, and the foreign minister himself.[64] Moreover, a motion was passed for the preparation of a penal code. After obtaining a fatwa from the *şeyhülislam*, a new system for quarantines (an international sanitary council) and passports was introduced in order to bolster imperial security (*maslahatı kavileştirmek için*) and health provision in a time of cholera epidemics.[65] These were accompanied by a commission that was established to oversee all political economic matters as well as issues linked to agriculture, commerce, and industry such as the causes of the empire's trade deficit.[66]

It is true that Mustafa Reşid was one of the masterminds of these reforms, and his ideas were shaped in large measure by the European example: their state mechanisms, permanent embassies, the handling of the interior and external affairs of the empire in different state departments, or the importance of the non-arbitrary appointment or dismissal of the members of the imperial councils.[67] At the same time, the Ottoman reform movement of the late 1830s was in many senses the resurgence of the hybrid temperament of the New Order of Selim III, which had been an amalgam of European-inspired ideals and the teachings of the Sunni–Orthodox Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi school.[68] Figures like Hüsrev, Pertev, and the future Valide Sultan Bezm-i Alem were all linked to the Naqshbandi school, or at least to the proponents of the New Order, such as Küçük Hüseyin Paşa (Selim III's right hand and the prominent grand admiral), and his wife, Esma Sultan (Selim III's sister).[69] Moreover, figures like Sadık Rifat Paşa, the sultan's ambassador to Vienna, supported the movement by sending reports on European institutions and advising on the means of reform.[70]

The Russian-backed adversaries of this hybrid camp such as Halil Rifat and Akif Paşas, for their part, were *not* opponents of reform. Their disagreement was

[64] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 102.
[65] Ahmet Dönmez, *Osmanlı Modernleşmesinde İngiliz Etkisi: Diplomasi ve Reform (1833–1841)* (Istanbul: Kitap Yayınevi, 2014), 220.
[66] 'Memorandum on the Commission to Lord Ponsonby', n.d., DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E631/88.
[67] Kaynar, *Mustafa Reşit*, 104, 107. [68] See Ch. 2.
[69] Butrus Abu-Manneh, 'The Islamic Roots of the Gülhane Rescript', *Die Welt des Islams* 34(2) (Nov. 1994): 184–7.
[70] Seyit B. Uğurlu and Mehmet Demirtaş, 'Mehmet Sadık Rifat Paşa ve Tanzimat', *History Studies* 2(1) (2010): 44–64.

instead mainly over the means and content of the programme. As the Russian agents in Istanbul observed, they preferred more independent and indigenous reforms in the Ottoman Empire, instead of the replication of ideas and institutions from Europe, which could prove hazardous and inefficient in the sultan's dominions.[71]

Mahmud II listened to the demands of both groups. He endorsed Mustafa Reşid's vision. But he did not grant the foreign minister unlimited liberty in his scheme. For instance, since Reşid aimed to recruit to the Ottoman cause the support of European public opinion and of Ottoman subjects, both Muslim and non-Muslim, in 1838 he requested the announcement of an edict to herald the new reforms. A pilot region was even chosen, in the environs of Bursa, for the implementation of new institutional and political reforms. But, due in part to Russophile ministers' insinuations that such an edict would lead to the curbing of his absolute power, and in part because he felt uncertain whether he was making too many concessions to Reşid, the sultan decided against the plan.[72] The promulgation of the edict would have to wait for another year.

Commerce and Security: A *Capo d'Opera*?

All these bureaucratic changes overlapped with Anglo-Ottoman negotiations over the opening up of the sultan's dominions to free trade. As noted previously, a major relational dynamic of the Eastern Question was the intersection between the economic, financial, legal, strategic, and religious calculations of the various agents. The expansion of global capitalism was one of the major determinants of European diplomatic and military interventions in the Levant.

In 1815, Sultan Mahmud II had rejected the Great Powers' guarantees over his European dominions partially because commercial issues (liberalizing commerce in the Ottoman shores) had been tied to the Powers' proposal, which had baffled and intimidated him. In the mid-1830s, the security-for-liberal-commerce dilemma would again be brought to the attention of his ministers. By then, free trade had become a more pressing concern for western European empires, especially for Britain and France, who needed to find new markets for their manufactured goods in the age of the industrial revolution. Central European economies were protected by high customs tariffs. This would lead British merchants to search for new markets in Asia, particularly in the Ottoman and Chinese empires.

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Under normal circumstances the age-old capitulatory agreements with the Ottoman Empire would allow British merchants to sell their goods in the sultan's dominions with a degree of liberty. Import and export tariffs had been fixed at

[71] Todorova, *Rossiya*, 129, 130, 131, 134. [72] Dönmez, *İngiliz Etkisi*, 221.

3 per cent by the agreements of 1800, 1805, 1809 and 1820. But the customs duties British merchants paid in reality were 12 per cent or higher, as was the case with oil (35 per cent), opium (48 per cent), or silk (35 per cent).[73]

This was why British merchants complained that these were irregularly applied, as in each case a merchant could be asked by the Ottoman authorities for different sums for the same product, while the same rule applied to states differently. They believed that there was great ambiguity due to variable charges made for permissions to trade in the interior too.[74]

Another problem was the fact that international trade in the Ottoman Empire had previously been limited to ports because of religious prejudices as well as logistical difficulties. The existing capitulatory agreements had been designed in accordance with these customs. The growing tendency towards foreign commerce with the interior of the empire had led the Porte's authorities to levy extra duties, and to exercise prohibitions as well as monopolies that were granted for the producers to sell at fanciful prices of the sole manufacturers as venders.[75] This was why, as early as 1833, Palmerston had asked Ponsonby to remind the sultan that monopolies were 'injurious to the Industry of both Nations, and in the end detrimental to the financial interests of the Porte'.[76]

Moreover, British merchants were in a disadvantageous position in comparison to Russian traders in the Levant after the 1829 Treaty of Edirne. Palmerston and his agents believed that it was legitimate to ask for the same (i.e. establishing 'a general system of certainty . . . to the foreign trade'), as well as a European union entitled to enjoy special privileges such as those accorded to Russia, whose merchants paid fixed duties by treaties. This new system would be introduced in place of a 'perpetual and secret struggle to obtain such privileges amongst the European nations'.[77]

Finally, there was the issue of unequal customs duties levied by British authorities: 'for every £100 of English goods sold in Turkey, the Porte exacted but £3 in custom duties, whereas English duties on Turkish products of equal value amount to £60.'[78] This was why the Porte was also willing to review the customs tariffs on certain products; it was actually the sultan's agents that had taken the initiative, not Britain, in the commencement of negotiations over the tariffs in 1834, as the previous agreements were now expiring.[79]

[73] Henry L. Bulwer to Henry U. Addington, 26 May 1843, NRO Henry Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/18/1–20, 561X9. See also Bailey, *British Policy*, 120–21.

[74] Henry L. Bulwer to Henry U. Addington, 26 May 1843, NRO Henry Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/18/1–20, 561X9.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Palmerston to Ponsonby, 6 Dec. 1833, TNA FO 78/220/22; cf. Bailey, *British Policy*, 121.

[77] Henry L. Bulwer to Henry U. Addington, 26 May 1843, NRO Henry Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/18.

[78] David Urquhart, 'Turkey and its Resources', 92; cf. Bailey, 119–20.

[79] Mübahat S. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz İktisadi Münasebetleri (1580–1838)* (Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları, 1974), 92.

At first, the talks proceeded at a rather slow pace. This was due to the stark differences of interest as well as the urgency of the Porte's 'Egyptian crisis'. In 1835, Palmerston hinted to Nuri Efendi in London that these commercial and political issues could well be connected. With the abolition of the monopolies in the Ottoman Empire, '[a]n increase of the commercial intercourse between the subjects of the two states must tend necessarily to strengthen the political union between the two governments'.[80] But his hint did not prompt any concrete results.

In October 1836, the British agents prepared a draft agreement for the consideration of the Porte. Ponsonby had little hope; in his view, the Porte would reject 'with extraordinary perseverance' the abolition of monopolies, especially given that, amidst the crisis with Egypt, it was in a state of emergency and mobilization, and expensive military reform had for some time been under way, while war with Mehmed Ali was only a matter of time.[81] All these, together with the desire to make up the losses arising from the depreciated Ottoman currency, added up to an urgent need for funds.[82] It was no time to make commercial concessions that could adversely affect the Ottoman treasury.[83]

In May and July 1837, Ponsonby again dolefully wrote, 'the Porte feels the shackles imposed upon it by the [commercial] conventions that exist', referring to the 1829 agreement with Russia. Obtaining the consent of Istanbul was 'almost impossible'.[84] Additionally, Russophile ministers were concomitantly pressuring the sultan against an Anglo-Ottoman agreement, still exercising a profound influence over the cabinet. Russia would not want the Porte to enter into an agreement with Britain which would upset the Russian merchants' advantageous position in the Levant.

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What eased the gridlocked Anglo-Ottoman negotiations was a bold political move on the part of Mehmed Ali of Egypt. Spurred by his preoccupation with Druze revolts and distress caused by the existence of an Ottoman imperial army of 50,000 men in his borders, the paşa's military preparations were continuing at full speed.[85] Yet they were draining Egypt's sources and prompting domestic discontent, embroiling the paşa's country in a vicious cycle.

[80] Palmerston to Nuri, 23 Oct. 1835, TNA FO 195/122; cf. Bailey, *British Policy*, 127.

[81] Frederick Pisani to Ponsonby, 14 Oct. 1836, DUR Ponsonby Papers, GRE/E483/45.

[82] Bailey, *British Policy*, 122. In 1828, the British sterling was quoted in Istanbul at 60 piastres, while in 1832 it rose to 100. Charles Issawi, 'Notes on the Negotiations Leading to the Anglo-Turkish Commercial Convention of 1838', in *Mémorial Ömer Lutfi Barkan* (Paris: Maisonneuve, 1980), 119–134, at 119–20.

[83] See also 'Objections which Pisani believed the Porte would make to certain clauses in the commercial treaty proposed by Britain', 26 Dec. 1836, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E483.

[84] Ponsonby to Palmerston, 9 May 1837; cf. Bailey, *British Policy*, 122; Denise Le Marchant [Office of Committee of Privy Council for Trade, Whitehall] to Bulwer, 20 July 1837, NRO Henry Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17.

[85] See Ch. 9.

In early 1838, encouraged by a number of French and British merchants and travellers such as Thomas Waghorn and John Bowring, who, during a visit to Egypt, made Mehmed Ali believe that Britain would not object to his independence, the paşa looked to break this cycle by voicing once more the idea of separation from the sultan.[86] In March, he hinted confidentially at his idea to the French consul-general, Adrien-Louis Cochelet (1788–1858)—a sign of his trust in France; then, in May 1838, he publicly announced his intention to gain independence to the representatives of all four Powers (Austria, Britain, France, and Russia), stating that 'he was now an old man', and could never 'consent that all that which he has been toiling for, and all [his] useful and costly establishments founded . . . at an enormous expense [would] revert to the Porte and to be lost at his death . . . I have worked fifty-two years to achieve what I am today.'[87] He had a family as well as 'a thousand adopted children' for whom he took the place of father, and he felt that all his labours would merely have been for the Porte, while his own children and family would be exposed to want and perhaps even to be put to death: 'I cannot quit this life without securing their future.'[88]

In this kairotic moment, just as Mehmed Ali declared his intention to win independence, Ponsonby used the anxieties in Istanbul to his advantage, arguing that an Anglo-Ottoman commercial agreement could be 'a means . . . to destroy the power of [Mehmed Ali] by destroying monopolies' upon which the latter's economic system was founded.[89] In addition, the British ambassador gave reason for Mustafa Reşid to believe that the commercial agreement could be followed by a political alliance.[90]

After these remarks, and only then, was the Ottoman foreign minister cajoled. He naively believed, and suggested to the sultan, that the abolition of the monopolies would not only draw Britain closer to the Porte and upset Mehmed Ali's economic system but would also win the support of the sultan's non-Muslim subjects who were usually occupied with commerce, revitalize Ottoman agriculture, and thus in the long run procure greater financial benefits despite the expected immediate losses to the imperial treasury.[91] Its benefits would be greater than what the sultan feared he might lose.

The British agents, Lord Ponsonby and the chief negotiator, Henry Bulwer, were aware of the potentially detrimental effects the planned agreements would cause for the Ottoman economy. They therefore suggested that the Porte ought not to be left in complete 'financial embarrassment'. They did not resist the

[86] Dodwell, *Egypt*, 170; Webster, *Palmerston*, vol. 2, 607; Kutluoğlu, *Egyptian*, 124–5.
[87] Campbell to Palmerston, 25 May 1838, TNA FO 78/342-II; cf. Kutluoğlu, *Egyptian Question*, 126.
[88] Comte Medem to Nesselrode, 17 July 1838, BOA HR SYS 933/1/185.
[89] Notes by Ponsonby, 11 Apr. 1838, DUR Ponsonby Papers, GRE/E631/75; Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz*, 100–101.
[90] Ponsonby to Cor, 8 Nov. 1838, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E149/9.
[91] BOA HAT 51905-B, 46365; cf. Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz*, 103.

proposal of the Ottoman plenipotentiaries Nuri Efendi and Mustafa Kani Bey to raise export duties for certain goods from 3 per cent to 12 per cent, and import duties from 3 per cent to 5 per cent.[92]

Despite the last-ditch attempts of Halil Rifat and Akif Paşas, who, according to Ponsonby, were 'indoctrinated by the Russians', to prevent the signing of the agreement, after further last-minute negotiations and British assurances to the sultan, Mahmud II was persuaded to sign the treaty.[93] When the news reached London, Palmerston was delighted. He wrote to Bulwer that the 1838 convention was a '*capo d'opera*' and would be ratified without reserve.[94] British merchants were equally content with the efforts made and the final agreement, which opened up new markets.[95] A Prussian observer wrote to Palmerston that it might 'very likely prove the most important feature of European policy since 1815'.[96] The treaty was ratified by Queen Victoria on 8 October 1838 and by the reluctant sultan in early November.[97]

The Baltalimanı Convention of 1838 was arguably the fourth major step toward the liberalization of the Ottoman economy in the nineteenth century. The first had been the new capitulatory treaties that had been revised every seven years since the 1800s; the second the abolition of the Janissary corps in 1826, 'of the urban guildsmen on the military payroll that were the strongest advocates of protectionism'; and the third, the Treaty of Edirne (1829) when (as already noted) Russia had obtained from the Porte specific rights for her merchants.[98] Now, in 1838, most local monopolies were also abolished and extraordinary duties on exports in the Ottoman Empire—which had, until the 1830s, supplied invaluable fiscal revenue for the sultan's treasury in times of crisis—were eliminated. In the following years, commercial conventions on similar terms were signed with other European Powers, including France (6 April 1839), Spain (2 March 1840), the Netherlands (14 March 1840), Prussia (22 October 1840), Denmark (1 May

[92] Britain accepted these, however, in lieu of internal transit fees (the extra levies charged on British merchants) from which the foreign merchants were now exempted, thus gaining an advantage over domestic competition; Ponsonby to Palmerston, 25 July 1838, NRO Henry Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17; Fred van Hartesveldt, 'Henry Bulwer and the Convention of Balta Liman', *Proceedings and Papers of the Georgia Association of Historians* 6 (1985): 56–63, at 60.

[93] 'Note on Halil Pasha's attempt to influence the Sultan against Reschid Pasha and the Commercial Convention', DUR Ponsonby Papers, GRE/E631/84, n.d.; Bulwer to Addington, 26 May 1843, NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/18.

[94] Palmerston to Bulwer, 13 Sept. 1838; NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17.

[95] 'Address to Ponsonby signed by thirteen merchants in Constantinople expressing appreciation of the recent Commercial Convention', 9 Oct. 1838, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E631/79.

[96] 'Memorandum by Augustus Jochmus for Palmerston on the situation in the east following the commercial treaty with Turkey and seeking employment in the areas especially in a military capacity', 20 Nov. 1838, GRE/E346.

[97] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz*, 109; *The Times*, 19 Dec. 1838; BOA TS.MA.e 597/29.

[98] Şevket Pamuk and Jeffrey G. Williamson, 'Ottoman De-Industrialization 1800–1913: Assessing the Shock, Its Impact and the Response', National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper no. 14763 (2009), 4.

1841), and Portugal (20 March 1843).[99] The Ottoman government's authority to impose unilateral tariffs in service of the goal of a higher and more protective structure was thus curbed until the First World War.[100]

The short-term consequences of the opening up of the Ottoman economy were arguably negligible, as the treaties were not implemented by the Porte immediately, though over time it did procure an advantage to the European merchants over domestic competition and caused frustration for Mehmed Ali, while local industries under protection were dissolved one by one.[101] But, in the end, with the 1838 treaty, the Porte did give London what it had hoped for its merchants and commerce. The question was whether London would act in kind and provide the sultan with military support against Mehmed Ali through a political alliance without offending Russia. This was precisely the question to which Mustafa Reşid hoped to find the answer when he left for London the day after the convention was signed.[102]

'We Are Still Called Barbarians!'

The Ottoman foreign minister's talks with Palmerston in London did result in the draft of an agreement. But Britain would not want to participate in an offensive alliance with the Porte so as not to tarnish the 'constitutional alliance' with France nor to offend Russia. Palmerston was still committed to the Vienna order and would not wish to bind himself to a long bilateral alliance treaty with Istanbul which, he believed, went against the principles of the Concert of Europe.[103]

Instead, the British foreign secretary proposed tacit assistance—support for the rejuvenation of the sultan's empire against Mehmed Ali by the sending of military and naval advisers that would help renovate the Ottoman forces. He believed it was in the interests of Britain that the sultan should be strong, and it was evident that he would be stronger with Syria and Egypt than without them.

Palmerston looked to justify his support of the sultan by arguing that the Ottoman Empire was not 'crumbling to pieces'. He was possibly the first European statesman to oppose the idea of 'Ottoman decline':

> I must question that there is any process of decay going on in the Turkish Empire. [T]hose who say that the Turkish Empire is rapidly going from bad to worse ought rather to say that the other countries of Europe are year by year

[99] Kütükoğlu, *Osmanlı-İngiliz*, 114–17.
[100] Reşat Kasaba, 'Treaties and Friendships: British Imperialism, the Ottoman Empire, and China in the Nineteenth Century', *Journal of World History* 4(2) (1993): 218.
[101] Şevket Pamuk, *The Ottoman Empire and European Capitalism, 1820–1913: Trade, Investment and Production* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20; Pamuk and Williamson, 'Ottoman De-industrialization', 4.
[102] BOA HAT 950/40829C. [103] Baysun, *Mustafa Reşid*, 10; Bailey, *British Policy*, 176.

> becoming better acquainted with the manifest and manifold defects of the organisation of Turkey…

Still, Palmerston kept his options open, writing later: 'on the principle of "That I can do when all I have is gone" we can think of a confederation when unity [of the Ottoman Empire] shall have been proved to be impossible.'[104]

A defensive alliance was the most the British foreign secretary could offer Mustafa Reşid. But the latter needed more from Palmerston. He knew that it would not satisfy the sultan in Istanbul, especially after the concessions made with the 1838 commercial treaty.[105] Russian pressure on the Ottoman imperial capital was mounting daily, and Mustafa Reşid's mission had already caused anxiety in St Petersburg. Nesselrode had instructed Butenev to point out to the sultan the serious inconveniences triggered by the actions of Mustafa Reşid. St Petersburg was particularly riled by the information received from Austria that the Ottoman foreign minister had told British and French agents that after his return to Istanbul, the Porte would not extend the Hünkar Iskelesi Treaty.[106]

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It is unknown whether this was true. But, even if not, Reşid's policy proved inadequate to the sultan. Mahmud II was anxious. The state of uncertainty had for years exhausted his resources and health. On 6 April 1839, he decided against the signature of a defensive alliance with Britain.[107] The foreign minister was ordered to return back to Istanbul. With or without foreign assistance, it was the hour for battle, not fruitless negotiations. As a major conflict in Kurdistan had finally been suppressed and as the military had been mobilized and disciplined under Hafız Paşa and his able advisers, such as the Prussian field marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder (1800–1891), the conviction (introduced again by Hüsrev) arose that Mehmed Ali's forces stationed in Urfa could this time be defeated and pushed back to Egypt.[108]

Mahmud II subsequently ordered Hafız Paşa to commence hostilities on 17 April. The imperial army of 150,000 men crossed the Euphrates, invaded northern Syria, and met the outposts of the Egyptian army of Ibrahim Paşa near Nizib. The fighting took place on the 29 June. The first discharge of the Egyptian artillery, when more than 1,000 Ottoman soldiers were cut down, caused such panic that the sultan's army almost immediately took to its heels. His units having been scattered, Hafız Paşa pulled back, accepting defeat.[109]

[104] Palmerston to Bulwer, 22 Sept. 1838, NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17.
[105] BOA HAT 829/37498E.
[106] Todorova, *Rossiya*, 132, nn. 161, 162.
[107] Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 128.
[108] Ponsonby to Cor, 8 Nov. 1838, DUR Ponsonby Papers, GRE/E149.
[109] A. Pisani to Bulwer, 9 July 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17.

It was the fourth time that Mahmud II's imperial armies had been overwhelmed by Egyptian forces in seven years. But the sultan never heard the news. Before the two armies clashed, he had fallen very ill. His tuberculosis was in its second stage. Very lately, perhaps under the strain of recent developments, the threatening nature of his disease had been made manifest. His physicians had declared that if the fever 'which came on every severing was not subdued, he could not live much above a month'. On 21 June, he was seen in public for the last time, on horseback on his way to a mosque close by his residence at Çamlıca (where he had been sent for respite), but he was 'quite *méconnaissable*, so emaciated, so pale, so weak that he could hardly keep his seat'.[110] From then onwards he had not been able to leave his room, and his symptoms were alarming. On the morning of 1 July 1839, just before the news of the battle reached Istanbul, Mahmud II passed away, having spent the greatest part of his last night conversing with his 16-year-old son, Abdülmecid, who was to succeed him, and with Hüsrev, whom he recommended the young *şehzade* consider as 'his father and adviser'.[111]

After Mahmud's death, however, Hüsrev claimed more than this.[112] The next day, during Abdülmecid's ascendance to the throne, in possibly the single most inopportune moment in late Ottoman bureaucratic history, he seized the seal of the grand vizierate from the hands of Rauf Paşa (the present grand vizier) and appointed himself the most powerful man in the empire after the sultan. His opponents, including his former protégés-turned-enemies, and particularly Grand Admiral Ahmed Fevzi, were all alarmed by this hitherto unheard-of action by the 70-year-old. Fearing the loss of his post and life under Hüsrev's rule, the grand admiral immediately fled with the imperial fleet to Rhodes, and thence to Alexandria, seeking shelter with Mehmed Ali.[113] Thus the Porte lost a battle, its sultan, and the imperial fleet—all within one week.

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What would the young Sultan Abdülmecid and his cabinet do now? Authority had now passed back to the hands of old Hüsrev, and Mustafa Reşid was still in Europe. The new grand vizier's first action was to invite the representatives of the five Great Powers to a conference on 3 July and to communicate to them that the new sultan wanted to maintain peace.[114] At the same time, a letter—signed by Hüsrev but written on behalf of the sultan—was sent to Mehmed Ali that promised the pardon of the paşa and guaranteed him the hereditary rule of

[110] A. Pisani to Bulwer, 25 June 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17.
[111] A. Pisani to Bulwer, 9 July 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers, BUL 1/17.
[112] Çelik, *Şeyhü'l-Vüzerâ*, 354–5.
[113] BOA HR.SYS 933/7; BOA HAT 1239/48178.
[114] Palmerston to Bligh, 3 July 1839, BLM Beauvale Papers MS 60475/16.

Egypt, if he returned Syria, and 'under the condition of fulfilling entirely the duties of submission and obedience'.[115]

Two weeks later, however, Mehmed Ali, despite recognizing Abdülmecid as sultan and caliph, refused to return Syria to the Porte and demanded de facto hereditary rights over all provinces he ruled.[116] He also strongly demanded the dismissal of Hüsrev from the post of grand vizier, since he was 'detested by the whole nation and for whom all means are admissible for achieving his objective, including a knife and poison'.[117] As soon as Hüsrev was dismissed, Mehmed Ali would make peace, send the Ottoman fleet back to Istanbul, and he would even go himself on a steamship to pay homage to the sultan.[118]

This was what had transpired in early 1833 all over again. The road to Istanbul was once again open for Ibrahim's army. Mehmed Ali was again asking for the dismissal of Hüsrev. The Ottoman sultan, albeit a different one, was again disinclined to accept this request. And the Porte again found itself having to turn to the aid of the Powers against a vassal.

What was different this time was that the five Great Powers could finally act in concert—at least in the beginning. On the day Mehmed Ali's response reached the palace, despite all their other differences, the representatives of the five Powers in Istanbul jointly signed a note to the sultan urging him to suspend any definitive action without their agreement.[119] Six days later, on 27 July, they signed another note declaring their commitment to the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.[120]

This was the first time since the Congress of Vienna of 1815 that the Powers had taken a common stance with respect to the Eastern Question. How had the impasse between them been overcome? What happened to the ideological divides, Russia's 'weak neighbour' policy, and the distrust among the Powers? Before answering these questions at some length in the next chapter, I should like to highlight the agency of Mustafa Reşid as one of the enablers of the multilateral intervention of the Great Powers that took effect not only by means of inter-imperial diplomacy but also through domestic reform and, eventually, the instigation of an uprising in Syria.

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Mustafa Reşid was in London when Sultan Mahmud II died and the Battle of Nizib was fought. He found out the news on 17 July 1839 after returning to Paris

[115] 'Traduction de la copie d'une lettre écrite par le Grand Vizier to Méhémet Ali Pacha', 8 July 1839, AMAE Papiers Desages, 60PAAP/37.
[116] (Ambassadeur, Therapia) to M. le Maréchal, 22 July 1839, AMAE Papiers Desages, 60PAAP/37, f. 46.
[117] Laurien to Stürmer, 16 July 1839, HHStA, Türkei VI, 69; cf. Šedivý, *Metternich*, 743.
[118] Roussin to Desages, 26 July 1839, AMAE Papiers Desages, 60PAAP/37, f. 47.
[119] Collective Note, 21 July 1839, AMAE Papiers Desages, 60PAAP/37, f. 49.
[120] Collective Note, 28 July 1839, AMAE Papiers Desages, 60PAAP/37, f. 48.

and settling into his residence at 1 Rue des Champs-Élysées.[121] In fact the news did not upset him at all. Instead, he believed that now was the opportunity to put an end to the crisis, as we can deduce from an informal memorandum to the French foreign ministry which he drafted in his native language (its date is unknown, but it appears to have been written after he found out about the death of Mahmud, and was translated by P. Desgranges on 22 July). In it he underscored his 'great hopes' and desire for European involvement in the crisis in the Ottoman Empire, and explained how this should take place.[122]

The memorandum began with a forthright and self-critical portrayal of the wider ills of Ottoman governance. Mustafa Reşid wrote that the Janissaries had been a major cause of the maladministration of Ottoman public affairs, and that since their abolition in 1826, opportunities to introduce new reforms had been wasted by the 'intolerable tyranny' of Mahmud II, as well as by domestic and external intrigues that prevented the higher levels of administration from undertaking any measures for the good of the empire. The discontent of the Ottoman people was not, as was believed in Europe, 'a result of their lack of disposition to civilisation', nor from any other cause arising from fanaticism.

According to Mustafa Reşid, 'the Egyptian question' was an accidental product of the wider ills of the Ottoman imperial system. It had in the past decade further weakened the empire by exhausting her resources. However, it had resulted merely from the personal hostility between Mahmud II and Mehmed Ali, and since the former was now gone and the latter ready to give up the grudges of the past, it should now be very easy for Istanbul and Cairo to be reconciled, he maintained. Amidst all these domestic and international hurdles, progress had been almost impossible. Now was the time for comprehensive reforms that would prevent the Porte from suffering similar miseries. If new institutions could be formed and governed 'with wisdom and discernment', each would bring 'the real advantages of an immutably established system'. Tyranny would diminish and the subjects' affection for the imperial government would increase: 'the populations [would] rally with all the strength of their heart to useful and beneficent innovations.'

For Mustafa Reşid, Mahmud II's death was an opportunity to effect a break from this vicious past. But he was concerned that the sultan's young successor was still surrounded by those men of the ancient system—domestic (Russophile) and

[121] Jouanin to MAE, 17 July 1839, AMAE CP Turquie 38/128.

[122] 'Traduction d'un mémorandum par Moustapha Reschid Pacha', in 'Notes sur l'état de la Turquie traduites par M. Desgranges', 22 July 1839, AMAE CP Turquie 38/133; also in AMAE MD Turquie 45/40; Desgranges to Desages, 19 July 1839, AMAE CP Turquie 38/129. Turgut Subaşı has recently published an article about the memorandum, including in its appendix the full text (in French), in which he rightly points out that it has been almost entirely overlooked in the literature of the Eastern Question. However, he asserts that the memorandum was written to Palmerston in August. Turgut Subaşı, 'Anglo-Ottoman Relations in the Nineteenth Century: Mustafa Reşid Paşa's Memorandum to Palmerston, 11 August 1839', *International Journal of Human Sciences* 8(1) (2011): 1731–46.

foreign (Russian) individuals who were ready to stage any intrigue to sustain their interests, and who would thus keep alive the ancient system of tyranny which had arbitrarily claimed the lives of people like his mentor, Pertev Paşa.

This was why the intervention and tutelage of the European Powers was needed. The foreign minister knew that external interventions would be 'contrary to the respective rights of nations', and 'the blind submission of Muslims to the laws of the Qur'an and their recognised fanaticism' would not fail to make them 'repel all proposals dictated by the European Powers'. Yet at the same time he believed that these could be 'countered by guaranteeing that the intervention and thus infringement of the respective rights of nations would have as its object no action harmful to the strength and prosperity of the Ottoman subjects, and that such interventions would not exceed administrative suggestions'.

Therefore, the proposals ought to be made to the Porte 'not by a single nation, but an alliance of all the Great Powers'. It would warrant, by adherence to the principle of European equilibrium, that such an intervention would not act as 'an antecedent to unilateral interventions in the future'. Finally, Mustafa Reşid suggested that the Powers should pay great attention to two things when making proposals for intervention to the Porte: first, they should not violate the teachings of the Qur'an, so that the conservative and reactionary powers would not categorically oppose them; second, proposals for reform of the Ottoman councils should be made not in the name of 'liberty' but in the name of 'the security of life and fortune', so that the agents of those Powers with absolute governments would not strive to hinder them.[123]

With these words, one of the sultan's ministers was for the first time explicitly calling for the Powers to intervene collectively, defining the nature and limits of their intervention, and observing the benefits of joint intervention for both Europe and the Ottoman Empire. His was also a call not to leave the destinies of the empire to the will of Russia again, and for support for the reforms which he wanted to undertake.

We will possibly never know whether Mustafa Reşid wrote this memorandum by himself or received any aid from his European correspondents, such as Canning or Guilleminot. Either way, the most important point for our purposes is the role he attached to security as a driving force. He made it clear that the support of the Great Powers should be framed very carefully—'security' had to be the keyword, not 'liberty'. His memorandum and subsequent actions would irreversibly merge local discursive practices in the Levant with a culture of transimperial security in the following months.

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[123] Ibid.

About ten days later, on 27 July, the Ottoman foreign minister wrote from Paris to Grand Vizier Hüsrev, asking him not to hurry in taking any action against Mehmed Ali. He explained that the Powers not only wanted an arrangement between the Porte and Egypt, but also stronger measures which would in future secure the independence and integrity of the Ottoman Empire: 'so we must do nothing . . . but wait for the Concert of their combined wills. Waiting brings no danger.' Mehmed Ali would not be able to do more than the Powers permitted him. 'All that I see in Europe proves to me that all the governments . . . have the will to support the equilibrium of Europe by the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire.' Therefore, '[l]et us not act on our own, let the field of negotiations be entirely free, and let us give up to the Powers, for they are better than us.' According to Mustafa Reşid, what the Porte had to do for now was 'not to shock [Mehmed Ali]', but 'to be nice for the form . . . nothing for the substance, and to refer to the European arbitration'.[124]

The Ottoman foreign minister had realized that the European notes of July 1839 stemmed from their immediate urge to prevent the fall of the empire rather than the resolution of their ideological and strategic differences. But he was then left puzzled after his conversations with King Louis Philippe and the prime minister and foreign minister, Admiral Soult, in late July 1839. The French had endorsed the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. But at the same time, their policy toward Algiers had switched from temporary occupation to colonization. As I will elaborate in the next chapter, sympathy for Mehmed Ali in France was still steering the course of French policy—in fact, the French government asked the Porte to grant Mehmed Ali the hereditary rights of the provinces that were currently under his rule.

As a result, after spending three weeks in Paris, Mustafa Reşid did not proceed to Istanbul as he had initially planned. Instead, he decided to go to London first to ensure British support. There, on 11 August, he presented his July memorandum to Palmerston also. Mustafa Reşid believed that the key to the solution of the 'Egyptian crisis' lay in London, and in the resolution of its differences with Russia.

But, despite his advice to Hüsrev, he did not just wait to see if the Powers would resolve their differences in 1839. He was worried that a shift was unfolding in French policy: 'A powerful party of [French] philanthropy and liberals', he penitently wrote to Hüsrev before leaving Paris, 'pronounces against us despite all our reforms.' Despite all administrative reorganization, all pledges delivered, and all commercial concessions made in the past decade or so, '[w]e are still called Barbarians [by the French public]'.[125]

[124] Mustafa Reşid Paşa to Grand Vizier, 27 July 1839, AMAE CP Turquie 38/212, cited also in Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 130–31.

[125] Mustafa Reşid Paşa to Grand Vizier, 27 July 1839, AMAE CP Turkey 38/212.

In September 1839, immediately after he returned to Istanbul, the Ottoman foreign minister invited young Sultan Abdülmecid, together with the grand vizier, to consider the promulgation of an edict. The edict would herald a set of new empire-wide reforms, and help prove the Porte's civility to the French in particular. That is, Mustafa Reşid and his network in Istanbul set out to take their own steps—no longer militarily, nor by provoking Mehmed Ali—but by way of reforms and regeneration, an idea often attributed to Palmerston, though a party of Ottoman ministers themselves had upheld it since the late eighteenth century.

To reiterate, Mustafa Reşid thought that the promulgation of a new series of reforms would seal the Porte's commitment to 'civilization' in the eyes of the European Powers and particularly those of French liberal public opinion. At the same time, it would buttress the sentimental attachment of Ottoman subjects to the sultan against Mehmed Ali's power and popularity. Of particular importance were places like Syria, which had been the focal point of the differences between Istanbul and Cairo for some time and where uprisings against Egypt had been taking place intermittently since 1834.

After weeks of confidential negotiations at the imperial councils, the script of the edict had finally been drafted and agreed upon in early November. Mustafa Reşid was nervous about how it would be received by the wider public and the ulema, knowing that its content was 'far beyond anyone's expectation'.[126] On the evening of 2 November, just hours before he would read out the edict, he told his steward Salih Bey, 'Tomorrow I will be in great danger and I have little hope that I will be alive [by the end of the day].'[127]

On 3 November, Reşid went to the kiosk of the Gülhane Park in Istanbul where the proclamation was to be delivered. At 11 o'clock in the morning the protocol began. He received the red ceremonial book from Grand Vizier Hüsrev. He then ascended a pulpit, standing under a gold awning. Before him were numerous bureaucrats, European and Ottoman diplomatic corps, and the Istanbul population. The sultan was watching behind a curtain at his stand. The foreign minister waited five minutes for the signal of the court astrologer, and then read out the script in an audible, expressive tone: 'All the world knows that . . . countries not governed by the laws of the shari'a cannot survive,' he began.[128]

> But in the last one hundred and fifty years . . . the sacred shari'a was not obeyed nor were the beneficent regulations followed [by the Ottoman state]; consequently, [its] former strength and prosperity have changed into weakness and poverty . . . [W]e deem it necessary and important . . . to introduce new legislation

[126] Pisani to Bulwer, 17 Nov. 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers BUL 1/17.
[127] Baysun, *Mustafa Reşit*, 12.
[128] Caquet, *The Orient*, 93. For the English translation of the script, Bailey, *British Policy*, 277.

> to achieve effective administration of the Ottoman Government and Provinces. Thus, the principles of the requisite legislation are three: (i) the guarantees promising to our subjects perfect security [*emniyet-i kâmile*] for life, honour and property; (ii) a regular system of assessing taxation; (iii) an equally regular system for the conscription of requisite troops and the duration of their service.[129]

The edict had great textual similarities to his July memorandum. Often labelled as the Ottoman social contract, it spoke to an Ottoman as well as European audience. It accentuated the security of Ottoman subjects and pledged a guarantee allowing Ottoman statesmen to perform their duties partially emancipated from the unchecked acts of the sultan.[130] It was a declaration of the rule of law in the sultan's empire.[131]

A British agent in Istanbul wrote that 'the announcement of this great measure… has been received with the greatest exultation by all classes and sects in the several provinces of all [the] Turkish empire in which it has been promulgated'.[132] This was partly because, as the historian Butrus Abu-Manneh accurately claims, the edict could not be attributed exclusively to the European-oriented ideas of Mustafa Reşid or 'to his initiative'.[133] In fact, it was the product of a coalition formed by Hüsrev Paşa, Sultan Abdülmecid, his mother, Valide Sultan Bezm-i Alem, the Şeyhülislam Mustafa Ashim Efendi, and their Naqshbandi-Mujadidi network. This is comparable to the New Order movement of the 1790s and 1800s and its ideals. A resident of Istanbul for decades, the dragoman Pisani rightly noted, 'the ulema had prepared something of this kind for the adoption of Selim III but the [1807] revolution took place before the plan could be carried into effect.'[134]

Abu-Manneh traces the wording of the edict to an *irade* issued by Sultan Abdülmecid on 17 July 1839 that had already set out, in different language, the security of the 'property, soul, dwelling and place' of Ottoman subjects. Although this observation certainly has merit, it is questionable whether Hüsrev and other proponents of the 'New Order', who in 1838 had urged Mahmud II for similar reforms guaranteeing the security of life, property, and honour, could have

[129] J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record, 1535–1914*, vol. 1 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1975), 268–70.

[130] Ariel Salzmann, *Tocqueville in the Ottoman Empire: Rival Paths to the Modern State* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 41–3.

[131] Selim Deringil, *Conversion and Apostasy in the Late Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 33–4.

[132] Pisani to Bulwer, 17 Nov. 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers BUL 1/17.

[133] Abu-Manneh, 'The Islamic Roots', 193. This is discussed also in Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: The Story of the Ottoman Empire 1300–1923* (London: John Murray, 2005), 449.

[134] Pisani to Bulwer, 6 Nov. 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers BUL 1/17.

influenced the young Abdülmecid—a significant point that remains unaddressed in Abu-Manneh's account.

Moreover, Abu-Manneh seeks the ideological origins of the rescript in the medieval writings of the Islamic scholar Ghazali, who writes of the relationship between justice, security, and prosperity.[135] Yet when one examines the continuity of Ottoman political discourses and the more immediate political-ideological context from the late 1790s to 1839, it is possibly more persuasive to argue that the Gülhane Edict was a late 1830s adaptation of the 'circle of justice' and the philosophy of security-with-prosperity that had been upheld by the 'New Order' coalition. It was an understanding of governance that predates Ghazali.[136]

The 1839 edict reads:

> [i]f there is an absence of security as to one's property, everyone remains insensible to the voice of the Prince and the country; no one interests himself in the progress of the public good... If, on the contrary, the citizen keeps possession in all confidence of all his goods... he feels daily growing and doubling in his heart not only his love for the Prince and country, but also his devotion to his native land. These feelings become in him the source of the most praiseworthy actions.[137]

This cyclical understanding of just governance, which formed the underlying philosophy of Ottoman security culture, and which created an undeviating link between peasants, merchants, soldiers, bureaucrats, diplomats, and the sultan, was bolstered by the Gülhane Edict.[138] Among its major objectives was the reform of the entire taxation system of the empire, while ensuring security by means of introducing rights and liberties and regular conscription.

Yet the edict delivered more than this. As Abu-Manneh claims, it went further, requiring the sultan and the ulema to pledge to take an oath not to act contrary to its stipulations–something that went beyond the *irade* of the sultan and the petitions of previous imperial councils. With this unprecedented aspect, the edict checked the arbitrary political decisions of the sovereign and the ulema. It was possibly what frightened Mustafa Reşid the most, because it threatened the authority of the sultan as well as the influence of the ulema. Even though the edict was by no means a constitution, nor a bill of rights, it aimed, as Reşid later wrote elsewhere, to put an end to the fatal state of affairs the Porte was in, but not 'to restrict the sovereign authority of the Sultan'. It had in view the improvement of the imperial conditions 'by sound reason and even by the precepts of Islamism'.[139]

[135] Abu-Manneh, 'The Islamic Roots', 190, 196. [136] See Ch. 2.
[137] Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, 114. [138] Darling, *Social Justice*, 161–2.
[139] 'Traduction d'un mémoire sur la situation actuelle de l'Empire Ottoman', attached to Stürmer to Metternich, Constantinople, 10 Mar. (N472E), HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 80; cf. Miroslav Šedivý, 'Metternich and Mustafa Reshid Pasha's Fall in 1841', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 39(2)

Finally, the Gülhane Edict spoke to a European audience by invoking the idea of civilization. One can discern this in the explicit emphasis on equality between 'the Muslim and non-Muslims subjects' who would enjoy, 'without exception', imperial concessions, and in the pledge that everyone participating in the imperial council would 'express his ideas and give his advice freely'. Reşid associated 'civilization' with granting non-Muslims the same liberties and rights enjoyed by Muslim subjects of the sultan.[140] A major difference between his July memorandum and the edict was that 'liberty' and 'security' were considered synergistic concepts, not as two opposite ends of the arc of a pendulum between which Ottoman governance should oscillate.[141]

As will be clearer in the following pages, the idea of 'civilization' was implanted with this edict as one of the building blocks which bridged European and Ottoman quests for security, and signified the transimperial quality of the civil war in the sultan's domains.[142] Two days after reading out the edict, relieved of his fears for his life, Mustafa Reşid wrote to Palmerston, expressing his hope that 'the friendly Powers will appreciate the good that must result from these institutions in the interests of humanity and the Ottoman Empire, and that they will see in them a new motive for strengthening the bonds which will unite them with Turkey'.[143]

Amongst the statesmen of the Great Powers and the public, there was a mixed reception. To Palmerston, the edict was 'a grand Stroke of Policy, & it is producing great effect on public feeling both here & in France. I have never despaired of seeing Turkey rear her head again as a substantial element in the Balance of Power.'[144] Russian Ambassador Butenev's first report on the ceremony hastily depicted it as a 'theatrical act'. It was 'unexpected for people as well as diplomats . . . ' He could not fathom 'the secrecy and mystery of the ceremony as well as the total lack of prior knowledge of the diplomats about it'. But he was the first to underline the links between the edict and the reforms of Mahmud II, showing how in some respects one was the continuation of the other. Butenev presciently noted that it would herald a new era in Ottoman history.[145]

The French press bestowed praise upon the edict and the ceremony, though the liberal, pro-Mehmed Ali *Le Siècle* also raised suspicions about its potential

(2012): 259–82, at 282. On the religious origins of the edict, also see Frederick F. Anscombe, 'Islam and the Age of Ottoman Reform', *Past and Present* 211 (2010): 160–89.

[140] 'Exposé fait par Rechid Pacha à M. Desgranges', 21 Sept. 1841, AMAE MD Turquie, 44; cf. Kodaman, 'Paris Sefirlikleri', 73.

[141] For an article that argues otherwise, see Ersel Aydınlı, 'The Turkish Pendulum between Globalization and Security: From the Late Ottoman Era to the 1930s', *Middle Eastern Studies* 40(3) (2004): 102–33.

[142] Hurewitz, *Diplomacy*, 114.

[143] Reshid Pacha to M. Le Vicomte, 5 Nov. 1839, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E506.

[144] Palmerston to Ponsonby, 2 Dec. 1839; cf. Caquet, *The Orient*, 113.

[145] Butenev to Nesselrode, 5 Nov. 1839, AVPRI f. Kantselyariya, d. 47, ll. 302–15; cf. Todorova, *Rossiya*, 132–3.

effectiveness in an 'oriental empire'.[146] At the same time, French intelligence correctly identified the edict's general objectives as being to rally the people's support against Mehmed Ali and to attract the attention of European public opinion, and noted that Mustafa Reşid's immediate goal, as he once told to M. Desgranges, was to make it clear that the true trajectory of 'civilization did not point to Egypt but Constantinople'.[147]

The edict did fulfil its immediate purposes. 'It is a fact', one British agent wrote, 'that the first intelligence of it which reached [Mehmed Ali] upset him more than anything we did.'[148] As we will see, it was also used as a wildcard in pressuring France to change her policy with respect to Mehmed Ali in the coming months. It was presented as a main point of reference in rallying the Syrian population against Egypt a year later.[149] Consequently, it paved the way for the joint European intervention that Mustafa Reşid had long hoped would take place.

With the edict, the Ottoman foreign minister and his associates—Valide Sultan, Hüsrev, Rıza, Sadık Rifat, et al.—managed to weave together legal reform, security, and liberty in order to obtain the support of the Powers. The Porte's key agents would no longer oversimplify by framing their empire as the 'patient' in need of European 'medicine', but would instead depict it as an active figure in the game of civilization. This was why, only days after the edict's proclamation, Mustafa Reşid made a bid to involve the Porte in 'the European confederation' by means of Baron Stürmer, the Austrian internuncio to Istanbul.[150]

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The effects of the Gülhane proclamation on Mehmed Ali's ambitions can be discerned in his immediate response to it—an unexpected move. In early 1840, he sent a letter to his old enemy Hüsrev, now the grand vizier, through his handmaiden Zehra Hanım. He announced that he had given up his claims over Hüsrev's dismissal. But on everything else he made no concessions: the Porte would always have in him and his sons 'faithful and devoted servants' together with 'a considerable force in Arabia' which was always ready to cooperate in support of the state and religion, provided that the Taurus mountains were left to him. His only objective was 'to acquire a good name in future history'. The paşa underlined that the imperial fleet still belonged to the sultan and would be returned to him. Yet the persistent refusal to leave the Taurus mountains to Egypt prevented him from doing so. He added that the Porte was 'playing the game of those Powers' in seeking refuge at their hands, while the very same

[146] Caquet, *The Orient*, 117.
[147] 'Lettre de M. Desgranges sur l'état de la Turquie', 17 Nov. 1839, AMAE MD Turquie 45/43.
[148] Pisani to Bulwer, 27 Dec. 1839, NRO Bulwer Papers BUL 1/17. [149] See Ch. 8.
[150] Stürmer to Metternich, 6 Nov. 1839, HHStA, StA, Türkei VI, 71; cf. Šedivý, *Metternich*, 45.

Powers were in fact aiming to weaken it 'to facilitate in due season the project so long entertained by them: [the partition of the Ottoman Empire]'.

> If this be so, rather than fall in five years with shame and ignoring, how much preferable is it to fall at once, while the name and religious enthusiasm of Islam yet exists. To this I have made up my mind, and cease not night and day in pushing on my warlike preparations.[151]

The paşa hoped for the resolution of the crisis by an agreement between Istanbul and Cairo, but not with inter-imperial meddling.

Hüsrev rejected Mehmed Ali's proposal. With the support of the four Powers behind him, despite the defeat at Nizib, he believed he now had the upper hand against his rival. He therefore wrote in his response to Mehmed Ali that the sultan's only desire was to forgive his enemies and restore peace, and establish concord among all his subjects. The Taurus mountains offered an important natural fortress for Istanbul as much as they did for Cairo. They were essential for imperial security. And it had become impossible for the Porte to follow a different path from that which 'we have feared so far'—seeking refuge in the intervention of the Powers. 'What were we supposed to do in this situation? Could we reasonably refuse the support we have been so generously offered by the Christian Powers?' the Grand Vizier wrote in the draft letter, before crossing out these sentences. Instead, he wrote, '[W]e are waiting with perfect security' for the events that the future would bring, and the preparations for war that Mehmed Ali spoke of did not frighten him.[152]

This was the last (written) dialogue on the subject between the two men. Despite Hüsrev's reliance on the support of the Powers, there was in fact still no prospect of a Great Power intervention at this hour. The risk of an invasion of Istanbul by Ibrahim was still imminent. And until the spring of 1840, no action was taken by the Powers. Only then did Reşid and then the Austrian ambassador to London, Baron Neuman, take the initiative. Together with Nuri Efendi, the Ottoman ambassador, Neuman penned a letter addressed to the representatives of the Powers. The two reminded of the July 1839 note and criticized the Concert of Europe for its lack of action.[153]

Seeing that the dangerous relations between Hüsrev and Mehmed Ali continued unabated even after their secret correspondence (leaked to Mustafa Reşid

[151] Mehmed Ali to Hüsrev, 23 Feb. 1840, DUR Ponsonby Papers, GRE/320.

[152] Grand Vizier to Mehmet Ali, Moharrem 1256 [Mar. 1840], BOA HR.SYS 933/1/249.

[153] Rechid to Nuri Efendi, 27 Feb. 1840, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E444/25; Nuri Efendi to Palmerston, 7 Apr. 1840, BOA HR.SYS 934/1; Nouri Efendi to Palmerston, 18 May 1840, DUR Ponsonby Papers GRE/E444; Webster, *Palmerston*, 678–9; 'Extrait des nouvelles confidentielles par M. Chevalier Cordoba (Spanish chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople)', Jan. 1840, DUR Ponsonby Papers, GRE/E150.

by Ponsonby, who then got it published in European press), and in the absence of Great Power action, the Ottoman foreign minister, for his part, looked to prevent any forward move on the part of the paşa. He took the reins into his hands and got Hüsrev dismissed from his position on 8 June, lest Mehmed Ali should use his personal enmity as a pretext for aggression again.[154] When Hüsrev struggled to force his way back into office, he was linked to a bribery scandal and then sent into exile in Tekirdağ.[155]

Malicious as it may seem, Reşid's plan did the trick. Mehmed Ali was elated by the news of Hüsrev's dismissal. He saw a new chance for a bilateral settlement with the Porte and sent his first secretary, Sami Bey, with an official proposal for an arrangement. Even though the continuation of the talks produced no settlement, it gained Mustafa Reşid time. He himself was preparing a new proposal in mid-July 1840, agreeing to confer Egypt on Mehmed Ali with hereditary possession, and southern Syria with partial hereditary rights.[156] But before his proposal was communicated, the long-expected news came from London. The four Powers—Austria, Britain, Prussia, and even Russia—and the Porte's representative, Şekib Efendi, had finally agreed on an intervention plan.

Mustafa Reşid immediately dropped his scheme. His unusual quest to overwhelm Mehmed Ali's ambitions by means of painting the Ottoman centre as the civilized face of the East, making commercial concessions to wring an alliance from Britain, penning memoranda to legitimize and enable the multilateral intervention of the Concert of Europe, and helping to initiate bureaucratic and administrative reforms, was finally producing concrete results. For the Ottoman foreign minister, this was the hour of revenge.

[154] BOA HR.SYS 933/2; Roussin to Desages, 8 June 1840, AMAE 50MD/45/70.
[155] Çelik, *Şeyhü'l-Vüzerâ*, 375–85.
[156] Kodaman, *Les Ambassades*, 135; Šedivý, *Metternich*, 796–7, n. 121.